



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Tuesday, March 13, 2018
Members Present

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, 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

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. R.J. Simpson): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 62-18(3):
UPDATE ON THE REVITALIZATION OF THE
GREAT SLAVE LAKE FISHERY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, as part of this government's mandate to diversify the economy to provide greater opportunity for our residents, we are moving forward with our vision to revitalize the Great Slave Lake fishery.

Since the release of our revitalization strategy last year, we have been working to put into place the many elements needed to move our vision forward. We have researched and are confident that the market exists for the unique fresh-water fish that Great Slave Lake can supply. We have identified, with the Tli Cho Cooperative, a viable business plan that will enable current and future NWT fishers to regain their livelihood and benefit from a direct say in the revitalized commercial fishing sector. More importantly, we have met and talked with fishers from both north and south of Great Slave Lake who have expressed approval and support for our plans.

As we prepare to take our next steps, Mr. Speaker, there are five components that will be essential to revitalizing our vision that includes a new fish processing plant in Hay River, run by the fisher's cooperative which can continue to sell to the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation and its successor, as well as direct to market; collection stations in Yellowknife and Fort Resolution, to enable fishers to access quota in other parts of Great Slave Lake balance harvest and increased production; new fishers, to maintain quota and supply and ensure the continued viability of the sector for the future; a marketing strategy that will be develop a new northern brand, identify target

markets, and expanded sales; and new products, such as roe, fresh and frozen fillets, and fertilizer, that will bolster the NWT production, make it more competitive and marketable, and add to its economic value in support of local jobs and opportunities.

If anything, Mr. Speaker, our work to date has shown the importance of being flexible and fully responsive to opportunities and circumstances as they present themselves. To that end, we are moving quickly, in light of the federal government's upcoming year-end, to leverage partnership dollars that will allow us to finance the processing plant that is so pivotal in our revitalization plan. Costs for the plant will depend in part on equipment options. Should all funding be secured, we are prepared to invest as much as \$12 million into this critical piece of infrastructure.

We see the signing of the Integrated Bilateral Agreement with Infrastructure Canada as a positive step that opens the door for us to advance our work on the Hay River fish processing plant under the Investing in Canada Plan. In the meantime, we are already working with the Department of Infrastructure on site selection, equipment purchasing, and a tender for a building design.

Mr. Speaker, rebuilding a commercial fishery won't happen overnight. There is still much work to be done. Even as we pursue funding options with the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories was the first to sign on to the new six-year Canadian Fish and Seafood Program Framework Agreement. Our participation in this framework will support the marketing requirements of our strategy and allow us to capitalize on growth opportunities in the Northwest Territories as we transition to a more streamlined and collaborative fish and seafood sector in Canada.

The challenge before us, Mr. Speaker, is to connect and put all of these pieces in place in the next couple of months so that construction can begin in the summer of 2019 and a new fish plant will be ready to go in Hay River for the 2020 fishing season.

I look forward to updating Members of this Legislative Assembly on the progress of this exciting investment that will result in a revitalized

and sustainable sector, a renewed livelihood for fishers, greater community wellness, local food production, and added value to the Northwest Territories economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 63-18(3):
2018 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I can feel it. I can feel it in the air. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to provide Members with information on the 2018 Arctic Winter Games, which are being hosted from March 18 to March 24 in the South Slave Region.

The Northwest Territories has been an active participant in the Arctic Winter Games since its inception in 1970. These games are an important celebration of sport and culture for youth from the circumpolar region. We are proud to host the 2018 Games, and we are even more proud of Team NT who will be representing the Northwest Territories.

Team NT will consist of approximately 350 athletes, coaches, cultural performers, and mission staff. Territorial trials were held in December and January in the communities of Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, and Yellowknife. I would like to congratulate all the participants who tried out for Team NT. These athletes should be applauded for their commitment to their sport, their communities, and to active living.

Team NT will join athletes and cultural performers from Alaska, Yukon, northern Alberta, Nunavut, Greenland, Nunavik, the Russian province of Yamal, and the northern European region of Sapmi. The Arctic Winter Games play an important role in the development of our athletes. Our youth look forward to the games every two years, for the opportunity to share in competition and cultural exchanges. I am confident that our youth will once again benefit from this experience. Friendships will be formed and our young people will return with many lasting memories.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Sport North Federation, the Territorial sport organizations, regional coordinators, and the many hard-working volunteers who are leaders in our sport system. Without their hard work and the thousands of hours they give, the Arctic Winter Games and many other sporting events would not take place.

I am pleased to confirm that we will also be sponsoring 20 Youth Ambassadors, ranging in age from 16 to 24, who will be assigned volunteer roles in both Hay River and Fort Smith. These young people come from 14 different communities, and

they have been preparing since November to represent our territory as part of the host society welcoming the circumpolar world to the South Slave.

Our Youth Ambassadors will have a variety of roles, including athlete care and comfort, food services, medal ceremonies, and providing support to sport venues. I understand they may also have a special role in the opening ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, each year since 2007 our Youth Ambassador Program has offered an opportunity for Northwest Territories youth to volunteer at a major event such as the Arctic Winter Games. These opportunities help build self-confidence and develop skills, and they provide a way for our youth to learn more about other people and cultures. I am extremely proud of the Northwest Territories Youth Ambassador Program and all of the participants who have humbly served at major events. They are our future leaders.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the South Slave 2018 Arctic Winter Games Host Society, the volunteers in the South Slave Region, and to those who will be travelling from within the Northwest Territories to volunteer. Without these volunteers, the games would not be possible, and it is important to recognize the tremendous work they have done and they will continue doing, during the games and after.

In closing, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to wish Team NT the best of luck at the 2018 Arctic Winter Games. I would also like to reaffirm to them and to all our young northern athletes and volunteers how proud we are of their accomplishments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Thank you to all the volunteers who are making the games a reality. Good luck to all the athletes. Ministers' statements. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 64-18(3):
MINISTER LATE FOR THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Minister of Health and Social Services will be late arriving in the House today due to a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNIZING MONIQUE SABOURIN IN
HONOUR OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to speak on my biological mother, the Late Monique Sabourin of Fort Providence, in honour of International Women's Day.

Monique Sabourin (nee Lefoin) was an elder featured in the book Nahecho Keh, which was written in the 1980s. Here are her words of experiences: [English translation not provided].

Mr. Speaker, my mother had TB, and I was born at the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton. I was adopted to another family as a child. I was blessed to have had the experience of having two sets of parents in my life. I want to thank my biological mother, the late Monique Sabourin, for making an enriching family life.

She passed away in April 2002. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF JONAH SANGUEZ, YOUTH
TRAPPER OF THE YEAR

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge an impressive young person of the Nahendeh region, Jonah Sanguéz, a resident of Jean Marie River, who is in her second season of trapping. She was taught by her mother and continues striving to learn more about her family's background and living off the land.

Jonah is one of the five young trappers in the NWT awarded a Trapper Recognition Award from the territorial government. The NWT Trapper Recognition Award recognizes the hard work NWT trappers put into their craft and the contribution they make in the Genuine Mackenzie Valley fur Program.

Jonah values being out on the land and learns plenty from her mother, such as hunting, trapping, and survival skills. According to Jonah, inspiration came from her mother's family trapping for many years and her brothers teaching her while growing up. They were always encouraging her to further her knowledge.

Jonah's proudest moment was when she receiving the NWT Trapper Recognition Award this year for all her hard work. The recognition of something that has been passed down for generations in Jonah's family has been an honour for both Jonah and her family.

Although trapping runs in the family, Jonah has faced several obstacles, such as the cold winter temperatures, breaking trail where there wasn't one, and checking traps set 1 kilometre or more away from camp.

The past two years have been memorable for Jonah. After regular participation in traditional teachings and being awarded for her contribution, Jonah looks forward to the many successful years to come.

I would like to thank the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for recognizing trappers across the NWT. Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate to have young individuals advocating these principles in our communities. On the behalf of the region, mahsi cho and congratulations, Jonah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REFLECTIONS ON INTRODUCTION OF JUNIOR
KINDERGARTEN

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on the debate we had a year ago about the introduction of junior kindergarten. Much of the discussion at that time concerned funding, but I also talked about the impact junior kindergarten would have on existing early childhood development programs. I was concerned that parents would have fewer choices for their four-year-olds. In fact, a year later, that is the case here in Yellowknife. I'm also concerned that pouring resources into JK has diminished what's available for children up to three years old.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of junior kindergarten has pushed Ecole St. Joseph School to maximum classroom capacity within their school, and Weledah isn't far behind. ECE has agreed to increase capacity at St. Joe's by investing \$1.5 million in portable classrooms. This isn't counted as a cost of JK, but it is.

The uptake in junior kindergarten has resulted in the loss of one classroom of 16 children at the Montessori School in Yellowknife, and they may lose another one in the fall. They are trying to stay viable by offering after-school and full-day care on professional development days.

There have also been changes at the Yellowknife Play School. Children are a lower average age, and that's resulted in adjustments, including a new focus on toilet training and purchasing age-appropriate play resources. Mornings are well attended, but afternoons have been harder to fill,

resulting in an overall drop in income, the board says.

Mr. Speaker, there have also been significant changes at the Aboriginal Head Start programs. They have lost most of their four-year-olds, so their total numbers are down, and their funding is down as a result. Some programs have had challenges, but they continue as community-based language and culture programs for children ages zero to three. It's worth noting, in this context, that JK is still not fully funded for Aboriginal language and culture, with an overall shortfall of \$300,000 across the NWT. Until that's resourced, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has not met his promise to fully fund JK.

Mr. Speaker, it is by no means all bad news. ECE reports that 85 per cent of four-year-olds across the NWT are enrolled in JK, and they attend eight days out of 10. That gives parents an opportunity to set children up for success at school. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What parents don't have is as much choice in programming for their four-year-olds. JK is rapidly becoming the only option. I'm also concerned that it may be using up resources that used to be ear-marked for early childhood development programs for children up to three years old. I'll have questions for the Minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EXTENDED OPENING OF AKLAVIK ICE ROAD

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it feels like spring has come early to the Mackenzie Delta. This means that ice roads will probably see a shorter season. Mr. Speaker, last year, the access toward Aklavik closed early due to warm weather, and this year the Department of Infrastructure increased the minimum ice thickness requirements for the operation of ice roads. Increasing the minimum ice thickness means a longer wait for the road to open and a shorter season to use it.

Mr. Speaker, the Hamlet of Aklavik has three projects on the go that were scheduled to be completed by Christmas. The use of the road is required in order to bring in supplies, but the road opened later than usual after the ice thickness requirements were changed, and these projects are still delayed. I commend the Department of Infrastructure in reconsidering requirements for safe operation of ice roads, but shorter seasons mean

that our communities need to wait longer to get groceries and supplies, and our businesses are suffering.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the Department of Infrastructure implement flexible requirements, such as allowing personal vehicles that are lighter to go on the road earlier than heavier semis and tanker trucks, or even consider reversing the thicknesses required, given that not all ice is the same.

Mr. Speaker, shorter seasons due to a changing climate are made worse with the increase of the required ice thicknesses to operate ice roads. These changes have deep impacts, deep effects in communities that are not connected by land year-round. I urge the Department of Infrastructure to reconsider options for increasing the ice road season so that ice roads are kept open longer, and our communities have enough time to get resupplied. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AMNESTY IN CANNABIS LEGISLATION

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in approximately four and a half months, Canada will be lifting a 95-year prohibition on cannabis and will formally legalize the recreational use of cannabis nation-wide. This will truly be a monumental moment for both our country and for the world, because Canada will become only the second country in the world to legalize consumption and sale of recreational cannabis.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, I believe this move by the federal government is a smart one. Simply put, prohibition has not worked. I am glad that our country is finally ending the criminalization of people over cannabis. The lives of countless people have been disrupted due to harsh penalties for cannabis-related offences, as many people have received criminal records and have faced jail time for minor, non-violent drug offences.

Mr. Speaker, I must also state that there are aspects of the legalization that I think have been overlooked. I am referring specifically to amnesty for those who have been criminalized for cannabis-related offences. What will happen to people who are presently in jail for marijuana-related offences? Is Canada ready to modify sentences to let people out of jail? Will Canada pardon, suspend, or expunge criminal records related to marijuana?

Mr. Speaker, we can look at California as an example. In 2016, California legalized the recreational use of marijuana, and contained within

their legislation was a provision that enables people with prior marijuana convictions to be able to apply to the courts to have their convictions dismissed. This resulted in thousands of cannabis convictions dismissed from people's records and many people released from jails with reduced prison sentences.

Mr. Speaker, according to a recent poll by Nanos Research, 62 per cent of Canadians said they support pardons for people with marijuana possession convictions. There have also been numerous organizations, law firms, and advocates who have been urging the federal government to provide cannabis amnesty. I sincerely hope that if, in fact, our federal government does decide to provide cannabis amnesty, then our government here in the Northwest Territories will follow suit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ECOLE ALLAIN ST-CYR EXPANSION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Today, my Member's statement is going to be about expansion of Ecole Allain St-Cyr, and I'm going to attempt it in French. [English translation starts] today it's good news in my Member's Statement. For anyone driving or walking along Taylor Road here in Yellowknife, something new is happening. The long awaited expansion of Ecole Allain St-Cyr is underway and the work space has now been closed in. When completed, this work will finally give francophone students in Yellowknife access to the same facilities enjoyed by other children in our community. This was a very long process that included court challenges, negotiations, a lot of planning, and many funding applications. I congratulate the Commission scolaire francophone Territoires du Nord-Ouest, Association, Association des parents ayants droit de Yellowknife, all the parents and students who have patiently waited, the Departements of Education, Culture and Employment and Infrastructure, and the contractors working on the project.

The expansion will include a gymnasium with a wooden floor that is up the standards required, a stage, an industrial kitchen and another specialized classroom. These new facilities will be made available to the community as a whole when they are completed, just as the school itself is now available and has been used for public events such as the Aurora Fiddle Society weekend workshops. The expansion should also assist in student retention that allows Ecole Allain St-Cyr to compete with other Yellowknife High Schools. [English translation ends].

Merci, Monsieur le president.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, climate change is the most pervasive, overarching issue of our time. It is the one thing that is having a significant impact on everything else, and whether we like it or not, no government or community, no business or industry, and no individual or household will be able to avoid its impacts, and it's going to cost us big dollars.

Those costs are already beginning to add up, Mr. Speaker. When water levels are lower, our hydro generation is less efficient, so we have no choice but to pay more for diesel. When our forests burn at an unprecedented rate, we have no choice but to protect communities and property. When shorelines erode, we have no option but to pay to relocate houses, repair roads, and fix the damage. When permafrost thaws, we have no choice but to spend more on heating piles and rollercoaster highways.

Mr. Speaker, these impacts are already upon us, and with them, the incredibly high costs of repair. Frankly, these costs are not going away. In fact, they will continue to grow for some time. The only viable solution, Mr. Speaker, is to do everything possible to reduce our carbon footprint. Let's embrace new technologies like solar and wind power, so that we burn less fossil fuel. Let's support energy retrofit programs for our houses and buildings to save on energy use. Let's stop assuming that nuclear is a bad topic. Molten-salt reactors have the potential to deliver affordable, clean, and safe energy that could support the mining industry without endangering the climate.

Mr. Speaker, initiatives like these are essential as we move into the future, and we will have to find the money for it while we adjust to paying the new carbon tax. While that tax is federally mandated, we have the opportunity to design the regime to suit our specific needs.

It is imperative that our carbon tax system supports the transitions we need to make, Mr. Speaker. Industry, transportation, and households need support to make the changes that will lead to a low carbon future. The revenues from a new carbon tax must go back to them to help them make those changes. Anything less, and we will be failing our children's future and letting down the next generation.

At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CARBON TAX

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to speak on the issue of climate change as my honourable friend, the Member for Yellowknife North did. Everyone from Her Majesty the Queen to His Holiness the Pope have addressed climate change as the key crisis facing the planet and future generations. I'm really pleased to see so many leaders in the world step up. Just 10 years ago, there was a still a debate on job-killing carbon taxes, and now everyone from industry to the grassroots are calling for carbon pricing as a method to curb carbon emissions and ultimately reduce the impact of our industries, our homes, and our communities have on increasing the rates of climate change.

Northerners and Canadians know that polluting isn't free. Here in the Northwest Territories we are affected most by climate change. All of the Arctic is subject to extreme shifts in weather over recent years, and we have to do our part. I hear from a lot of people that carbon tax will be a hardship and potentially exemptions need to be sought. We need to find ways to get out of it. I hear that from this government as well, and I think we need to do our part to ensure that the cost of living is not made unbearable by Northerners.

We can't afford to have people leaving our communities. They deserve to have a stable and prosperous North for themselves and their families, but at the same time, we need to show real leadership and find a way to embrace the carbon pricing system that will protect our environment and show to the rest of Canada and the world that we are part of a progressive movement to address climate change definitively and to protect our future and the future of future generations as well.

I believe we can do that. I know we can do that. I know my colleague, the honourable Minister of Finance, is working diligently towards this. My questions for them later today are going to be where he is at. Even though I know from my work on standing committees, a lot of work is going on. I think the public deserve an update because they have questions, and I want to answer those questions with information I can provide them. Let's see if we can get it on the floor of the House. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Pages we have from Aklavik. In my riding, we have Tristen Elanik and Tisha Koe; also chaperone, Liz Wright. I would like to welcome you to the House and hope you enjoy the rest of your week. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Yellowknife North constituent Arlene Hache and thank her for all the many years of service that she has provided in social advocacy. Thank you, and welcome. Thank you for being here.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize two Pages today working this week in the House, Phoenix Crevier-Walsh and Harvey Haviyok-Kaladhok. Thank you for what you are doing.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Ms. Arlene Hache, who is here as the Yellowknife representative for the Northwest Territories Status of Women Council. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the Page from Yellowknife South, Liam Butte, and also all of the other Pages who have worked here these past few weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. Yes, we are nearing the end of our session, so thank you to all of the Pages who have endured with us over the past six weeks. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I, too, want to welcome all of the visitors in the gallery. One who doesn't want to be recognized, so I won't mention her name, as well as Debra Richards, a new constituency assistant. I don't think people realize how vital constituency assistants are to what we do. They are the first point of contact often for constituents and they are integral to our system of government, so welcome. Of course, Ms. Arlene Hache, welcome. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, acknowledgments. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 247-18(3): CASSIDY POINT

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up some questions dating back to May 31 and October 20 of 2016 with the Minister for Lands. There seems to be some confusion around the issue, and I would like to try to clear it up once and for all. With the changes with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the creation of Lands, can the Minister please advise us: does the department has all the files as it pertains to equity leases at Cassidy Point? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak for all of the files. I do know that the 41 properties out at Cassidy Point, those files are in the hands and have been reviewed by the Lands Department. I can't speak to other files in other departments from that area. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for clearing that up. In regard to the commitment made by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in 1992, was this commitment made in an email or letter to all the residents and lease holders at Cassidy Point?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, there was a commitment made many years ago to the Cassidy Point Prosperous Lake Lease Holders Association. That has been supported by the previous Minister of Lands in the 17th Legislative Assembly. I'm not certain which department or which person actually made that commitment.

MR. THOMPSON: I am not looking for the person or persons who made that commitment. I am asking if the Minister is aware that there was a commitment made to the leaseholder, whether it was made in an email or a letter to the leaseholder.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am not certain as to the manner in which the commitment was made, but I do know that a commitment was made which the government is prepared to honour, and has been honouring.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final question. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the House, the Minister was reading a document, and he said he couldn't share this document with us, so I guess I am a little confused and maybe he can clarify that: was this document

that he was reading an email or a letter to the leaseholders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Unfortunately, I can't remember which document I was referring to; however, I can look into that and get some more information to the Member opposite. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 248-18(3): CARBON TAX PLAN

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has put in place a carbon backstop for jurisdictions that don't embrace their own carbon pricing model. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he can speak to ongoing negotiations with the federal government over carbon pricing, and whether or not he has prepared our own carbon pricing model for implementation here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been working on our own carbon price modelling, and as we all know, the federal government has backstopped. They plan on implementing that backstop if the jurisdictions don't come up with their own modelling, so we have come up with some modelling, and we have updated committee on our approach with it. Once we have our discussions with the federal government, then we will be able to share that information.

MR. TESTART: The deadline the federal government is calling for is March 31st. Will the Minister be prepared to implement our carbon plan before that deadline?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are just in the final stages of our modelling. We still need to have discussions with the federal government. Of course, at the end of the day, our goal is to mitigate the impact it is going to have on people in the Northwest Territories. Again, once we have had those discussions, once we have more information to share, we will make it all public because the public needs to know. We can't pre-empt our discussions with the federal government and release it to the public just yet.

MR. TESTART: I appreciate that we don't want to potentially impact the negotiations that would result in the backstop. I don't support the backstop model. I think we need our own made-in-the-North model. Can the Minister assure us that we will get a made-in-the-North model, and we won't be forced to accept the unfavourable backstop model that is

being proposed by Ottawa, unfavourable to people in the Northwest Territories and my constituents?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Well, I can assure the Member and all Members and the public that the NWT government is going to have a made-in-the-NWT approach to it, because we do want to mitigate the impact it is going to have on the high cost of living and doing business in the Northwest Territories. Also, I can add that the Northern Premiers have had some discussions. They all have some concerns with the federal backstop, as well. They have had their discussions, and they will continue to do so. As we move further into the process, I will continue to update committee and update Members of the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final question. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that assurance. As the Minister knows, the Prime Minister of Canada committed to allow the NWT to keep all the revenues raised from the carbon tax. I have heard the Minister say that there is going to be a program that will mitigate any new taxes that will impact our already too high cost of living, but that other important piece of public policy is leading the way forward to a green economy with renewable energies and less carbon-intensive industry. Is the Minister proposing a carbon plan that will do that as well? Because the only thing I heard in his past statements was mitigating the impacts of this on people's bottom line. That's important, but we also need to grow this economy towards a green, clean energy economy. Can the Minister answer if that is part of the plan? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member is correct. I mean, we have looked at a number of different options as to how we are going to roll this out. A lot of the feedback we got from the engagement, there were a lot of suggestions in there as to what we could do with the revenue from the carbon pricing. We have looked at a number of different options. I have laid out some of those options to committee. I am looking for some feedback from committee as to our approach going forward, but again, I can assure the Member and members of the public is that our government is doing what we can to mitigate the impact not on the cost of living but on the cost of doing business, and the potential for investments into a greener economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 249-18(3):
CARBON TAX PLAN

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my colleague the honourable Member from Kam Lake for the warm-up. My questions are to the Minister of Finance, and I am going to go down the same lines as it relates to my Member's statement on carbon taxation today. I appreciate the work that the Minister is doing, and especially with his federal counterparts, and I recognize that nothing is written in stone yet, and I certainly don't want to compromise any negotiations that are going on between the two governments. Can the Minister begin to tell us, at least, how he might be planning to structure the carbon tax revenue to help NWT residents and, in particular, businesses to transition into cleaner technologies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out before, we have been doing some modelling. We have got a lot of feedback on our approach to carbon pricing and the effects it is going to have on the people of the Northwest Territories. I would prefer not to get into too much detail right now as to the work we are doing, because we have had discussions with committee. We need to have the discussions with the federal government, and I don't want to pre-empt or jeopardize any discussions that we might have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate the difficult position that the Minister is in. It seems that we will maybe get some repetitive answers, but this is the nature of question period. I am going to put another one to the Minister as it relates to people that are of lower income, lesser income, sometimes a struggle with new forms of taxes. Let's get off what the deal is between the federal government and the territorial government, and just maybe ask the Minister what the Minister intends to do with any form of a newfound tax as it relates to lowering, the impacts it will have with folks with lower income levels. Will there be rebates or income assistance or what have you that will be available for these folks?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The federal government has come up with the carbon pricing. They have a federal backstop. I think the Member previous to you spoke on federal backstop and his non-support of it. If we went with the federal backstop, then the costs would be a lot higher. We are coming up with a made-in-the-North approach. That is going to look at a number of different groups across the Northwest Territories, and I assured the Member previous that we are going to do what we can, we will do what we can, to mitigate the effects of carbon pricing on all levels of people in the Northwest Territories. It is high on the radar of the Northern Premiers. They have had those discussions. We continue to have our discussions

with Ottawa. In fact, I think I have just lined up a meeting for the end of the month with my federal counterpart, so we will continue to have those discussions.

Again, getting into the detail, once we have those discussions and I share the results of those discussions with committee, then we will be able to have more public dialogue on this issue.

MR. VANTHUYNE: One last question that I have for the Minister, then, today. It is a little bit relevant to what is going on between our two respective governments. More so, it is about investing in new technologies. I am just hoping that, at the end of the day, the Minister, this government, can commit to transformational investments that will really affect our ability to lessen the impacts on climate change and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Is the government looking at transformational-type change? Are they looking at things such as nuclear molten-salt reactors, and of course, connecting to the southern grid and providing much cheaper, affordable power to the North?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are. The government is always looking at transformational projects and ways we can lower the high cost of doing business and living in the Northwest Territories. We continue to do that. I think the federal government has made it a priority of theirs, too. They have made a lot of investment in infrastructure across Canada, and the NWT has our proposals in to get our share of some of that funding. We are looking at a number of different projects that would help offset our greenhouse gas emissions and lower the cost of living. Again, as we go further into the process, I would be glad to keep committee updated as to the work we are going and seek their feedback.

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

QUESTION 250-18(3):
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN EVALUATION

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I have great hope that JK is going to improve student readiness for school and ultimately their success. I am sure the Minister does, too. How is the development of students in JK going to be evaluated and when? Mahsi.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One way that we are measuring the evaluation of four-year-olds in the education system is through our early development instrument. Later on, we

have the middle development instrument that we are introducing into the schools and, obviously, ultimately, at the end of the school year, the graduation rates either from elementary school or even through high school. There are other areas that we are looking. Mainly, it is the early development instrument to make sure we watch the progress and then re-evaluate again at the middle development instrument. I agree with the Member that I do believe this is going to have an impact in all of our schools and our education and the development of our students in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that response. Student achievement is one measure of this program, but I also have questions about value for money. I am wondering if there are other measures that the Minister is going to consider for junior kindergarten.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: There are other ways. One way was: everyone knows that junior kindergarten is optional. For the parents, single parents, even, who enter their four-year-olds into the junior kindergarten system, I did mention that it saves the families anywhere from \$8,000 to \$12,000 per year. On the family side of things, it is economically having an impact on some of the families across the Northwest Territories. Also, areas that we are able to help the junior kindergarten classrooms, as well as Aboriginal Head Start, they were able to access the \$5,000 one-time funding to get pay-based materials into the school. Other than that, that is really it.

MS. GREEN: I wonder if the Minister could tell us what the ratio of funding is for early childhood development initiatives, ages birth to three, versus the funding available for school?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: This year, when we fully implemented junior kindergarten throughout the territory, we had a budget in the 2017-2018 school year of \$5.2 million. Our ECD budget throughout the territory was set at \$8.91 million. I don't have the ratio of the education authorities to ECD. Our JK funding to ECD ratio is 1 to 1.7. In this upcoming budget for 2018-2019, we will have a junior kindergarten budget of \$6 million. We will also have an ECD budget of \$11.6 million throughout the territory. We are making very vast investments and improvements in how we operate with early childhood programs in the Northwest Territories, as well as our support for junior kindergarten throughout the NWT.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final question, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the detail the Minister was able to provide in his

answer. I guess my last question is about the funding for early childhood development initiatives. I understand that there is money from Canada coming for early childhood development. Could the Minister talk about how that is going to be spent? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Member is right. We do have an agreement that we have signed. We are just waiting for the announcement from the Government of Canada that will increase the amount of funding we will have in the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned in this House, we have 11 communities that don't have any early childhood programming outside junior kindergarten that we implemented in the school.

We want to ensure that we put a focus on those communities that currently don't have early childhood programming and also continue to sustain other daycare spaces and daycare programs throughout the Northwest Territories so that we do have accessible and affordable childcare in all 33 of our communities in the Northwest Territories. Getting into more detail of how we are going to spend that money, once the announcement is made, I will brief committee. I have made that offer to brief committee once that announcement is made. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I would like to recognize some visitors we have in the gallery before they take off. I believe the grade 9 class from Sir John Franklin High School in Yellowknife. Welcome. It is always nice to have an audience. I like to see when the youth are engaged. Welcome. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 251-18(3):
APOLOGY AND COMPENSATION FOR GIANT
MINE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to follow up on a motion that we passed unanimously in this House on October 20th of last year. It was with regard to an apology and compensation for damages from the Giant Mine. I would like to know whether the Premier has had a chance to write the letter to the Prime Minister as contemplated in the motion and whether he can table that letter in the House before the end of this sitting. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I did write a letter to the Prime Minister as contemplated in the motion of October 20, 2017. I will be tabling that letter probably tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Premier for the follow-up on the motion. I would like to know whether there has been a response from the Prime Minister of Canada to that letter and whether that response can be tabled in the House before the end of this sitting, as well.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Prime Minister has responded. The letter will be tabled likely tomorrow, as well.

MR. O'REILLY: While I am on a roll here, I want to thank the Premier for that, as well. It would be good to know if negotiations have started and whether there is a target date or any other kind of details on the process. Can the Premier tell us whether he is aware of any further progress on the issue of an apology and compensation for the damages from the Giant Mine?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Prime Minister in his response indicated and advised that he was forwarding my letter to the Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and that since then, it is my understanding that the Regional Director General for the Department of Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs has agreed to enter into discussions with the Yellowknives Dene First Nations and is working with the chiefs to schedule a meeting.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final question. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Three for three. Let's go for four for four. Again, I want to thank the Premier for that. That's really great news. This is something people in this community worked long and hard for, so I really appreciate the response from the Premier.

GNWT is a co-proponent under the Giant Mine Environmental Agreement, and it's also a partner in the remediation of the site, not a financial partner, we will be clear on that, through the 2005 Cooperation Agreement. Our staff have a lot of knowledge and information about Giant Mine and its impacts. Can the Premier tell us whether our staff will be supporting the work on an apology and compensation, and whether they have begun to be engaged on this issue? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'm not aware that our staff have been directly engaged as of yet, but we have a very good working relationship with the federal Department of Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. We will endeavour to engage with them, so that we continue to stay on top of this issue and help facilitate a resolution that we are able to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 252-18(3):
AMNESTY FOR PAST DRUG OFFENCES IN
CANNABIS LEGISLATION

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about the amnesty for people who have been charged with marijuana offenses in the Northwest Territories. I recognize that this is a federal government initiative at this point. At some point, the GNWT will be engaged. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice if the department has statistically reviewed the situation or the numbers of people who have been charged with criminal offenses due to marijuana. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise that the department does not keep statistics on the number of Northwest Territories residents with convictions for simple possession or otherwise, and it may be that some of them will have convictions arising from other jurisdictions. I was looking at an article, however, on Andre Picard, which seemed to indicate there was still a large number of people across Canada being charged. He indicated in that article that, as I read it, there were more than 40,000 convictions, or charges, rather, cannabis-related charges laid in 2016. So there are a large number of people who are still being charged. I'm assuming that some of them are Northwest Territories residents, but we don't have those statistics. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Even without statistics, I would like to ask the Minister if there has been any discussion with his department on how to handle I guess it's going to be a huge number of individuals who have been charged, in the case I spoke up in my Member's statement about, with possession as the Minister indicates. I was wondering if there were any discussions at all at the departmental level pertaining to that.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I have mentioned previously, this matter is primarily a federal one. I do know that, some time ago, the Departments of Justice and ECE established a program whereby clients on social assistance could receive financial assistance to obtain a record suspension, which is the modern term for a probation.

As I say, there may be a lot of applications for record suspensions, or a pardon, rather, coming ahead. Unfortunately, it does seem that there are still a large number of charges being laid. As I mentioned previously, tens of thousands of charges are still being laid. I don't think the federal government is contemplating any change in their policy with respect to pardons for marijuana charges until after the current legislation, regarding

the legalization of recreational cannabis comes into effect.

MR. BEAULIEU: I do realize that we are talking about the legal stuff here, but had there been any discussions, like at some point, we must begin to talk about what's going to be coming in July. I would like to know if there have been any discussions between the Minister and his colleagues in Cabinet.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Of course, I cannot discuss the details of what is discussed in Cabinet. However, we do realize this is a live issue, and it is a live issue for the federal government also. I do know that, as recently as earlier this year, and I'm reading a story in the press that the Federal Safety Minister, Ralph Goodale, said the government is examining the implication of possible pardons or record suspensions. This is an issue mainly at the federal level, and I think we could all say we are expecting some movement by them with respect to the issue of passed convictions, but time will tell.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final question. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking these questions because it does certainly have an impact on individuals for jobs, employment, travel, and many other things. When an individual who has a criminal record is appearing at the border, for example, whether or not they are able to across the border could depend upon the type of criminal offense they have on their record. I would like to ask the Minister if he could commit to starting to have discussions with the other Ministers who have some involvement in creating employment and having the growth of our economy in the territory so that they have that discussion, so that when July 1 comes and the legislation is passed that this government would be more prepared than not prepared. Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, it has been a challenge for this government to prepare for the upcoming legalization of recreational cannabis. Certainly, I am willing to discuss these matters with my colleagues in Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 253-18(3):
ICE ROAD OPERATIONS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement. A little background is, in the past, the ice roads opened at a weight limit of 25 millimetres and today, the changes that were made were, you now have to have 35 millimetres to open roads. I would like to ask the Minister: will the Minister be more

flexible as we tend to have colder weather in the Mackenzie Delta compared to the southern part of our territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope the Member is not talking about this winter. I think the Mackenzie Delta has been warmer than years. I will have to check into the significant change from 25 millimetre to the 35 millimetre for operation of the ice roads, but I do know, and I have said it in this House a number of times, safety is our number one priority for residents of the Northwest Territories.

We have guidelines for safe construction of ice roads in the Northwest Territories and I will endeavour to have a look into why the change took place from 25 to 35 millimetres. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Last spring, as we are all aware, the ice road closed quicker on the ice road to Aklavik. It was due to a little open section of water. Mr. Speaker, all we had to do at the time was block off a section of that road to ensure that vehicles didn't go near that open water, which was just alongside the road. Will the Minister block off any open sections along the ice road this spring, rather than closing the road all together?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Well, first of all, I'll say no to that, just to protect myself. There are a number of circumstances that have to be taken into consideration on the closure of these ice roads. One of the things is, as I said, we have a guideline around how we operate the ice roads in the Northwest Territories. Climate change is impacting how the Government of the Northwest Territories operates and how we build and maintain these ice crossings in the NWT, and it's become a significant challenge. Even this year, we're having some challenges right now with a number of overflow issues on a number of the roads. They're going to actually bring the cost up of operating these things continually as we go forward. I think the Member from Yellowknife mentioned that in his comments about climate change, how it's affecting us. We have warmer water that is flowing under the ice, and it can degrade the ice surface, the thickness of it, and it's not visible to the naked eye, and people assume that the road is -- just because the ice conditions look on the surface as they can be operated and it's cool out, warmer waters and river currents and stuff are having an effect on these things, and we have to continue to monitor them, and we will continue to do that, but safety is our number one priority.

MR. BLAKE: The Minister talked about increased costs. Maybe if the Minister would listen to some of the things that we're trying to let them know of to bring the costs down, maybe those costs would be half of what they are today. Like heat trace, for example. The other question I had was: our contractors up in the area have years of experience with these conditions, and even your colleague next to you knows of this area that we're talking about, and over the years, it's been the same conditions in that area, and the people have a lot of traditional knowledge in that area. This spring, I'm sure, we may have to do it again, but will the Minister ensure that the department tests the ice in that area to ensure it's safe? If we have to block off a little section of the road, maybe a quarter or half, then, especially for light transfer, because it is safe for light traffic? To let residents, give them time to stock up for the spring. They don't have access to that road until next fall.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I agree, the contractors have a lot of experience in that region building these ice roads. It's been the same contractors off and on for a number of years, but at the end of the day, I'm the Minister whose head is on the line here if something happens. Safety is our number one priority. We will continue to monitor the situation going forward. I can talk to the department if there are any issues arising right now on that section of highway in the Northwest Territories. As I've said, I know that a number of our ice roads have challenges right now, and as you can see by the weather outside, it's going to increase. When it's plus six in Hay River right now, there are challenges right across the board, but safety is our number one priority. I will talk to our department. We'll have our superintendent have a look at the road and make sure it's safe to operate for everybody.

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

QUESTION 254-18(3):
CASSIDY POINT CONSULTATION

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up with questions to the Minister of Lands. Can the Minister explain to this House how the Yellowknives Dene First Nations were consulted in regards to the land at Cassidy Point? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do know that there was consultation, and I just want to make sure I get my dates right. In December, formal consultation, December 2014, that is, the department sent formal consultation letters regarding the possible fee simple transfer to the

Akaiicho Territory Dene First Nations, ADFN, Northwest Territories Metis Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, and Tlicho government. Copies of the letters were also sent to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation chiefs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm a little bit concerned. This started in 1992, and if I heard the Minister say it correctly, it was 2014 when we consulted with the First Nations, so maybe he'll have to clarify that a little bit later. I guess my concern is, my understanding is that the Yellowknives Dene did not support the sale of this area to lease holders. So how was the government able to move forward with this commitment?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that when the letters were sent out on December 14, 2014, to the groups that I have already mentioned, the consultation period with respect to those letters ended on February 3, 2015, which would have been about 60 days later; and by that time, no Aboriginal governments responded to either support or object to the proposal.

MR. THOMPSON: I find it hard to believe that the First Nations would not object to this, but I guess I'll go on to my next question. Has the government of the GNWT compensated the Yellowknives Dene First Nations for taking these pieces of land and for that happening?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned, letters were sent out to the groups I mentioned, and no responses, negatively or positively, were received by February 3, 2015, which, as I said, was approximately 60 days later. No compensation has been paid, as I understand it, to this point.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final question. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that answer. So on October 20, 2016, the Minister spoke about the importance of the Government of the Northwest Territories honouring its commitments no matter how old they are. It comes with the honour of the Crown. In speaking with a number of residents, we're not too sure what the Minister meant by this. Can the Minister please explain to the House what he meant by this statement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As all the Members of this House know, a commitment was made many years ago to the people at Cassidy Point, allowing them to obtain fee simple. Period. That was the end of it, we thought, but it is a little more complicated than that, simply because the people out at Cassidy Point doubtless relied on this assurance from the government. So there are two reasons why the government must follow up on its commitment,

honour of the Crown, as I call it: one, we made the commitment, as I said; and, doubtless, people affected relied on that promise. So there are two reasons why we must follow through on this promise, and that is in keeping with the honour of the Crown. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 255-18(3):
RENEWAL OF TERRITORIAL FORMULA
FUNDING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to ask some questions of the Minister of Finance about the renewal of our territory formula funding arrangement. Buried on page 317 of the federal budget, there is this set of curious numbers and so on. It says, "Proposed renewal of equalization and territorial formula funding for a five-year period, with technical changes to improve accuracy and efficiency of calculation of entitlements," and so on. So this seems to indicate that our territory formula funding arrangement is going to be renewed for another five years, as is. I'm just wondering if the Minister of Finance can shed any light on what this commitment from the federal government is all about? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this year's federal budget, they announced that we were going to get an additional \$1.7 million toward our formula financing as a result of the negative impacts of the review of the territorial formula financing that they just completed. The current deal expires on April 9th. The Member is correct. We are getting renewed for the next five years, and my understanding is for the next five years we should get incremental increases, actually, to our budget, to offset the negative impacts of the review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister for that. I'm just worried about the renewal of the agreement for another five years. There are issues here in terms of the carbon pricing. There is a commitment from the federal government to ensure that any impacts on the TFF with respect to carbon pricing are going to be dealt with. We know that we don't get to keep enough of our own source revenues under the TFF, so I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if there is still going to be an opportunity to make further changes for the funding arrangement with regard to carbon pricing and own source revenues:

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: In my response to the questions to Members previous, I had talked about the carbon pricing and the effect it might have on the territorial formula of financing. Part of the discussions that we will have with Ottawa is on how that may affect our territorial formula of financing. I know we have had commitment from the federal government that they were going to recognize the uniqueness of the North, so we are hoping they take that into consideration. As we proceed into those discussions, again, I will commit to keeping Members updated on the discussions that we have. On the own source revenue, we keep all our own source revenue except for the resource royalties, which we just started receiving a few years ago. A part of that goes back to Canada. We get a portion of that, but all the other own source revenue, we keep within the territorial government.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for that. My understanding was, and look, I'm not an expert on the territorial formula funding arrangement, but my understanding was that, if we introduce a new tax, we get to keep the revenues from that for the first three years and then it gets rolled into our base and sort of clawed back through the arrangement. Is there going to be the ability to change that sort of provision of the arrangement, so that we get to keep more of our own source revenues in the future?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Again, I'm positive that we get to keep all of the revenue that we generate, but I will confirm that and have a conversation with the Member. I have raised in the last Finance Ministers' meeting that our concern about the impact on some of the technical changes that they have, and so I have started those discussions with the federal Finance Minister. I'm sure that we get to keep all of the revenue that we generate. Again, I will confirm that and if I was wrong, then I will let the Member know.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final question. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to get a briefing. I think the standing committee should probably get a briefing on the formula funding arrangement pretty soon so we better understand this, but even with regard to, say, the resource revenues that we get to keep under the devolution agreement, there was an independently commissioned study by the Department of ITI that said that that arrangement wasn't the greatest and that we should be able to keep more of those sorts of revenues as a result of changes that could be made to the territorial formula funding arrangement and maybe the devolution agreement. Is the Minister aware of opportunities there are going to be to renegotiate other provisions of the territorial formula

arrangement if it's renewed for five years? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: On the resource royalty revenues, I mean, we started receiving those revenues at devolution before that were a number of years before that; I don't believe we got any revenue at all from the resources that were extracted from the Northwest Territories. It was a long time coming, and it's a start. I hope we will continue to see that pile of money increase in the future, which would mean that there would be more jobs in the Northwest Territories.

Again, the Member makes a good point, though. The territorial formula financing that we have with the federal government is quite complex. There are a number of different components to it. If it's a wish of committee, I would be glad to provide them with a briefing, be it a written briefing or an in-person brief, a technical briefing, and then we can all understand the territorial formula financing. My understanding, again, is that we get to keep all of our own source revenue that we generate. Otherwise, why would be raise taxes or anything like that if we are not able to keep it? Again, I will have that discussion with committee and we will see as we go forward that we are all better informed on the territorial formula financing agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 256-18(3):
NUCLEAR ENERGY

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure, as Infrastructure is the department that handles our energy policy for this government. Earlier today the honourable Member for Yellowknife North spoke about nuclear energy as a potential solution to remote industrial operations in the high Arctic and as a solution for off-grid mines. I know that many industry actors who are operating in the Northwest Territories have been looking into the potential of nuclear technology. I haven't heard a lot from this government on its position on nuclear. Do we have one, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nuclear is an interesting conversation. I think, if you read the documents, we are interested in all new technologies that are coming down the pipe to help us meet the energy crunch that is coming and the greenhouse gas reductions that we will have to meet. The Nuclear Board of Canada was at the Arctic Energy Conference in Inuvik to

participate. They were there with constituency of a few people to pay attention to what's going on and the needs across the North. We continue to follow the nuclear technology as it improves across the country.

At PDAC, I ran into the federal parliamentary secretary who was having a meeting with the many nuclear people and how it could be implemented in the country, but it's a long ways off. This thing has to go through some strict rationale on how it is going to be used safely in our country, and I'm not quite sure if the technology is even there to be implementing it at this point, but we are definitely following it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for clearing that up. I am glad that this government is on the case. I think nuclear is one of those areas of energy that gets a bad rep because of some very high-profile global disasters, but that shouldn't persuade us away from looking at the potential. Canada has had nuclear reactors operators in southern provinces for many years, such as in Ontario, who has a famously successful nuclear program that hasn't had any major problems.

I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware of any territorial jurisdiction that could allow us to pursue our own nuclear program without the federal government having to design it for us?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I believe anything that pertains to nuclear energy in this country has to follow the jurisdiction of the federal government. As I have said, though, we are paying close attention to how this is rolling out. I have had a few documents that actually crossed my desk that people have sent me about it. As innovation comes along and technology changes, I am sure that is no different than the impacts of climate change. This is something that is coming. It is something that I think not just the Northwest Territories are going to have to have a look at as an energy needs as the future comes, but it is a global thing that I think many nations are going to have to look at.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the industry has been looking at this technology, including industries working in similar conditions, and potentially in the Northwest Territories themselves. Does the Minister know if there are any industrial energy projects that the GNWT could potentially partner with and work with the federal government to move nuclear projects forward in the Northwest Territories?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I'm not aware of any large industrial components that are interested in doing this. As I have stated, I don't believe the technology is there yet. This is something that we are just keeping an eye on moving forward and how

we can have it implemented in the future once it becomes a reliable source of energy.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final question. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for responding on an area that there is not much meat on the bones, so to speak. There is a public concern over the use of this technology. I think we are reminded of some public engagement that went on earlier in this term. Clearly, if this is the way of the future, and the Minister is confident that the industry is moving in this area, and the economy is moving in this area, is he willing to commit to put a discussion paper together or some talking points that could be shared with the public so we can get Northerners on the conversation and allay any hesitation they have of embracing technology, which as he said, is on the way of being normative in western civilization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I said, our energy strategy moving forward talks about all the types of future innovative and different technologies that are coming down the pipe. At this point, I don't think I want to put our resources into putting a paper into something that is probably quite a distance out, but we will continue to monitor it going forward, and if some more information that crosses my desk that I think is going to be relevant to the conversation of how we do the energy mix to lower our greenhouse gas emissions for the Northwest Territories, at that time I will look at bringing that out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 257-18(3):

NORMAN WELLS FIRE DEPARTMENT

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back into my role as the honorary Member for the Sahtu with some questions about the Norman Wells fire department for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Last week, we had a conversation about the status of the Norman Wells fire department. My question for the Minister is whether it is operating today. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I actually appreciate being asked the question so I can clarify some of the information. As stated last week, the Norman Wells fire department was not shut down. That was an error on behalf of the media. We have been, before actually, before

the Auditor General report, we have been going in and doing assessments of community fire departments. We have done 15 so far, and each one of those have come with recommendations. Norman Wells was identified as the need for more training, and there were some issues regarding the qualifications of the fire people to be able to operate some of the equipment, so we scaled back a bit, but we did not close down the department. Just to clarify that, that it is still operational. They are in need of some training, and we are currently working with them to make sure that training happens.

MS. GREEN: I will answer to that also. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer. It sounds like there was very poor communication that happened between the Town of Norman Wells, its personnel, and the department, and so on. Are there some lessons learned there?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes. Again, there are always lessons learned with anything, when things go good and when things go bad, there are always lessons to be learned. Within that one, again, I have to focus that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is not in charge of all the fire departments. That is a community issue, but we do work with them closely to provide the support, the training, and the services that they need to make sure that they are functioning well. There was a breakdown in communication. We talked with the council.

They are actually going to be on this Monday coming up, March 19, the town administrator, and with Municipal and Community Affairs onside. We will be having an inter-agency meeting in the afternoon, and then we will be having a public meeting in the evening so that people in the community can actually hear and dispel any fears that they may have.

The Office of the Fire Marshall is also going to meet with the fire department on Monday and Tuesday, the 19th and the 20th, to put in some details on the implementation plan and how they are going to get their team up to standards with the training necessary.

MS. GREEN: It sounds like this issue is well on its way to being resolved. My only remaining concern is that, in the reporting on this issue, the reporter tried the fire line on Friday and got no answer. Does the Minister have any information on whether the fire emergency line is operational?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: That is new news to me. I have also concerns if someone is trying to phone a fire line and doesn't get through. I would like to say that the community, the council should be available at all times. We will check into that. I do know there may have been a glitch. They are

just in the process of hiring a brand new fire chief, and the new chief is going to start work in early April. That still no excuse, so I will look into it to make sure if people call for support, emergency support, that somebody is going to answer that phone.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to the Commissioners opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Premier.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 139-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
181-18(3): MIDWIFERY PROGRAMS AND
POLICIES

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 181-18(3): Midwifery Programs and Policies." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 14-18(3):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
MAY 24, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 15, 2018, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on March 15, 2018, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 24, 2018; and further, that at any time prior to May 24, 2018, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills: Bill 9, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures) 2018-2019. Minister of Finance.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 9:
 APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONAL
 EXPENDITURES), 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 9: Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2018-2019 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I had a premonition there. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 7:
 CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS
 ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to do a second reading of bills. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 7, Chartered Professional Accountants Act, be read for the second time. This bill, like the parallel statute to be introduced in Nunavut, establishes the Organization of Chartered Professional Accountants, which will be responsible for regulating the profession of accounting in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. This bill merges the existing professions of certified general accountant, certified management accountant, and chartered accountant into a single profession and repeals the statutes governing those formerly separate professions.

Some of the key provisions of this bill concern the following matters:

- setting out the powers of the organization to manage its affairs, including the powers to hold property, borrow money, make bylaws and elect its governing board;
- setting out rules respecting the practice of the profession, and reserving the chartered professional accountant designation to members of the organization;

- setting out rules respecting the membership and licensing of members of the organization;
- setting out the powers of the organization to establish requirements for members, including ethical and professional standards of conduct and continuing competency requirements;
- setting out rules respecting the making and investigation of complaints against members and the conduct of discipline proceedings, including appeals;
- providing that the organization may exercise powers and functions for the regulation of the profession in Nunavut; and
- providing for transitional measures, including preserving registrations effected and proceedings taken under the former governing statutes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 7 has had its second reading and is referred to standing committee. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 9:
 APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONAL
 EXPENDITURES), 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 9, Appropriation Act (Operation Expenditures), 2018-2019, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make appropriations for operation expenditures for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. It also sets out limits on amount that may be borrowed by the Commissioner on behalf of the government, includes information in respect of all existing borrowing and all projected borrowing for the fiscal year, and authorizes the making of disbursements to pay the principal of amounts borrowed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to speak to the principle of this bill. It was a month ago that I gave my reply to the budget address. What has changed since then in terms of the 2018-2019 budget now that we have an appropriation bill in front of us?

I want to talk a little bit about the budget process. The reductions in this budget are not as drastic as in the previous two fiscal years, but Cabinet continues to cut programs and services to build larger surpluses to spend on infrastructure projects or roads to resources. The promised spending in the last two years of our mandate is limited to a few new initiatives. This was the approach even before the reduced revenues were announced.

In November 2017, Regular MLAs reviewed the departmental business plans. Phase Two reductions appear in many of the departmental budgets. Overall, the business plans often did not contain enough information for us to understand what specific activities were to be undertaken in 2018-2019.

Regular MLAs sent detailed correspondence listing unacceptable reductions and recommended investments and provided supporting rationales for our positions.

The response was that revenues were lower than anticipated and further study was needed by Cabinet. When the full response was received, Cabinet refused to make any of the changes requested by Regular MLAs. Another exchange of letters took place and then Cabinet finally agreed to about \$1 million in changes after Regular MLAs began to defer departmental budget consideration in Committee of the Whole. The changes that we asked for were less than one one-thousandth of a percentage of the total budget, at least the changes that we have in the appropriation bill before us and the supplementary appropriations that are to come.

As I said last year, few will ever know how hard the Regular MLAs had to work and work together on behalf of our residents to extract any concessions from Cabinet. Budgets also serve to focus discussions and debate on policy and programs. One lesson that we can take away from this is that responses to commitments made in Committee of the Whole reviews of departmental budgets should be prepared in a more timely fashion.

How can we make the budget process more productive next time around? There needs to be earlier, meaningful consultation with Regular MLAs about the overall fiscal context and direction of the budget, even before the development and reviews of business plans. The review of the business plans was rushed this time because of the change in schedule resulting from a mid-term review and

other factors. The business plans themselves need to be significantly improved, and Ministers need to be better prepared. I think we also need to develop a process convention for the budget.

I would like to talk a little bit now about some of the details in the budget. There will be some welcome new investment in the social envelope, including youth mental health and stronger support for FASO and autism. I support these initiatives. There are even some new initiatives related to the environment, including completion of the protected areas network and support for communities dealing with climate change. Unfortunately, these environmental initiatives are funded by internal cuts within Environment and Natural Resources.

On the economic side, I support the increased investment in agriculture, but there is really no serious effort to diversify our economy. Additional funding is being devoted to land rights negotiations, which is welcome, but it comes after two years of cuts in such funding. Little work is under way to develop a knowledge economy and the future of Aurora College is still very much up in the air.

The only new revenue initiative in this budget is the proposal to study a land transfer tax and the continued study of a sugary drink tax that is carried over from the previous year. I cannot accept Cabinet's approach of continual cutting without some corresponding and commensurate effort at raising new revenues. I will repeat my words from my 2017 reply to the budget address: the world, this country, and the NWT have witnessed growing and unparalleled gaps between rich and poor. Our government has done little to address this issue through the tax system.

In my reply to the budget address last month, I said the following:

"The public would be shocked to learn that we will raise more money from tobacco taxes, \$16 million, than we get from resource royalties, \$13 million. There have been no serious efforts by Cabinet to stabilize and increase our own source revenues. So much for the promise of devolution where our government would do a better job managing resources than the federal government. After almost four years after devolution, not one word of the mirror legislation or regulations has been changed. We can and should be raising significantly more from mining, as shown by two independent experts who have recently examined our revenues from this sector. A review of mining royalties has also been put off to some unspecified future date and is very unlikely to be completed within the life of this Assembly. Why should the federal government give this government any more authority over lands and resources when we haven't done anything with the authority we have?"

My experience over the past month just reinforces my belief in these statements.

Some of the specific reductions in 2018-2019 that I believe are particularly short-sighted and harmful are highlighted as follows:

- The environment continues to be a low priority with Cabinet. There is no new investment in renewable or alternative energy as we wait for federal dollars to rain from heaven. The 2016 sunsetting of \$760,000 of funding leveraged by Regular MLAs during the bailout of the NWT Power Corporation for diesel to replace hydropower during low water levels was never replaced in the Arctic Energy Alliance budget. When Regular MLAs proposed increases in funding for Arctic Energy Alliance, this has been rejected.
- Within Environment and Natural Resources, the cutting of five positions at headquarters, four of these in corporate management that are related to communications, policy, and legislation, has seriously reduced the capacity of the department. It has a lot on its plate with at least six legislative proposals; major public policy initiatives, including the Climate Change Strategic Framework; and a heavy communications responsibility with caribou and fire management. This work is already well behind schedule, and it is not at all related to lack of effort by the staff who I have publicly commended. The problem is with the lack of funding and staff to get the job done. ENR is again one of the few departments to continue to take cuts and more are planned in the next two years.
- Boreal caribou monitoring is to be cut by \$150,000 at a time when the species has been listed as threatened and when a recovery strategy is under consideration that will call for more monitoring, not less.
- We have seen numerous examples of government withdrawing funding when there is a hint of federal funding. Cutting our commitments to fund boreal caribou monitoring is simply wrong.
- Funding for the district education authorities is also to be cut by \$200,000 as part of Cabinet's fiscal reduction targets. The hope is that some sort of shared services approach will yield these savings.
- MACA will cut \$250,000 from its budget for multisport games support, as the lottery funds may now be used for that purpose. There will be further cuts over the next year as well.

Lastly, while I appreciate and support the changes being made in the NWT Housing Corporation, there is still no plan or funding to get our housing out of core need. Cabinet appears to have already decided that not one cent of the recently announced federal infrastructure funding is going to be used for housing as well.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this is a better budget as a result of Regular MLAs working together on behalf of all of our residents. I am proud of the Regular MLAs for having pushed for improvements, and I am very happy to continue to work together with them.

However, even with the minor changes there are significant cuts, especially to the environment, and little to no effort or even consideration of new revenue sources. The overall direction from Cabinet's fiscal reduction strategy of cutting jobs, programs, and services to fund infrastructure continues in this budget.

There are some exciting initiatives in this budget, and I sincerely thank my Cabinet colleagues and their staff, and my Regular MLA colleagues for much hard work. However, on balance, I cannot support the 2018-2019 budget, given the focus on spending reductions to fund infrastructure and very limited effort to look at revenues. I will be voting against the appropriation bill. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my reply to the budget address, I spoke of the process that led us to what we have been doing for the past several weeks in the Chamber of the House. Although I was dissatisfied with how that process played out and I felt we could have had more engagement on both sides of the House to build a budget we could all support, at the end of the day, we were forced into a situation where it has taken us to until this point to bring forward an appropriation bill.

In ideal circumstances, we would have more time to work on these issues to find a compromise. I think that is the real spirit of democracy. I have often said that, that it's not about making everyone happy, but it's about creating a budget or a bill or a proposal that everyone can live with, and that our constituents can live with as well. That is important, Mr. Speaker. I feel that we have done that with this appropriation bill.

I'm not going to speak at length to the contents of the bill itself and of the budget that we will moving forward with in 2018-2019, as I expect it will pass today, but I do want to say that many of the most troubling concerns around some of the directions

the budget was taking with policy decisions and spending were resolved through the great amount of work that Members on both sides of the House did over the Committee of the Whole reviews that are often not as exciting as question period in the day-to-day business of the Assembly, but are very important because they allow us to ask these questions and do an in-depth review on each department's budget.

Ultimately, that work has been exhaustive. Every dollar has been accounted for. Every spending proposal has been questioned. At the end of the day, we have made progress on arts funding. We have had made progress on land tenure issues. We have made progress on environmental concerns. We have made progress on business support. There are other policies that will still need to be worked out. I expect we will spend the remainder of this term doing that, but again I can't look at this budget and see something I can't support. Rather, I see something that I acknowledge has taken a lot of work to get to the place it is today. That work has ultimately made a better budget, a more balanced document, and helped get the information contained within its pages out to our constituents so they understand how the government is spending their money on improving services and programs to Northwest Territories residents.

Finally, on the coming infrastructure budget and the need to continue to invest in that infrastructure budget, which is something I do support, the nature of our financial procedures requires us to pay for that infrastructure budget for what may appear as an operational surplus. It can also be thought of as the capital budget. What we don't spend on these programs and services, we are going to be spending on capital. I would disagree with the argument that it is potentially an area to cut services to pay for infrastructure. I think, rather, we need more common sense budgeting practices that allow everyone to understand exactly what we are doing when we move forward.

We are not posting surpluses year on year. We are paying for capital, and the way we do that is somewhat complex. We need plain language, common sense budgeting that everyone can follow along with, that everyone can understand, and that ultimately respects that there are two budgets in play here. One is capital and one is operations maintenance. That is the one before us today. That is how we pay for programs and services.

I'm satisfied that this government is using its limited resources in a time of reduced revenues to maximize the gains made to Northerners and to address the most pressing issues that Regular Members have brought to the floor of the House and has successfully championed over the last weeks of this sitting of the Legislative Assembly. I

will be supporting the appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand here to speak on the principle of this appropriation bill. I guess my biggest challenge was the big cut of another \$250,000 in the multi-sport games. This is now \$500,000 cut from multi-sport games and this is having a huge impact on our youth and our residents, especially our future.

When speaking with the Finance Minister, this was my struggle. This was my challenge. This is something I stand up on my principles. However, as we work forward and you got to look at the big picture and look at the number of the issues here. The big issue in my riding I represent is mental health issues.

New positions, the child and youth care consultants, our counsellors, is huge in my riding. You have heard me speak about the challenges we faced in the riding. The positions now are going one in Fort Liard, one in Fort Providence, and one in Fort Simpson. There is going to be a manager. This is going to help address this issue. It's a first step and it's a positive step. I have to congratulate the Department of ECE and the Department of Health and Social Services for working on this and making it a positive step. They have a plan. They are trying to address it. They are starting with the Tlicho and the Nahendeh riding right now, slash Deh Cho. They are moving on for the next few years.

Autism and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, that is another big issue, and I appreciate the government putting some money towards it. It is now addressing this issue, and it's helping our residents be better prepared in this issue.

You have heard me talk about equity leases here as an issue. It has been an issue ever since I got here. The Minister of Department of Lands and I have had a number of conversations, questions on the floor here. I have to applaud the Government of the Northwest Territories and Cabinet for recognizing this need. We now have put in five positions there. We are now looking forward to making a deal with this in the next three years. That is a huge step for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

We have a number of equity leases out there across the territory and we need to address this. These are people who are homeowners. They are taxpayers and they want to deal with this matter. I applaud the department for dealing with that.

Adding to government's service officers, in the small communities, these positions are huge. They

have a huge impact on the riding and for the residents. They address these issues. They are the first line, I think it's what I was told, a single-window service. This is having a huge impact. The department has heard us and is dealing with this matter. They are coming up with a plan to get into all the smaller communities. I applaud the department for that.

I have seen firsthand how these positions have an impact in two of my communities that I represent, Ford Liard and Nahanni Butte. Those two positions are amazing. They do a lot of work for the residents and they are a good conduit for myself as the government as we are trying to get information out to people.

The next issue is leases. From 10 per cent, which is reasonable in some people's world, to 5 per cent. I tried to push it for 3 per cent. I applaud the Minister for actually looking at this and the department for looking at this, and we are reducing that lease to 5 per cent because it now has a huge impact on all residents of the Northwest Territories, not in any specific riding. It's all residents who are dealing with this matter, so I applaud the department for that. Again, I would love to see it at 3 per cent, but at least at 5 per cent, receiving money back into people's pockets.

The last one I would like to talk about the increase to the arts funding. The arts funding, we have heard it, we have seen it, we have had meetings where the arts community asked for increases in funding, a \$200,000 for increased funding. We were able to work with the departments and the government to come up with an additional \$200,000, which will help these people and help us promote our art world.

Mr. Speaker, when I first started out going through this process, I was really challenged to support this budget. People have seen me stand and rise in this House and not support the last two, but I have to applaud the departments and the government for working with us. We are not going to all have the positive relationship that we want. We don't want to get everything we need, but I have to applaud the department and the Minister for working with us on this. It is a long process. There have been a lot of letters written back and forth, a lot of communication behind the scenes, but I applaud the department and my colleagues on this side here for working together for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

At this point in time, I will be supporting the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

The motion is carried. Bill 9 has had its second reading. Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns; Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process; Tabled Document 135-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018; and Tabled Document 136-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, with Member for Mackenzie Delta in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Tabled Document 135-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, and Tabled Document 136-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. We will continue after a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 135-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018. This document provides for an increase of \$2.4 million to the capital budget.

These supplementary estimates include \$1.5 million for the purchase of four portables for St. Joseph School in Yellowknife, and \$900,000 towards a construction of a new fish plant in Hay River. This expenditure will be fully offset by revenue from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I am prepared to respond to committee's questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right I have Mr. David Stewart, who is the deputy minister, Department of Finance. To my left, I have Ms. Sandy Kalgutkar, deputy secretary to the FMB.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor for general comments. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to speak to, it's not a question, it's just a comment. I support these supplementary estimates or the requested appropriation, in particular, the \$1.5 million for the purchase of four portables at St. Joseph School. That school is in my riding. It's the largest elementary school in the Northwest Territories. I have risen in this House before to speak about the space needs of the school. This is something that this school district was looking to bring forward, so I'm very pleased that the government is providing assistance to the School District of Yellowknife Catholic Schools in the purchase of these portables and that we are going to take some of the pressure off the space needs at Ecole St. Joseph.

I hope that, moving forward, we continue to support our partners in the educational system similarly because, when we change our policies and programs and put demands on the schools, we need to do our best to offset those demands and effectively support education across all levels in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod, do you wish to comment?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: No need to, Mr. Chair. I just thank the Member for his comments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. Next, we have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Minister may have heard me say today in my statement, one of the unintended, I think, unintended costs of the introduction of junior kindergarten was the necessity to provide these portables. If junior kindergarten had not been introduced last fall, would the school still have needed the portables? I wonder if the Minister can answer that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that the school was getting close to their capacity; if not this year, I think these would have been required soon, or these would have been required eventually.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it's my understanding that the school was anyway fairly full and then, once there were 50 or 60 junior kindergarten students added to that, then it was untenable. One of the good things about our system of government is that we can do supplementary appropriation of this kind and be a little more nimble in response to the school's needs rather than having to wait until the fall to the next capital plan, which then of course wouldn't come into effect until a year from now. Those are my comments. Nothing further. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want to be clear that I do support these two items that are in the supplementary appropriation, but I'm wondering if one of the witnesses can tell us what the position is of the supplementary reserve for infrastructure. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the 2017-2018 supplementary reserve will be over-expended by about \$7.5 million. That includes, though, a special warrant related to the barges that will be repayable over time, but for the year, it's \$7.5 million over the reserve amount. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So given that the supplementary reserve, then, is in a deficit position, how does that show up as debt in our accounts? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as the Member would be aware, the estimates are that; they're estimates. As the year goes along, the supplementary reserves are accessed for situations like this. Departments also end up, at the end of the year, with some lapsed funding, and that all gets figured out at the end of the year. Then we'll be able to figure out our cash position and know whether that's going to add to our short-term debt or whether we'll have adequate resources for the year to cover all those expenditures; but if it is beyond the revenues that we had for the year, then that would go on short-term debt. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank the deputy minister for that explanation. So does this affect our overall long-term debt or our debt wall in any way? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, the short-term debt as well as the long-term debt goes under our debt limit, which is \$1.3 billion, is the federally imposed debt limit. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So perhaps one last question: is the department looking at what the supplementary reserve is going to be for 2018-2019? Is it the same level? Or what sort of lessons learned are there when this goes into \$7.5 million of debt? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the capital supplementary will be at the same level, which I believe is \$5 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that the Deputy Minister talked about this. That \$10 million is related to a special warrant for the barges for the Marine Transportation Services. So when does that amount start to get transferred back into the revolving fund that was set up for expenses related to the marine transportation services? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that it will be repaid over a 15-year period for the contributions we've made to them. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay. Thanks, Mr. Chair. So over a 15-year period. I guess I was hoping for something shorter than that, but the amount that gets charged back to the revolving fund, does it include the interest on the short-term debt or any interest related to the special warrant? Does it get charged back to the revolving fund? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, we'll charge the interest on that short-term debt back to the revolving fund. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Any further questions, committee? Seeing none. Seeing no further general comments, we will now proceed to a review of supplementary estimates by department. The committee has agreed to begin the review with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operation expenditures, not previously authorized, \$1,500,000. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Education. Seeing that there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Committee, we will now begin at page 6, which I just read out. Okay. Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditure, under not previously authorized, \$1,500,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next we have, under Supplementary Estimates

(Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, under Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, \$900,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Total department, \$900,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Okay. That's it. Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 135-18(3)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister, and our thanks to the witnesses for - oh. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 35-18(3):
CONCURRENCE OF Tabled DOCUMENT 135-18(3): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 4, 2017-2018

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that consideration of Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, now be concluded, and that the Tabled Document 135-18(3) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal sessions through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The motion is on the floor and is being distributed. Thank you, committee. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Do you have another motion? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Tabled Document 136-18(3): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No. 4, 2017-2018.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 136-18(3). Does the Minister have any opening remarks?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No. 4, 2017-2018. This document

provides for an increase of \$29.2 million to the operations budget.

Major items in the supplementary estimates include:

- \$20.7 million for demand-driven, non-discretionary items such as out-of-territory hospitals and physicians, extended health benefits and Metis health benefits, and the Residential Southern Placement Program;
- \$959,000 to provide for the Hay River Health and Social Services Authorities' pension plan, and \$181,000 to provide increased contribution funding to AVENS - A Community for Seniors;
- \$2.8 million for projected costs in the Income Assistance program;
- \$2 million for activities under the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. These expenditures are fully offset by revenues from the Government of Canada;
- \$1.7 million for compensation increases, replacement vehicles, and new mandatory equipment for the RCMP, G Division; and
- \$857,000 for increased grant-in-lieu payments to Municipal Taxation Authorities under the Grants in Lieu of Property Taxation Policy.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I am prepared to respond to committee's questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber, even though they are there. It's all process. Thank you. Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses once again? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right, I have Mr. David Stewart, deputy minister of Finance. To my left, I have Ms. Sandy Kalgutkar, who is the deputy secretary to the FMB. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor for general comments. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my first question relates to page number 4. Under education and culture, there is a new expenditure of \$2,015,000. Could the Minister please tell us

exactly what this money is going to be used for? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The GNWT recently signed an early learning and childcare agreement with the federal government that provides funding over a number of years. I believe it is a 10-year agreement. There are a variety of activities to support early childhood operators under that contribution.

The first \$2 million in the first year, there are some additional positions that are being added to help support the work with the various childcare operators, as well as some other activities that are included in there as well. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's my understanding that there are three new positions, and obviously they wouldn't be worth \$2 million, so what is the balance of this fund being used for? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of the items that are included under the activities that are going on: professional development and training, to support training for licensed childcare centre based early childhood development programs; cultural resource development in distribution to some of the centres; supporting some additional post-secondary training for early childhood workers; scholarships that are provided to support students who are enrolled in early childhood programs; some health and safety funding; and then some additional grabs for equipment and those sorts of things for childcare operators. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I recognize that this is not the deputy minister's department, but it was my understanding that this money was earmarked for the availability and affordability of childcare. How does this expenditure relate to those mandate goals? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as the Member pointed out before, the money is for the first year of this program, so this is

what the money has been expended for this year and the subsequent years that are coming up, and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has assured me that he would be able to provide a further detail and a briefing to social programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am highly unhappy that we are being asked to authorize an expenditure for which we do not have a plan, despite the fact that a bilateral agreement has been signed. The Minister has been holding out on us in sharing this information, and now we know why. The spending that he contemplates does not further the mandate objective, and doesn't do anything about availability or affordability of childcare. So now that we have this information in public, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment tomorrow. In the meantime, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance what precedent there is for asking Members to approve a budget for which there is no plan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to confirm there is a plan in place with this early learning funding. I can't share the full details until announcement has been signed with the Government of Canada. We are waiting for them to make that announcement. I will be more than happy and willing to sit down with committee and go through the details of the accessibility, the high quality of programs that are going to be earmarked with this \$2 million for the 2017 year. As I mentioned in the House, I would be more than willing to come before committee and share the details of that plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Moses. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am not satisfied with that response. We have asked the Minister continuously over not just weeks, but months, to share the details of this plan with us in confidence as the Standing Committee on Social Development. He has consistently refused to do that, and that's in spite of the fact that the Regular Members have received details of other federal governments' funding prior to an announcement.

This is strictly a stalling tactic by the Minister to avoid any accountability on the way that he is envisioning to spend this money. From what the deputy minister of Finance has just told us, this in no way addresses availability and affordable of

childcare. I am very disappointed, and there is no reason for us to be put in this position of approving money for which we have no plan. That's not a question. That's a rant. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That was a rant well taken. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I, too, share the frustration of my colleague from Yellowknife Centre because I have sat in on some of the Standing Committee on Social Development meetings where childcare has been discussed. This agreement, the Minister has continually said, I can't share details with you, and then all of a sudden the first year funding pops up in a supplementary appropriation on the floor of the House. We are all big people in this room. You should be able to share confidential information with us. This is not a way to do business, so I don't appreciate the way that this has come up.

I do want to turn to a supplementary reserve for O and M. I would like to know what the impact of this supplementary appropriation is going to be on the overall reserve. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The items included in this appropriation will make that supplementary reserve be over by about \$4.8 million for the year. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Presumably, this side of this reserve, now that it is in a deficit position, will be reconciled the same way as it is on the capital or infrastructure side where we wait for year-end, look at O and M spending within all the departments, and determine whether there is a surplus or a deficit. If there is a deficit, it is taken up as small, short-term debt. Is that the way that this would get reconciled? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is accurate. At the end of the year when we have both the operations and the capital spending, then we will know where our final cash position will end up and whether we need to add that onto the short-term debt. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer from the deputy minister. What is the reserve going to be for O and M for 2018-2019, and how does that compare with the reserve for 2017-2018? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the supplementary reserve for next year will be \$30 million, but we don't anticipate our ask coming forward to be as high as they this year because, with a lot of the health-related items in this supplementary, we are building them into the base so we will have that discussion during the main estimates and business plans for next year, but we do not anticipate unless there is something unforeseen. We don't anticipate the amount being as high next year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just so I can confirm, the supplementary reserve then for 2017-2018, I believe was set at \$35 million; and for 2018-2019, it is being reduced to \$20 million. Can I confirm that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't have the main estimates document in front of me, but I believe those values that the Member quoted are correct. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the deputy minister's response. That is the information I've got in front of me. It looks like the reserve is going to be reduced by \$15 million, but this supplementary appropriation is for over \$20 million for our out-of-territory patients. It looks like we would still run, if everything else being equal, there would still be a \$5 million deficit next year. How is the reduction in the reserve calculated to go down just \$15 million rather than, say, \$20? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The reserve value, the Member is correct, it is \$20 million for 2018-2019. The investments that we have made in the base on some of these items that the Minister

noted for Health and Social Services and other areas, we believe that that reserve amount will work, and that we will be able to stay within that amount. Obviously, there are other factors like fires and those sorts of things that we can never be too certain of, and so we will have to keep our eye on that and manage our resources carefully over 2018-2019 to make sure that we are able to meet the financial figures that are included in the main estimates. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am not sure I am convinced on that, but only time will tell. There's \$959,000 in here for a top up for the Hay River Health and Social Services Authorities pension plan. I know that there has been some discussion in the House about bringing the workers there into the public service. Does anyone at the table know the status of those discussions? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think this is an issue that has been looked at in the past. I know we have started another project with the Department of Health and Social Services to look at those costs again and see what the requirement would be, and then see whether within our fiscal environment we are operating, whether it makes sense to do that or not, but we have started to do that detailed work again, just to update those figures and have that for a fully informed discussion on that topic. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Until that happens, we will just continue to have to top up the pension fund. For 2017-2018, it is almost \$1 million. Does anybody from the department know how much we have spent to top up the pension fund period over a number of years? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, 2007-2008, \$739,000; 2008-2009, \$587,000; 2009-2010, \$406,000; 2011-2012, \$227,000; 2012-2013, \$611,000; 2013-2014, \$1,009,000; 2015-2016, \$1,266,000; 2016-2017, \$872,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate those numbers, and it is all good evidence as to

why these folks should be brought into the public service. Thanks. I don't have anything further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Comments? Next, we have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the discussion around the Education and Culture supplementary appropriation, there was a discussion around this early learning and childcare agreement. Our detail here is from 2017 to 2020, but I believe I heard a witness quote this as a 10-year deal, or a 10-year funding arrangement. Obviously, this program is four years. Can we get some clarification whether or not this is a 10-year funding arrangement or a four-year funding arrangement? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework with the Government of Canada is a 10-year. The framework is 10 years. The funding agreement is for three years.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Can the Minister just quickly explain the difference between the two, the 10-year framework and the three-year funding plan? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think the 10-year agreement that was signed, the framework lays out broad goals to improve early childhood programming in Canada. I think the three-year agreement is related to specific actions that were included in that three-year. I think it is safe to say that there will probably be further discussions on activities that may take place after the first three-year period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Just to confirm that the 10-year framework does not have dollars attached to it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct. Just the first three years are funded. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Maybe something further. Are these positions solely contingent on this funding? Is this something we are looking to maintain after three years? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have been given the indication that yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have more questions about this 10-year framework, but this isn't the appropriate time to do it. I will defer those to a later day and save them for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to thank the Minister and the witnesses for answering my questions. Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Next, we have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for putting me back on the list. Mr. Chair, I note that on page 5, \$181,000 is allocated to AVENS. I wonder if the witnesses could tell us what the specific use of this money will be? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is supplementary funding. They increased their contribution related to their collective agreement. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand what he said about increasing funding so that they can meet their obligations under their collective agreement. They have been at or near a deficit for a number of years. Will this funding amount make any difference to that situation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. It certainly has to help. I understand the department continues to work with AVENS, though, to look at their broader financial situation. I understand the Member is correct, that they have been having some challenges on the financial side. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is a more general question about how organizations that have contribution agreements are accountable for their spending to the government: can the Minister just give us an idea of how that happens? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Thanks, Mr. Chair. There is a little difference between whether they are getting a grant or a contribution from government, but typically there is a requirement to report back. Depending on the type of organization that it is, the reporting could range from some outcomes of what they were able to do with the funding from the territorial government to the requirement for audited financial statements and more detail on what they did with their contributions from the government. It really depends on the NGOs that are laid there. We have a third party accountability framework that describes the different types of external organizations that we fund and what specifically they have to report on to the government each year. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can Mr. Stewart or another of the witnesses tell me what kind of accountability they have specifically for AVENS, if, in fact, they know? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we don't have that detail in front of us, but we will work to get the information for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you for your responses. Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Any further questions or comments? Seeing no further general comments, we will now proceed to a review of the supplementary estimates by department. The committee has agreed to begin the review with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditure not previously authorized, \$2,015,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Agreed. Thank you. Next, we have income security not previously authorized, \$2,807,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Agreed. Thank you. Next, we have not previously authorized total department, \$4,822,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, Department of Health, operations expenditure not previously authorized, under administrative and support services, \$959,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have ambulatory care services not previously authorized, \$9,301,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. Next, we have community health programs not previously authorized, \$6,736,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have diagnostic and therapeutic services not previously authorized, \$509,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have supplementary health programs not previously authorized, \$4,381,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Yes, Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have one question about this. The shortfall for extended health benefits and Metis health benefits, this amount, this \$4.3 million, appears to be 40 per cent over the current budget. Of course, it seems like we are seeing an increased need for these benefits to be extended to Northerners. The current level of funding going forward, has it been adjusted to address the shortfall in the supplementary health programs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it has been adjusted. It is a part of the base funding for next year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Does the Minister have that information with him today? The line item, how much it has been adjusted by in the main estimates? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the extended health benefits base is increased \$3 million, and the Metis health benefits is increased by \$848,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm satisfied with that response. I think we have seen this for a couple of years now, that the health benefits are being exceeded based on demand, and I'm pleased to see we are fixing the problem. I have no further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Under supplementary health programs not previously authorized, \$4,381,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. Next, total department not previously authorized, \$21,886,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures not previously authorized, mineral and petroleum resources, negative \$249,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have under tourism and parks not previously authorized, \$50,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Under Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department not previously authorized, negative \$199,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. Next, we have the Department of Justice, operations expenditures not previously authorized under community, justice and policing, \$100,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have policing services not previously authorized, \$1,691,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have total department not previously authorized, \$1,791,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures not previously authorized, under regional operations, \$857,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Total department not previously authorized, \$857,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. There are no further comments. Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 136-18(3)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 36-18(3):
CONCURRENCE OF TABLED DOCUMENT 136-18(3): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 4, 2017-2018, CARRIED

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that consideration of Tabled Document 136-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, now be concluded and that Tabled Document 136-18(3) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Committee, we have a motion on the floor. The motion is being distributed. Thank you, committee. The motion is on the floor. The motion

is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

The motion is carried. Thank you. Thank you, Minister, and our thanks to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the will of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the chairman of the Committee of the Whole leave the chair and report progress. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, Member for Mackenzie Delta?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 135-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, with a motion adopted; and Tabled Document 136-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2017-2018, with one motion adopted. I would like to report progress that consideration of Tabled Document 135-18(3) and 136-18(3) are concluded and that the House concur with those estimates as amended, and that appropriation bills to be based thereon be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Do I have a seconder? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 9:
APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES), 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 9, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2018-2019, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker,

I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. The mover has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

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

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote are: 15 in favour; one opposed; zero abstentions.

---Carried

Bill 9 has had its third reading. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret Thom, is ready to enter the chamber and ascent to bills?

Assent to Bills

COMMISSIONER (Ms. Thom): Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

Bill 1, Western Canada Lottery Act;

Bill 9, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2018-2019.

During this session, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be introducing the following bills for consideration by the House:

Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2018-2019.

The government considers this bill essential to the good conduct of government business, and as such, I recommend its passage. Thank you. Quyanainni. Merci beaucoup. Marsi cho. Koana.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, the orders of the day for Wednesday, March 14, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 8, Emergency Management Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns
 - Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.
This House stands adjourned until Wednesday,
March 14, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:02 p.m.