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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Great Slave)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 28, 2016****Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:01 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good morning, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Human Resources.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 98-18(2):
REPORTING ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to update the Members of this Assembly on the status of the NWT Public Service. The Department of Human Resources reports on the public service using various mechanisms, including the 20/20 Strategic Plan Results Reports, the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey Results, and the Public Service Annual Report, to name a few.

Later today I will table the 2015 Public Service Annual Report. I want to take this opportunity to tell Members about improvements to this report and efforts to increase transparency and accountability of public service salaries. Mr. Speaker, the 2015 Public Service Annual Report provides information on the management, composition and development of the public service, and highlights some significant achievements from 2015.

The 2015 version of the Public Service Annual Report has been streamlined in comparison to previous years. A significant component of this redesign has been ensuring important information and data it contains about the public service is presented as clearly as possible. The Department of Human Resources is modernizing the report to ensure the report focuses on citizens. These changes will ensure the information is presented in a way that will have meaning to the public.

In the coming years, the report will be tabled in the House using a fiscal year reporting cycle instead of the calendar year. This will better align the report

with Government of the Northwest Territories reporting cycles. Additionally, reporting on the fiscal year will help readers make a stronger connection with what is being reported and what they have experienced over the past year. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committed to transparency and to providing the public with information about how public money is being spent to maintain the public service.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to update the House on a matter concerning the transparency and accountability of the public service. The GNWT is committed to transparency and to providing the public with information about how public money is being spent to maintain the public service. Currently, salary grids for unionized, excluded, senior management and deputy head employees are available on the Department of Human Resources' website. These salary grids provide the salary ranges for all of our positions.

In an effort to increase transparency, in mid-November, the Department of Human Resources will begin to make organizational charts, job descriptions, and salary ranges publicly accessible on the department website. Exact salaries will not be disclosed; rather, the salary range of positions will be released. This is an important step towards greater transparency for public service salaries, while still ensuring that there is no invasion of personal privacy under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is an engaged and highly motivated public service that provides quality programs and services for residents of the NWT. The dedication and commitment of public servants to their communities is an important part of what makes the GNWT a great place to work and an employer of choice.

I believe I am not alone in the belief that NWT public servants play a very important role in what makes the NWT a great place to live. I want to take this opportunity to make certain that all public servants know that we do not take their contributions for granted. As the Minister of Human Resources, I take great pride in this government's commitment to its public servants. I am proud that

this government has consistently been recognized as one of the top employers in Canada for diversity. I am proud of the fact that GNWT employees are, on average, among the highest paid public servants in Canada. I am proud of the benefits, like health care and 24-hour access to our Employee and Family Assistance Program, that contribute to our employees' well-being. I am proud of the generous leave package, the northern living allowance, and the five paid days off at Christmas time that allow our employees to live balanced lives.

Mr. Speaker, as the work of the 18th Legislative Assembly continues, the public service continues to work hard to support the priorities of this House. I am confident that, with such a dedicated public service, we will make great progress in the months and years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Transportation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 99-18(2):
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation is committed to working with public and private sector partners to continue to improve transportation infrastructure across the Northwest Territories under the mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly. Our government strongly believes in working collaboratively with various levels of government, from Aboriginal and municipal authorities to the federal government, as well as our private sector partners.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to strengthen our partnership with Canada by ensuring that the priorities and challenges of our territory are being recognized. Infrastructure improvements result in economic and social benefits for Northerners and all Canadians, and the Department of Transportation is committed to identifying new opportunities to increase investment in the NWT transportation system, in collaboration with our federal counterparts.

Mr. Speaker, our collaboration with the federal government has allowed us to make several improvements this year to nearly every one of our highways and to several of our airports across the territory. These investments wouldn't have been possible without the New Building Canada Plan, which has given us the opportunity to invest in core transportation infrastructure to support economic growth, job creation, increased productivity, and an enhanced quality of life in communities across the NWT. The Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway is another example of successful cooperation with our federal partners. Without Canada's \$200 million contribution, the project simply would not be happening.

With the project entering its final year of construction, an Opening Ceremony Stakeholder Working Group has been established as we work toward the opening of the highway, set for November 2017. The working group is made up of representatives from Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, the Inuvialuit Community Economic Development Organization, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and a number of Government of the Northwest Territories departments.

Working with various Aboriginal governments in the territory is also a major priority for our government, and indeed, for the Department of Transportation. The Tlicho Government has consistently been a valued partner in advancing one of the strategic projects for our territory: the Tlicho all-season road. We also appreciate the relentless support provided by the Sahtu Secretariat's Mackenzie Valley Working Group, helping us advocate and move forward the construction of the Wrigley to Norman Wells portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to talk about the work that we are doing with a number of partners to improve road access into the Slave Geological Province. A detailed analysis of optimal routing options was carried out by the Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Transportation using a mapping tool developed by Aurora Geosciences Limited.

As a result of this partnership, a route that will provide the greatest economic benefit has been chosen for the project. The Government of the Northwest Territories is now assessing the P3 potential of building an all-weather road along this route through the Slave Geological Province.

The Department of Transportation is teaming up with the Departments of Finance and Industry, Tourism and Investment to develop a P3 business case assessment for the route, and we look forward to working closely with representatives of the diamond mines to advance this project.

Mr. Speaker, our government is not only committed to building a safe, secure and efficient transportation system. We are also committed to working with our partners to study the effects of climate change on transportation infrastructure and permafrost.

This summer, we launched the second phase of the Northwest Territories Transportation Monitoring Program and extended research activities along the established research sites. For this, the Government of Canada is providing \$560,700 over the next two years from the Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative, while our government is providing the remaining amount. All told, this will amount to over \$740,000 in research funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to provide an update today on our government's efforts to work with the private sector and the federal government to restore safe marine operating conditions in Hay River. We continue to work with the Harbour Restoration Working Group, which is led by the Hay River Harbour Authority, with participation from a number of organizations, including the NWT Fishermen's Federation, Small Craft Harbours, the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

I am pleased to announce that progress has been made on this issue. In May, the Canadian Air Force used a CP-140 surveillance aircraft to record aerial photographs over the Hay River Harbour. In June, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans conducted a technical review of the harbour infrastructure. All of this information is being used to define what exactly we need to do to address the immediate safety concerns of the Harbour Authority. We will continue to work with our partners to secure federal funding for rehabilitation of this important harbour.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation is committed to strengthening connections with its partners to improve the NWT's transportation system to improve safety for the travelling public, lower the cost of living, adapt to the effects of climate change, and support economic opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Deputy Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 100-18(2):
PREMIER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Bob McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend the state memorial service for the late Jim Prentice in Calgary, Alberta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ENERGY EFFICIENCY INITIATIVES IN JEAN
MARIE RIVER

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about what the community of Jean Marie First Nations has done recently. This small community has really taken the initiative to become more energy efficient. The community has constructed a solar panel installation at the water treatment plant. This solar panel installation will generate approximately six kilowatt hours, which

will offset 15 per cent of the plant's power consumption.

Mr. Speaker, the community was very excited about installing new solar panels to provide power to the water treatment plant. During the installation, the community was informed that there was both money and the capacity to install 44 panels instead of the 24 that they presently had installed.

The community was informed that the Power Corporation would only authorize a maximum generation output of at least 20 per cent per community from solar so as to ensure their use of the plant operation. Upon hearing this, the community and I did not see this as a fair and reasonable idea. This would seem to be contradictory to the intent and purpose of having solar power available. To the community and myself, solar power is a perfect avenue to reduce the cost of diesel fuel.

Mr. Speaker, even with this fact the community completed the project. As well, the community work with Arctic Energy Alliance to come up with a more efficient way of lighting their buildings. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that the community was able to retrofit seven buildings with LED lights. This will help the community save money for the residents and the band.

Mr. Speaker, with these two initiatives in place, the community and Arctic Energy Alliance held a parade with an ice cream party to celebrate the retrofit and solar panels installed. This small community is taking the initiative to become more energy efficient with the help of Arctic Energy Alliance. Later on, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ROLE AND VISION FOR NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for many years the Northwest Territories has needed an overall guiding plan for generating and distributing electrical power. At a public meeting on October 26th, the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, who is also the Minister responsible for Transparency and Public Engagement, missed an opportunity. He had a chance to share with MLAs, and the people of the NWT, the government's broad vision for NTPC.

An overarching vision is what is needed, Mr. Speaker. But what we heard was a technical

presentation justifying NTPC's claim that it is not overcharging customers. Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand why we pay what we pay for power, but we also need to understand the bigger picture.

A vision for our power system should guide government as we consider the major challenges that face us. The vision must tell us: is NTPC's role to partner with other governments or the private sector? Is it to compete against the private sector? Or is NTPC going to be a monopoly, the only game in town?

Mr. Speaker, I know that the new NWT Energy Plan is going to answer some of these questions, but clearly the government has already adopted certain assumptions. Otherwise, decisions like bidding on the Hay River power franchise or engaging in talks with SaskPower would not have already been made.

Mr. Speaker, the plan needs to be open and transparent, and it hasn't been. We don't know the underlying assumptions being made by the Power Corporation. The public is looking to us for leadership. No family, community or business should pay more than is necessary.

No one should feel like they're paying more than their fair share. We have a responsibility to set a direction that is in the best interest of everyone, and not let rate payers be used as pawns in games that serve some unknown agenda.

Mr. Speaker, as a Crown corporation owned by Northerners, NTPC must clearly state its mission and vision: what it is, where it is going and how it will get there. Later, I will have questions for the Minister Responsible for the Power Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCENTIVES FOR CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION (COR) CERTIFICATION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Mr. Speaker, I'll share a few observations today on the costs to small businesses of ensuring safe workplaces. First a bit of good news. Members may be aware of COR, or the Certificate of Recognition of safety through the NWT Construction Association. It's the occupational health and safety accreditation program that verifies a fully implemented safety and health program meeting national standards, and it's also independently audited. Even though it's voluntary, many NWT businesses have embraced COR certification and risen to meeting those standards.

Following up on a constituent inquiry, I contacted the Minister of Public Works and Services to see whether, when procuring services, points might be awarded in the tender evaluations to firms who have COR certification in place. This would be a kind of financial carrot to recognize the extra costs in meeting the heightened safety standards of COR, and in the best interest of promoting safe workplaces. The Minister replied to say the department is indeed looking at the possibility of building safety certification requirements into tendering processes. So that's good news and supportive of the safety initiative of contractors.

While this is good news from the Minister of Public Works and Services, the Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission seems to be working at cross-purposes when it comes to small businesses. Currently, there is a program called Safe Advantage which will refund a portion of premiums to businesses on the basis of good safety records. However, this refund program is only open to employers whose last three years of premium assessments was \$40,000, and where continuing premiums remain above \$32,000. In replying to my question on this, the Minister responsible for WSCC pointed out that a recent review of Safe Advantage did not make a recommendation to roll out the refunds to all employers.

Some program supports were created to assist businesses with fewer than 20 employees that are not required to develop a formal Occupational Health and Safety Program. Those are good measures, but still, no refund of premiums or real financial incentives for safety in the workplace. COR certification provides an off-the-shelf, internationally recognized set of standards and competencies smaller firms can use to set up high-quality safety programs. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In the end, that's the sort of incentive that we need, COR certification and some sort of off-setting of fees through the WSCC. But safety does have a cost, and a premium refund to businesses who set up COR, no matter what the size, would be a good inducement. I urge all the Ministers to develop a coordinated approach to promote safety in the workplaces for small business. I'll have questions later today for the Minister responsible for WSCC. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SAHTU WINTER ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND
MAINTENANCE

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, as we look outside, the snow is here and the winter road is coming for the Sahtu region. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today is on the upcoming annual winter road construction and maintenance season, which totals a coverage area of 670 kilometres.

The residents of the Sahtu region look forward to this project for a variety of reasons. I guess the highest on the list would be taken out of isolation and access to the outside world, and also the construction and maintenance opportunities and employment that it brings. Also just the opportunity and freedom of going out visiting family and friends in other communities and within the Sahtu communities as well, as well as the ability to go out and get cheaper energy, meaning firewood.

In preparation for these opportunities it presents and knowing the physical position of our government, later I will have questions to the Minister of Transportation on staffing and operations. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION CARE PROGRAM

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation runs a program called CARE, Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancements. When residents use the CARE program they can access up to a hundred thousand in a forgivable loan to help them make major repairs and renovations to their homes. Access of these funds helps Northerners make sure that their homes can be safe and healthy residences and that their homes can be maintained for the full lifespan of the building. The Housing Corporation also offers additional assistance to help people with disabilities improve accessibility in their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I want the Housing Corporation to know that this program is very helpful in our communities, but that doesn't mean that there's no room for improvement. Complex and inflexible rules are seeing elders' debts to the Housing Corporation passed on to their families when elders pass away. I've seen this growing issue impact residents in my riding, Mr. Speaker. An elder may use their will to leave their home to a family member, but if that elder has an outstanding loan with the Housing Corporation that family member is expected to pay

the loan in full. This can be difficult to accomplish, especially when loans range from whether it's \$3,000 to \$80,000. That's not small change, Mr. Speaker, that's a lot of money; big money that was once part of a forgivable loan.

Later I'll have questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation on the work being done to revise and improve the CARE program and its policies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENT ON
IMPORTANCE OF LAND-BASED PROGRAMS

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the 2016-17 trapping season begins I would like to remind hunters and trappers to have a safe and successful season.

Mr. Speaker the Take a Kid Trapping Program has introduced hundreds of school age youth across the Northwest Territories to the traditional harvesting practices of hunting, trapping, fishing and outdoor survival. Delivered through schools and Aboriginal organizations in co-operation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the program is funded by the Departments of ENR, Municipal and Community Affairs, and Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, Take a Kid Trapping was launched in 2004 and the number of participants tripled within the first four years. Projects such as birch bark canoe building, setting traps for Arctic animals and a caribou hunt helped establish the program as a permanent investment in our youth.

The program continues to offer hundreds of students every year a classroom on the land as instructors incorporate visits to trap lines and hands-on experience setting traps, snares and fishnets. Outdoor safety is introduced through first aid and survival training. By taking students trapping, they get to practice the skills and apply the knowledge they learn in class about wildlife and conservation, and build their awareness of traditional cultural practices.

Mr. Speaker, culture-based education enhances a sense of belonging and pride in culture. For some students, it's their first time on the land. For others, it's an opportunity to connect with their roots and practice valuable skills outside of their usual family setting. Meaningful learning experiences connect youth to their families, the past, the present, and also the future as these activities provide an ideal foundation for other opportunities, such as the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Marketing Program.

In recent years, the program has branched out to initiatives such as Take a Kid Harvesting and Take a Kid Gardening that helps promote food security and community sustainability. Mr. Speaker, being on the land helps us to take responsibility for our own actions and appreciate the natural world, as global changes will continue to have a greater and greater impact on our everyday lives.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Curriculum states, "The wisdom of the Elders is central to cultural learning according to Aboriginal perspective. Elders are the 'Keepers of Knowledge,' and it is their guidance that Aboriginal people seek as they strive for balance in their relationships with the creator, the natural world, other people and themselves."

Mr. Speaker, this wisdom applies to all people, young and old. I believe the best way to teach that wisdom is by going on the land. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENT ON
DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE CELEBRATION
2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was 100 years ago this year that women got the right to vote. Women in Alberta were the first to be enfranchised and voters there elected the first female MLA, Louise McKinney, in 1917. Suffrage spread slowly across Canada, with women in Quebec getting the vote in 1940 and Aboriginal women along with men as well in 1960. Women slowly entered political life and in small numbers, and today we are still well short of parity.

A quarter of members of Parliament are women, and here in the NWT, as you know, there are just the two of us. This Assembly has committed in its mandate to increasing the number of women running for elected office.

Mr. Speaker, I bring this information to your attention because I recently attended an event which shared this same goal. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in Canada met in Regina at the beginning of the month. We spent a day with a group of young women who are considering running for, or helping someone else run for, public office at some point in their lives. They are part of a national initiative called Daughters of the Vote.

Mr. Speaker, a young woman between the ages of 18 and 23 will be selected from each of the 338 federal ridings to attend an event in Ottawa the week of March 6th next year. The programming for these emerging leaders will introduce them to how Parliament works and it will give them an

opportunity to engage with elected officials. The goal is to provide knowledge and inspiration to women who are considering a career in public life.

Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to tell you that the event sponsor, Equal Voice Canada, received a total of 19 applications from the NWT, representing eight different communities. Unfortunately, only one of them will be chosen to go to Ottawa because, of course, we have just the one federal riding. This is a challenge faced in other jurisdictions as well, where there were several times as many applications as there are positions available.

Mr. Speaker, one of my takeaways from this outreach event is that if we want more women elected to represent us in all orders of government, and of course we do, we need to make engaging young women a priority. They see a world of possibilities as they work on their post-secondary education and plan their careers.

If we inspire young women we may indeed have more women sitting in this Legislature one day in numbers approaching half the population. That is our challenge and we need to dedicate time, effort and resources to making this goal a reality. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENT ON
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
CHALLENGES RELATED TO FETAL ALCOHOL
SPECTRUM DISORDER

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] Today I would like to talk about... [Translation ends] My Member's statement is on early childhood development. Mr. Speaker, promoting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy is an important component of early childhood development. This means dealing with the challenges related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, or FASD, is a term used for a range of incurable cognitive and physical disabilities that a baby is born with as a result of a woman consuming alcohol during pregnancy. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is the leading known cause of developmental disabilities in Canada.

At least one in every 100 Canadians, or more than 380,000 people, currently live with this devastating 100 per cent preventable disability. The federal government and the provincial and territorial governments collective spend an estimated \$4 billion per year on programs to support those affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Mr. Speaker, I once attended a conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and at that conference the presenters were talking about the importance of investment in prevention, and working with mothers at risk. Researchers tell us that for every \$150,000 spent on the prevention of FASD we would save \$1.5 million in costs to manage the impacts of FASD. If we prevent just one case of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder we will save \$800,000 to \$1.4 million. More than that, we will prevent the damaging effects of someone living with FASD.

Mr. Speaker, although there is no cure for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, early interventions can help a lot of kids. I have spoken to educators who agree that if a kindergarten student comes to school with all of the opportunities that should be afforded to them -- Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Should be afforded to them through early childhood development. They will have a much better chance of graduating and becoming contributing members of our society. Mr. Speaker, it is clear, we should be viewing early childhood development as an investment in our children and their future. If we view this as an investment, it would be easily the highest yielding investment we could make.

Mr. Speaker, early childhood development is the responsibility of two departments, Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
2016 ABORIGINAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AWARD RECIPIENT GARTH WALLBRIDGE**

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know last week was Small Business Week, however when you represent Kam Lake there's always a good reason to talk about business. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to acknowledge the achievements of one of my constituents who recently won the Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Award at the Yellowknife Chamber's 70th Annual Business Award Gala, Garth Wallbridge and his firm Wallbridge Law Office. Mr. Wallbridge is a Metis public speaker, lawyer, and a leading northern entrepreneur.

Having over 30 years of experience in the North and operating the only 100 per cent owned Indigenous law firm in the NWT, Mr. Wallbridge's

influence has had a profoundly positive impact both locally and nationally. He was the founding director of the McGill Aboriginal Law Student's Association and the Metis Nation's Lawyer Association. He's also been invited to speak nationally on a variety of issues, but none more important to him personally than offering a better understanding of Indigenous people in Canada.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Wallbridge and wish him well in his continued success that he's had so far over the course of his prestigious career and for the future years to come. He's an inspiration to everyone here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HAY RIVER CHASE THE ACE FUNDRAISER**

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be very brief so we can all make it out of here early and get down to Chase the Ace. Chase the Ace needs no introduction, everyone in the territory is talking about it, the territory's a buzz. Tonight's total potential payout should be just shy of half a million dollars. If your ticket's drawn, you have a one in 11 chance of pulling the ace and taking it all home.

Hay River, it's a short five-hour drive from Yellowknife, so I encourage everyone in the capital to take the afternoon off. Perhaps the Ministers can let their departments go at 1:00. You've got to get in line for tickets by about 6:00 p.m. at Riverview Cineplex, Ptarmigan Inn, The Back Eddy, The Legion, Diamond Jenness Secondary School, or the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre. Mr. Speaker this fundraiser is put on by the Hay River Curling Club, but because it's grown to be such a huge event, it benefits multiple organizations, and really the entire community. It's a lot of fun, but it's also a lot of work to put on, and I want to give a shout out to all the volunteers that make it happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. See you in Hay River.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Good luck to all those who participate. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great honour and pleasure to welcome my father, Mr. Winston John Moses, joining us here today. Both he and my mom, Martha, are avid watchers, they rarely miss a -- I want to say an episode -- but a day in the House in sitting when they're watching on TV. I'm glad that he could be

here joining us today and taking in the proceedings. So welcome, dad. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to use this opportunity to recognize and thank two pages from Inuvik Twin Lakes. We've got Kyra McDonald with us today and Jazelle Pokiak, and I want to thank them and all the other hardworking pages. I also want to recognize Mr. Winston Moses as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also too would like to recognize Mr. Winston Moses who went to residential school with my father, and I'm proud to be working here alongside his son now. So welcome, Winston. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to our proceedings, it's always great to have an audience. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 414-18(2): NTPC VISION AND STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, it's well known that the Power Corporation was asked and chose to bid on the Hay River Franchise Agreement. My question is how has the Power Corporation made the determination knowing that they could potentially change the relationship landscape, the business landscape as it relates to power in the Northwest Territories?

Can the Minister explain the rationale behind NTPC, a Crown corporation, going into direct competition with the private sector? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, as is well-known, the franchise in Hay River came to an end and the Town of Hay River, on its own, decided that it should seek bidders for the franchise. One of the bidders was of course the Power Corporation itself. I think there were actually two other bidders. The

town accepted our bid, and our sole goal of this was to provide power at a lower rate to the citizens of Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: This leads to my second question then. I would like some clarification. What is the Power Corporation's vision for its relationship then with private industry and Aboriginal development corporations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, our vision, the vision of the Power Corporation, is to be provider of choice to our customers, a valuable partner to industry and Aboriginal groups within the Northwest Territories. So that is the vision of the Power Corporation.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I'm getting flat answers, quite frankly, but I'm going to take this in another direction, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the briefing on Wednesday, the Power Corporation president alluded to work that's being done on energy options for communities. Could the Minister provide some detail on this planning and the rationale for coming up with these options? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Power Corporation is involved in the development of an energy plan which has been spoken of several times in this House, so we are committed in the Power Corporation to, as I say, look at new ways of providing power, keeping in mind our vision of supplying power to communities at the cheapest, affordable and safest rate. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: The president said that there was going to be specific options that communities were going to be able to consider. Can the Minister speak more to the options that the communities are going to be able to consider, and can the Minister describe a strategy for public consultation and involvement as these options are being developed?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, this is all tied, of course, to the strategy to which groups will be invited to participate including NUL. So we're hoping to get a broad discussion about where the Power Corporation is going. Certainly, we are looking at more inventive ways and cheaper ways and more energy-efficient ways of delivering power to the Northwest Territories. That remains our goal.

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

QUESTION 415-18(2):
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR JUNIOR
KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The element of surprise is well and true today. Mr. Speaker, recently the Yellowknife Catholic School Board has gone to the press and expressed their frustrations with additional pressures being placed on the district schools by the implementation of the Junior Kindergarten Program, and in the words of the school board, "we want to make sure that we're providing the best and the best school for our kids." Right now they're looking to appropriate some portables from the YK1 School District. Has the Minister had a conversation about these resource needs and how does he plan to address it? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we did see the concerns in the press earlier this week. I can inform the Member that we do have two schools that fall under the Yellowknife Catholic School Boards that offer programs from kindergarten to Grade eight. The school in particular that he's mentioning does have a utilization rate of 79 per cent and at 85 per cent then we start looking at extensions as well as renovations. Now, the other school that they have has a capacity rate of 58 per cent.

We will have conversations with the superintendent how to address those concerns from the Yellowknife Catholic School Board, but there's two schools that are in Yellowknife that are currently offering K to 8 programming and both of them are not at the utilization rates at the moment, so portables at this time I can't see being an option as it results to JK, but we will speak with the superintendent of Yellowknife Catholic School Board should one of the schools get to a utilization of 85 per cent or near there, and then we can start coming up with some unique and innovative solutions so that students that are under the Yellowknife Catholic School Board system can assure that they have a safe and healthy environment to get the education they deserve. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: I just wanted to ask the Minister some questions about those numbers on capacity. This is of course the Ecole St. Joseph School which is in my riding of Kam Lake, and the school board is reporting 522 students for 90 per cent capacity for the 2016-2017 enrolment year. The Minister's quoted some other numbers. Can he explain the difference between the school board's numbers and the Minister's numbers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The numbers that I have stated that the school in question is at 79 per cent, so we'll have to follow up with the superintendent and have our staff speak with the superintendent to make sure which numbers are correct. The numbers before me are 79, and if we are at 90 per cent and we are over utilization capacity, then we'll have to speak with the school board.

As I said, we have two schools here in Yellowknife under the Catholic School Board System where one -- if it is stated in a newspaper at over capacity, then we're going to have to come up with the unique ways as the other school that I noted is only at 58 per cent, so there's a good chance of utilizing the other school to offset those numbers.

MR. TESTART: I appreciate the Minister will do some research into this. I think the bigger issue here is with the roll out of junior kindergarten, it seems that many of the school boards, both in YK1 or YCS, are feeling additional pressures, and I would like to ask the Minister if the department will be providing additional resources above and beyond what they currently receive to accommodate these new students and these new resource pressures on our schools.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: That's exactly what we're doing with this survey. As I mentioned in this House during this session. We also got a motion that as passed earlier in the week supporting the roll outs of a junior kindergarten and making sure that those surveys that addressed the concerns that are brought forward will be meeting the needs of the school, and we're having our engagements with the schools and the communities to ensure that they have the resources needed to implement junior kindergarten.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, I wasn't sitting in this House on the last Assembly, but I did pay attention. I feel like some *deja vu*. The last time this was attempted, surveys were sent out, consultations were done, and a plan was still adopted that left many schools outside of the ability to provide exactly what the school board is looking for, which again, Mr. Speaker, is providing best resources and the best schools for our kids which is exactly what we and the department agrees with and what the resolution puts forward, but to get to there we need a clear and costed plan and resources committed to this.

Will the Minister commit to providing that costed plan to this side of the House and to school boards that takes into account this gap in resources that the schools are asking for? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The gap in resources, I'd like to hear if it is anything specific. We've been out engaging, we've been hearing the responses that needed to be met. We've addressed those needs and the concerns, but for the gaps I'd like the Member to let me know where they are rather than some of the projected numbers where I actually have some of the actual numbers in front of me. We're still putting that plan together as the motion said earlier this week. So in two days, I don't think I could get a plan together from what the motion said, but we will have that in time for implementation in 2017-2018.

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

QUESTION 416-18(2):
POWER GENERATION OPTIONS FOR SMALL
COMMUNITIES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I spoke about the Jean Marie and their willingness to become more energy efficient. I applaud them for doing this great initiative. Mr. Speaker, I was a little surprised to find out that communities can only generate 20 per cent of their own energy power from solar panels and stuff like that. This is a good step towards our mandate, but we need to do more especially for the smaller communities.

We need to help them become more energy efficient and the cost of living can go down. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation please provide this House, does the corporation have a policy that states it's only 20 per cent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can advise that there is in fact a 20 per cent cap. This was developed as part of the NWT's solar strategy and it was imposed for technical reasons to ensure the electricity remains reliable. More than 20 per cent solar makes the system unstable. Now, in Colville Lake it is about 20 per cent, but that was only after some very expensive batteries and sophisticated load control were installed at the power plant. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, during the presentation this week we heard from the Power Corporation and Colville Lake was promoted as, you know, a good model out there and we're leading the world at it.

So, Mr. Speaker, is the corporation willing to work with the smaller communities to increase this so

that -- or come up with the strategies that they can increase this strategy?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, certainly, Mr. Speaker, as the Energy Strategy rolls out we'll certainly be looking at options. As I said, the 20 per cent figure is just to ensure reliability in the system. As mentioned, you can go above that but it becomes incredibly expensive and involves very substantial subsidies. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: Again, I talked about the public meeting we had in Colville Lake being presented there as the ideal model out there. Is the Minister able to work with the corporation or direct the corporation to come up with a better storage operation that can be used in these smaller communities?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly as the Energy Strategy unfolds we are going to be looking at new technologies. We are, in the corporation, always interested in looking at newer technologies that are more energy efficient and so on, but for now this 20 per cent cap was imposed for reasons of efficiency and safety.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer. When he talks about this 20 per cent for solar energy, is that just the cap for solar energy or is it for geothermal, wind, hydro or whatever the community is able to generate electricity? So could the Minister please explain that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question and --

---Laughter

-- logic would tell me that we would have to have a cap on 20 per cent on non-traditional sources of power, because the whole point of limiting it to 20 per cent was to allow there to be efficiency within the diesel system. So I imagine that 20 per cent cap would apply to all non-diesel sources of power.

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

QUESTION 417-18(2):
TAKE A KID TRAPPING PROGRAM

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: through the Take a Kid Trapping program we have seen project as diverse as canoe building and caribou hunts. My question is

how broadly is the Take a Kid program applied? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: This is a great program and I do know from experience that schools all across the NWT take advantage of this program. It was designed to introduce NWT youth to traditional lifestyle practices for hunting and trapping, fishing, outdoor survival and canoe-making as the Member has alluded to. It's also very good for their instructors or their teachers as well, because that introduces them to some of the traditional lifestyle that we practice up here, so it's a valuable program and it has tremendous uptake across the Northwest Territories.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response, and I see it working very well in my region. Mr. Speaker, my second question to the Minister is how are participants required to demonstrate the funding that is used for its intended purpose and report on the results of programming?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Each Take a Kid Trapping project, they're required to submit a report with financial statement included. All of the individual project reports are then rolled into the annual Take a Kid Trapping Report.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, my third question is: how does the government ensure that this program continues to be delivered in schools throughout the Northwest Territories?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, through our partnership between ENR, MACA, Health and Social Services and through the work of our HR field staff, we work with schools and harvesters throughout the region. I think one of the things we do is to ensure that this program continues to run and that they continue to receive the funding that they do from the different departments in this government. So it is a valuable program and I think it's one that has been funded very well and well taken advantage of by schools across the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thanks for the response; it was exactly what I was looking for. It's good to see cooperation and coordination at work in our programs, especially with elders and youth.

Mr. Speaker, I just have more of a comment, but more of a question, my last question to the Minister: can the Minister share some examples of projects undertaken in the most recent fiscal year. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in the last year we've had over 40 schools across the Northwest Territories take advantage of this program. We've had about 1,500 northern youth who were educated in some type of aspect of trapping and traditional way of life. One of the examples would be the JBK Elementary School in Fort Smith. They've been participating in this program since it started in 2002 and they had a winter camp in Thebacha and exposed students from K to 6 and staff over the course of eight days to trapping and other harvesting techniques.

Also, Colville Lake is another good example. They have a fully integrated approach to their program and they have Living on the Land as part of the everyday school life with the program running as a main feature of education over the past 12 years, so there's a couple of examples. Again, the Take a Kid Trapping Report that is usually tabled would have more specific examples across the Northwest Territories, but I think that's a good example of how it's utilized across the NWT.

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

QUESTION 418-18(2):
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER
PREVENTION AND SUPPORTS

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about early childhood development and the impacts of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he could update the House on what activities or what work has been going on at the national level in this area of FASD? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the national level Ministers responsible for Health and Social Services or Persons with Disabilities, get together on an annual basis. There's actually a side group been established to work on issues related to FASD. We fund the national FASD Research Group that goes out and pulls together data and helps develop promotional materials to encourage people to abstain from drinking while pregnant. As the Member said earlier, FASD is 100 per cent preventable but not curable. So they're doing a significant amount of work.

Next year, the Northwest Territories will be taking the lead on that FPT group; it will be the lead responsible for the FASD network over the following year.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, that's very good news that the NWT will be taking the lead in this. Can the Minister advise the House what is available right now in the area of programming and so on for FASD?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, across the Government of the Northwest Territories there's a wide range of programs and services available for children living with disabilities. Specifically related to FASD, the Stanton Territorial Hospital Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Family and Community Support Program has been established and it basically conducts diagnostic clinics to screen and diagnose FASD in children between the ages of seven and 17.

This team consists of doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists and other speech language therapists who can work with these children and help identify their limitations and help develop individual plans for care. At the same time, Education, Culture and Employment through their inclusive schooling has support workers in schools who can work with individuals who have been diagnosed or not diagnosed as the case may be, to develop individual care plans to help them through the school system. So there is a wide variety of things that are happening out there.

MR. BEAULIEU: Can the Minister advise the House how much money has been spent on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder programs in the GNWT?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't have at my fingertips the cost of the Stanton Territorial Hospital program that I previously mentioned, and I'll certainly get that information for the Member and committee, but we do provide money to different organizations across the Northwest Territories, not specifically for FASD but for children who are struggling with a range of disabilities which can and often does include FASD. So what I'll do is I'll pull together some of that information and I'll share it with the Member and with Committee of the Whole.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. It would be nice to know the trend of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Can the Minister tell the House if they know the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the NWT? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd love to say yes, but I can't, obviously. There are a lot of adults out there who were never diagnosed and we don't have the clinical diagnosis for them, so there probably are individuals who are FASD who have never been accurately diagnosed.

I could get some information for the Member on the number that have been diagnosed through the Stanton program so that we have some current numbers, but there isn't a real solid set of information out there on the exact numbers that would exist in the Northwest Territories. But I will provide what I can to the Members across the hall.

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

QUESTION 419-18(2):
SAHTU WINTER ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND
MAINTENANCE

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each year the winter road project is supervised by outside supervisors brought in at a cost. The cost includes such things as the vehicle, gas, room and board, and a significant amount of overtime.

My question to the Minister of DOT is, utilizing the GNWT and SSI MOU, will the Minister consider hiring local residents for this year's season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to check into this MOU right off the bat, but DOT presently hires two casuals for highway maintenance supervision out of the Sahtu Region for the winter road system.

MR. MCNEELY: Yes, I heard the number 17. Today it's two, so that totals 19 positions that we may see. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but will the Minister consider using the principles of the MOU, I know you have to reflect on the principles of the MOU here between both governments, and entertain the idea of a negotiable site supervisor's contract with a proponent from Sahtu?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Upon review of the status of having a Sahtu regional office, it's the department's view that, until we have an all-season road, which I am the biggest advocate for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, that it would not be in the best use of our dollars to put a regional office for transportation in the Sahtu region at this time.

MR. MCNEELY: I'm asking the question if the Minister would entertain the idea of cost savings on a negotiable arrangement to hire local and supply local for the vehicle and eliminate the provision cost and the hotel cost for outside supervisors. Would the Minister accept that?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I've already stated, we already hired two casual maintenance supervisors from the region to monitor the winter road activities. What I could convey to the Member is I would have to look into whose vehicles we're

using. We're already employing two people to do that, and I will get back to the Member on where we're getting the vehicles from.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is that I drive this winter road. I have no other choice but to drive it here, because I want to import cheap groceries. So I see the polar bear decals on the government's trucks, so I can guarantee the Minister that there is government-supplied personnel totalling two positions and two vehicles and room and board to service those individuals.

My question is, with the two positions that are supplied locally and the other two positions supplied outside, would the Minister entertain including a negotiable arrangement to supply those two individuals and their supports locally? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Member stated that I guess we're using government vehicles to do the maintenance supervision of the winter road. I can look into it, but I can guarantee, if we already have the units available, why would we go out to contract to rent vehicles for the complete four months of the winter road and add significant costs back onto the taxpayers of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 420-18(2):
REPAYMENT OF INHERITED CARE PROGRAM
DEBT

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, in follow-up to my Member's statement I have a few questions for the Minister of Housing. I'd like to ask the Minister, what is the current Housing Corporation's policy for NWT residents who inherit a family member's outstanding loan under the CARE program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently the policy for family members who inherit a debt from a deceased parent and get ownership of the house is that, if they decide to sell the unit, they either have to pay back the loan that was taken by the parent or else. If they wish to stay in the unit, they can take on the forgivable loan and they would just take it on. It is a forgivable loan, so if you stay in the unit over five years it starts to

come off without financial contributions. So that is the current policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: I understand that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is currently examining its policies on this matter. When can residents expect to see these changes implemented?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated many times, we are currently doing the engagement survey that will be coming out -- it should be in the MLAs' hands for the last review of the format and the questions. It will be going out to every user of Housing's services and every employee and local housing organization for their feedback.

We are giving two months for the feedback to be brought in, so starting in January we will be doing a thorough review of every single policy and every single program that we offer.

MR. BLAKE: I would also like to ask the Minister: how will an amended policy affect current clients and family members of the clients?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The policy that we are speaking about right now is actually not an easy policy; it's very difficult. The reason that we did put on a time line of the forgivable loans starting to come off after five years and up to a ten-year period is because we found that, when we were doing the loans to people — some people, not all, in fairness — some of the people that we were providing the loans to were actually turning around and selling the units soon after they'd gotten the loans.

So they had fixed up their house, gotten up to \$100,000 on taxpayers' money, and then turned around and sold the unit. So that wasn't fair, and that still is not a fair way. So we do have to be really careful with that policy, that we make sure that we are not penalizing people who do inherit houses and yet we don't put it back to the place where people actually can sell the units and there is no payback to the Housing Corporation.

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

QUESTION 421-18(2):
SAFE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM PREMIUM
REDUCTIONS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I spoke about the WSCC Safe Advantage program and the practice of refunding a portion of premiums employers whose last three years of premium assessments were \$40,000 and whose continuing premiums remain above \$32,000.

Can the Minister responsible for WSCC explain why this refund feature is not available to all premium

payers and only to those paying above a fairly substantial threshold amount? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the WSCC is focused on ensuring safe workplaces and ensuring that the employees have safe environments to work so that no injuries occur. The Safe Advantage program details, as the Member has indicated, with businesses over \$40,000 in assessment. It was found, Mr. Speaker, that large businesses, due to their accident records and claim costs drive the rates for all businesses in the Northwest Territories.

If the WSCC can get large businesses to lower their accident rates, then it will lower assessment rates for everybody, including small businesses. So their focus is on the larger businesses who actually have the claims actually occurring and are driving costs. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I appreciate the response from the Minister, but what seems to be driving the bus here is reducing premiums rather than safety. So I'll again ask the Minister whether a firm is large or small, these safety programs have a cost. When small firms have to take on these programs, that's probably proportionately a greater cost. So does the Minister not agree that small employers face proportionately equal or even greater costs for safety programs and will he consider eliminating the premium threshold for refund eligibility under the Safe Advantage program?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the Member's statement that they're more interested in claims costs or premiums is completely off base. The corporation, the WSCC, is focused on safety. As I indicated, the vast majority of claims costs are coming from large businesses. The WSCC absolutely, without question, recognizes the value of small businesses and is working hard to help small businesses reduce their overall costs. Recently they put in a program and hired an employee who can sit down with small businesses, at no cost, to help them develop their safety plans, their safety programs.

This is a way to actually help them reduce their costs right from the start. The WSCC is also putting in a training position that can help the organizations, small businesses, with mandatory training, to help them deliver it at little to no cost to the businesses, also helping the businesses remain sustainable. Mr. Speaker, the corporation is committed to small businesses, it's committed to safety, and is committed to residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. O'REILLY: I guess we have a difference of opinion here, but earlier I mentioned that COR certification can probably meet many of the same sorts of needs that the Minister spoke about, having these staff and working with small businesses and so on. But COR actually is subject to independent audit as well, so again the issue is one of cost for small businesses. Those that have already adopted COR, can't we find a way to help them in terms of their WSCC premium? So if the Minister won't consider refunds, can he suggest financial incentives or awards for businesses that do introduce a COR?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we clearly have a difference of opinion. The COR program is a construction-based safety program. It's a good program, there's no question. I support COR and there's a lot of organizations that are using COR to significant advantage; it helps them develop the plans they need, but it's very expensive to obtain and very expensive to maintain. It costs about \$15,000 for a small business to get registered with COR and about \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year to maintain.

So the Member's suggestion that we require COR would actually drive up the costs of small businesses. We have put in, in the WSCC, a position to help individuals, small businesses, develop their safety plans. If you go to the websites, there's tons of different programs out there offering safety programming and assistance in developing safety plans that are very affordable, in many cases free, that can be done to help those small businesses meet their obligations under the WSCC legislation.

That is the direction that the WSCC has taken, they're providing support to small businesses so that they can do these safety plans for minimal to no cost, while at the same time recognizing the value of COR for those larger organizations who have the capacity and the numbers to warrant COR.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister's misrepresenting what I was saying. I'm not talking about making COR certification a requirement for WSCC programs and so on. What I'm saying is that those small businesses that have actually entered into it voluntarily don't seem to get any recognition through WSCC in terms of having voluntarily adopted this and the extra costs that it brings on.

So once again, can the Minister commit to look at the Safe Advantage program and find ways to allow for those small businesses that have voluntarily

entered into COR, that they receive some sort of financial advantage, not just the big guys, we're talking about the little guys. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, by design the Safe Advantage program has a review that is done every five years. They had a review done a number of years ago after the first five years was completed that talked about the value of supports and resulted in some changes. There will be another review in a couple years, at which point they'll be able to assess whether or not the Safe Advantage program is meeting its needs to drive down costs for all employers across the Northwest Territories. I look forward to seeing that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 422-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION STRATEGIC PLAN
DEVELOPMENT

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I was talking about in my Member's statement and as I was saying in question period, there was a public meeting with the Power Corporation and they talked about their strategic plan for the communities and the power, and how we're going to generate it and make it specifically for the communities. So I guess my question to the Minister, can he please explain if, by developing this, did the corporation actually work with the communities to come up with their specific one or is this a generic one for the whole NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation always works with the communities. Specifically dealing with the issue of Colville Lake, which was a bit of a test case or an experimental case for the corporation, we can advise that the cost of the solar battery system there was \$2.7 million. Now, we're hoping that the cost of these types of systems will decline, as seems to be often the case with technology and, at that point, we perhaps could look at other communities. So, yes, we are willing to look at other communities in the future. I can't specifically say we'd be looking at the community referred to by the Member opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. I guess I'm looking at when they develop this strategy, which we haven't seen yet, has the corporation actually worked with the communities to develop specifically their own strategic plans to help

reduce the cost of electricity? So can the Minister please advise this House, if the corporation has worked with the communities to develop their strategy as part of their strategy, or is it the strategy for the whole NWT's generic picture?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the energy strategy that they have looked at in the past is generic, as referred to by Member opposite and we will be willing to, of course, work with the smaller communities, but the overall policy, as is true of most policies, tends to be territorial-wide.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. I'm just a little bit disappointed in hearing that it's a generic one and I appreciate we need to develop a territorial one, but when we're looking at the small communities we're trying to get them off diesel fuel. I mean, ultimately, we're trying to make it a better place for people and reduce costs. So will the Minister get his department or the corporation to look at that strategy and talk to the smaller communities so they can work on something that they can make use of their money to make it more cost-effective to live in their communities?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As the Energy Strategy is rolled out it's not going to be Yellowknife-centric; I do believe they are going out to regional centres. So we will be seeking input, and the other Minister involved also will be seeking input from the communities on just the issues that are raised by the Member opposite.

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

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that answer, and it's actually great to hear that the corporation is working with other departments on that and I think it's a good idea in working with the communities and moving forward.

The Minister actually talked about, you know, Colville Lake and spending \$2.7 million, if I'm correct, installing batteries to make sure the solar panels hooked in there. Will the Minister look at the other smaller communities south to see if they can actually do that to make it more efficient for a community? Another pilot project, I would love to have it in my riding, but if we could do another community, a small community, in the south so that they can try this project to see if it's a cost benefit to them.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I understand actually in Fort Simpson there is a solar panel system at the airport, which, admittedly it's quite small. I can't commit to entering into another pilot project at this time but I know we are considering how we can reduce the costs of power in all

communities, and certainly we do want to get away from diesel.

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

QUESTION 423-18(2):
PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT TRADITIONAL
ECONOMY

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to pick up on the Member for Nunakput's Member's statement and ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources some questions on traditional economy. I'd like to ask the Minister how much money is there in the traditional economy budgets, whether they rest in ITI or ENR? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, the exact number that is in the budget I'm not quite sure of, but I do know that the fur advancement loan we paid out \$408,000 for this year. But as for the exact dollar figure in the budget, I will get that number and I will share it with the Member, but it does rest in ENR.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping this is not too technical, but I'd like to ask the Minister: aside from taking kids trapping, what other programs are delivered under this budget?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the other programs that are supported are the Community Harvesters Assistance Program, our local Wildlife Committee, Take a Kid Trapping as the Member said, and Harvesting Program, the Western Harvesters' Assistance Program, the Hunters and Trappers Disaster Compensation Program, and the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission coverage for resource harvesters. So again, that is a wide topic of areas that it covers, and I will get the exact dollar figure and share it with the Members.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, as a traditional economy, I'd like to ask the Minister what the full spectrum of supports are there for hunters and trappers?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, through the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program we provide support for participants in the fur industry; there's three elements to it. There's actually the Guaranteed Advance for Furs, the Prime Fur Bonus, and the Fall Grubstake bonus and these are very good programs and a number of harvesters out there take the government up and ENR up on these opportunities.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the House knows we have an issue with the numbers for caribou, and whether the caribou has moved further east or if the caribou are simply decreasing in numbers, I don't know, but I'm sure the Minister knows.

I'd like to ask the Minister if there's anything available to help the communities that traditionally live off caribou? If there's anything available to help those communities to go to where the caribou are to hunt for their communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Member is absolutely right, there is some concerns with the caribou and it's coming to a point where the caribou actually have no chance with all the technology that we have in getting out to the caribou and that's allowed their numbers to dwindle along with a number of other things, but there is some funding available to help community harvesters. As to the exact, I would have to confirm that, but I do know there's money available to help harvesters go and do a community harvest.

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

QUESTION 424-18(2):
AFFORDABLE POWER IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation some questions about resolving this issue. We've had a lot of discussion in this House and in the public around the issue of affordable power in the Northwest Territories; however, the debate has largely centred on the claims from NTPC versus the claims from ATCO, when the real issue that Northerners have on their minds is how to make power more affordable.

Now the Power Corporation mentioned systemic issues that drive up the cost of power, and one of those is a lack of connection to the continental grid. I'd like the Minister to provide an update on how NTPC is planning on resolving this systemic issue in the short to mid to long-term? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, connecting with the national or even international grid clearly would not be a short-term thing we could possible contemplate, as it would be a very expensive project to connect either through Saskatchewan or

Alberta. There are costs, but certainly there have been talks at a very high level about that very project and we will be in talks with Saskatchewan as to the possibility of such a project proceeding; however, it is a project of great complexity involving several governments, also involving several Aboriginal groups on our side of the border and several on the Saskatchewan side of the border. So we are looking at this project because unless we have a massive population increase here the only way long-term to reduce costs would be to export.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, this government is engaging in three major transportation corridors; the North Slave Geological Province which we've heard about today involves the government of Nunavut and numerous Aboriginal governments as well. This is a multi-jurisdictional mega project. If we can do that why can't we do this?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, certainly, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at these projects. All of these projects involve great complexity. It's not as though we've completed any of these mega projects. So I would expect as time goes on that we will have talks with Saskatchewan or perhaps other governments with a view to exporting power which is really the only way to reduce costs.

MR. TESTART: The Minister just said that exporting power has been the way to reduce cost. Does the Minister also agree that lowering the cost of power in the Northwest Territories would lower costs of doing business and provide more incentive for people to live, stay here, and start businesses, and for the mining industry to open new projects? Does the Minister agree that lowering the cost of power is a key economic concern for Northerners and for our economy?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Clearly, lower costs would be a benefit both to private individuals and to industry. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: So, Mr. Speaker, we've gotten some facts out here around a long-term strategic goal for solving this problem. We're not hearing that in the press. Will the Minister commit to making the Power Corporation's long-term plans for making our energy system more affordable through infrastructure development, through multi-lateral agreements with other governments? Will he commit to making that kind of vision public the same way he's countering Northland's claims in the media? Will he start talking about positive things and not just countering the opposition?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I will promise to this House to talk about positive things.

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

QUESTION 425-18(2):
LIMITS ON ALTERNATIVE POWER
GENERATION IN THERMAL COMMUNITIES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Let's stay with the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. It's Friday. Mr. Speaker, I heard an interesting point raised earlier today and it was relevant to this number, the 20 per cent cap that would be put on communities in their ability to get themselves off of thermal energy.

I have heard that we want to work with communities, and I have heard that we want to get them off diesel, but now I've potentially heard that we're going to stop them in their efforts at 20 per cent. I'm wondering can the Minister provide us a little bit more clarity around that policy, why 20 per cent is the number? Does it only apply to thermal communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: They're the experimental and new technologies that are coming along, it is our intention of course to use those first in the thermal communities as we wish to get off of diesel power. But there are other initiatives. We are also encouraging people to reduce the amount of power they use to LED, more efficient refrigerators and so on, so we're hoping that the amount of power that they require is going to be reduced, and this 20 per cent figure which has been referenced several times today is a technical number in the sense that if you're going to have a mixture of diesel and solar, you can't go above the 20 per cent solar without expending a great deal of money for new systems.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Power Corporation is trying to encourage residents of the North to reduce their power usage; however, in efforts that residents have done to reduce their power usage, we've actually heard the Power Corporation come back to us and say you're doing good, but by doing good, we're going to have to up the rates.

We've got to charge more; we have infrastructure to pay for. So, Mr. Speaker, is that the reason why there's a 20 per cent cap is because 80 per cent is still required to pay for the thermal infrastructure in thermal communities?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the reason that the solar projects are capped at 20 per cent is that the diesel needs to run at the other 80 per cent. If they run more intermittently as I understand it, they become more unstable.

MR. VANTHUYNE: The Minister keeps referencing to solar only as the alternative source, but earlier it was noted that other potential alternatives energy

sources that could be considered to help reduce diesel consumption in the communities would also fall under this 20 per cent policy. So just for clarification, if Colville Lake, as an example, was able to throw up a windmill tomorrow, hypothetically, and reduce their diesel consumption by another 20 per cent, would that not be allowed?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, one of the issues with solar is that obviously it's not sunny all year round. I would anticipate that if there was a system that could have proper batteries for storage of power or if the wind was so consistent that it provided power throughout the year and we didn't need diesel at all, we would certainly contemplate that type of system, but currently the technology is not there and it's not cheap.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that I got an answer to the question. I've already gotten to the 20 per cent. If I found a way in my community to get my reliance on diesel fuel another 20 per cent off by putting up another alternative sources of energy, would that be allowed?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the problem is that that this 20 per cent was not simply dreamed up. It was a figure above which the diesel system became erratic or undependable. Now, if we had a system that provided 100 per cent of the power needs and we no longer needed diesel that would be one thing, but it would seem to me that a system that went up to 40 per cent, say between solar and some other system, would exacerbate the problem with the diesel system.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions have expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committee on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabled Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 198-18(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2016-2017

TABLED DOCUMENT 199-18(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2016-2017

TABLED DOCUMENT 200-18(2):
SERVING OUR PEOPLE: THE NWT PUBLIC
SERVICE REPORT 2015

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017," "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017," and "Serving Our People: the NWT Public Service Report 2015." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission.

TABLED DOCUMENT 201-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS
TRIBUNAL ANNUAL REPORT 2015

TABLED DOCUMENT 202-18(2):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2015
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Northwest Territories and Nunavut Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report 2015" and "Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Annual Report 2015 Northwest Territories and Nunavut." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motions. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act, Tabled Document 198-18(2): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017, Tabled Document 199-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017 with Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Supplementary Appropriation No. 1, Operations, and Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, Infrastructure, both for 2016-2017, and Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will take a short break and return for consideration of the items. Thank you.

--- SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 199-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017. Does the Finance Minister have any opening remarks?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I do, Mr. Chair. I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017. These estimates provide for an increase of \$591,000 to the operations budget.

Amongst other things, these Supplementary Estimates include:

- funding of \$308,000 for permafrost monitoring research and development;
- funding of \$285,000 for operating costs of the newly expanded Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Home in Behchoko; and funding of \$108,000 for the Aboriginal Justice Strategy for a training event; and
- enhanced capacity building.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Do you wish to bring any witnesses into the House?

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

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witnesses. We will begin with opening comments, general comments. Do we have any general comments on the operations expenditures, supplementary estimates? Seeing none, we will proceed to review the supplementary estimates by department. Can we please turn to page 4. Are there comments on page 4? Seeing no comments, I will call the page. Supplementary

Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, community health programs, not previously authorized, \$285,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$285,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. We will proceed to page 5, Justice. Do we have comments or questions on Justice? Seeing none, I will call the page. Justice, operations expenditures, community justice and policing, not previously authorized, \$108,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Justice, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$108,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We'll proceed to page 6. Lands, operations expenditures, operations, not previously authorized, negative \$110,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Lands, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$110,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. On to page 7, Transportation. Transportation, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$308,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Are there comments or questions on this page? Seeing none. Transportation, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$308,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 199-18(2),

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you.

Committee, we're just sorting things out. It will be a couple of minutes. At ease.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 33-18(2):
CONCURRENCE OF Tabled DOCUMENT 199-18(2): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2016-2017

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that the consideration of Tabled Document 199-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017 now be concluded, and that Tabled Document 199-18(2) 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. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Question has been called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I want to thank committee for their patience. We will now move on to Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017, Tabled Document 198-18(2). Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have opening remarks. I'm here to present Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017. These estimates provide for an increase of \$18.8 million to the capital budget. These Supplementary Estimates include:

- funding of \$15.3 million for a change in the timing of expenditures expected for the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, the total cost of the project has not changed.

Amongst other items, these supplementary estimates also include:

- funding of \$2 million to begin work on the heavy equipment operators facility project at the Aurora College Thebacha Campus;
- funding of \$804,000 for replacement of the aircraft rescue and firefighting truck at the Yellowknife Airport; and
- funding of \$419,000 to start the expansion of Ecole Allain St-Cyr School in Yellowknife.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-At-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please again introduce your witnesses for the record?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome again to the witnesses. We will begin with general comments. Do we have general comments on infrastructure expenditures, supplementary estimates? Seeing none, we will proceed to review the supplementary estimates by department starting on page 6, Education, Culture and Employment. Do we have comments or questions? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that there's some capital expenditure on Aurora College for our infrastructure improvements. I'm wondering if the Minister could tell me who determines infrastructure needs for the college? Is it the college itself or is it the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, or is it based on the capital needs assessment, et cetera? Just the methodology there? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT FINANCE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the department and Aurora College, they worked together on identifying their project needs. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Seeing nothing further, I will call the page, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$400,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$400,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will turn to page 7. Comments or questions on MACA? Seeing none, I will call the page. Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, -\$155,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, -\$155,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. On to page 8. Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures. Comments or questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yesterday in the House I tabled a letter from APADY, which is the Francophone Rights Holders Parents' Association of Yellowknife. Their position is that they haven't been adequately consulted on a proposal going into Heritage Canada to provide for additional funds for the expansion Ecole Allain St-Cyr. So I just want to get a commitment from the Minister that there's going to be closer collaboration with APADY and the French school board in finalizing whatever proposals get sent to Heritage Canada? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think the Minister of Education has committed to working closely with this group, so I will make a commitment from this table as well.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, Mr. Chair, I didn't have my earphone in, so I couldn't actually hear the response. If the Minister wouldn't mind telling me again? I've got my earphone on this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I said the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has committed to working with this group as they go forward with this project, and I will make that commitment from this table as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you very much. I haven't forgotten about what I've asked, so I'll continue on it, but I do appreciate the commitment from both Ministers. I'll be happy to work with them to try to move that along, because at the end of the day it will save us money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Anything further? Seeing no further comments, I will call the page. Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, \$419,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$1,800,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$2,219,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to page 9, Health and Social Services. Do we have comments, questions about this expenditure? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I noted in the Minister's opening remarks that the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project is on budget. Can you confirm for me that the schedule's still in place, on time, and so on? I know I asked this yesterday of the Minister of Health, but I think he was bringing forward a budget for long-term care

related to Stanton, and this time I just want to know if the renewal project itself is still on time? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're pleased to say that the project is on time and on budget. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that response; good to hear that. But because we're sort of forwarding money here, and I guess this is in response to work that's already been done and invoices or whatever that have been submitted by contractors, are we actually ahead of schedule? Is that where we're at? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I will go to Mr. Kalgutkar for this one.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the project is not ahead of schedule it's just on time per the schedule that was provided for during the procurement process by the successful proponent, Boreal Health Partnership. When the government first procured -- were investigating and preparing the project, we were anticipating a five-year construction period. Boreal came back with a four-year construction period, and now we're just adjusting our cash flows to match that construction period. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, that helps clarify this for me why we're moving money forward for the project. I appreciate that response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I see nothing further. I'll call the page. Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$15,278,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$15,278,000. Does committee agree?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. On to page 10, Lands. I see no comments. I'll call the page. Lands, capital investment expenditures, operations, not previously authorized, \$110,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Lands, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$110,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Committee. On to page 11, Municipal and Community Affairs. Comments or questions? Seeing none, I will call the page. Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditures, school of community government, not previously authorized, \$155,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditure, total department, not previously authorized, \$155,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 198-18(2)? I apologize, committee, we have not concluded consideration. We have to move to page 12 of the document; that is Transportation. Do we have comments or questions on this, page 12? Seeing none, I'll call the page. Transportation, capital investment, expenditures, airports, not previously authorized, \$804,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Transportation, capital investment, expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$804,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Do you now agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 198-18(2), Supplementary Estimates, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. I want to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 34-18(2):
CONCURRENCE OF TABLED DOCUMENT 198-
18(2): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2016-2017

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that consideration of Tabled Document 198-18(2): Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017 be now concluded and that Tabled Document 198-18(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There's a motion on the floor. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Question has been called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

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

Committee, we have further decided to consider Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act. I'll ask the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm here to present Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act. The bill makes a number of amendments to the Vital Statistics Act. The Vital Statistics Act has been in force since 2013 and these are the first amendments to the act. Societal attitudes to transgender people are changing and it's also a time of reconciliation with Aboriginal people. The amendment to remove the requirement for gender reassignment surgery from the act brings the Northwest Territories in line with human rights decisions and progress in other provinces and territories.

Proof of completed gender reassignment surgery in order to process a change to the individual's sex designation on their birth registration and certificate is no longer accepted practice in Canada. Human rights decisions in a number of other provinces ordered governments to stop requiring proof of reassignment surgery for changes to sex designation.

When change in an individual's sex designation the amendments will allow the Registrar General of Vital Statistics to record a third sex designation. The options for sex designation will be male, female or X. The third designation is for those people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or

female. Some transgender residents of the Northwest Territories have requested a non-binary option such as an X to better reflect them. The use of gender designation X is becoming increasingly available in many jurisdictions. Some provinces such as Ontario have adopted its use and the Government of Canada is proposing to allow X on federal identity documents, and a number of countries already utilize X on passports.

The other changes facilitate residential school survivors reclaiming names changed by residential school system. These amendments will fill a gap in the act that may prevent residential school survivors from reclaiming their previous name if they had a single name. The act currently mandates a first and last name and single names are not permitted. The amendments will allow a person to register with a single name if the single name is in accordance with the person's traditional culture.

The requirement for first and last name will still apply in the majority of cases. Revitalizing Aboriginal language is a priority of the 18th Legislative Assembly. Currently, the act does not allow the Registrar General to register a name unless it is written in the characters of the Roman alphabet. The Roman alphabet is used by many Western European languages including English and French. This may prevent residential school survivors from reclaiming their previous name. Removing the requirement for names to be registered in the Roman alphabet is the first step to registering names in Aboriginal languages with characters that do not exist in the Roman alphabet. An example is the glottal stop that represents a sound in Dene for correct pronunciation of the name.

Implementing these amendments in our electronic information system will present a significant technical challenge and we're working with partners on solutions. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank standing committee for the review of the bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that considered the bill, for opening comments. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Social Development concluded its review of Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics on October 25, 2016. In addition to soliciting written submissions, the committee had a public hearing at the Legislative Assembly building here in Yellowknife. The committee was pleased to receive a written submission from Dene Nahjo and to hear from members of the public who addressed

the committee during the public hearing. Members, I also thank Shene Catholique-Valpy speaking as an individual, Coleen Canney and Teale MacIntosh from the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife, and Peter Redvers also speaking as an individual, for sharing their views and experiences at the public hearing. The residents' participation in the legislative process highlights the human face of Bill 5. This bill will have real and meaningful impact on the life of Northerners and their ability to use their true names, honouring their traditional culture and exercising self-determination in their identity. It is the beginning of a new era in the recognition of individuals by the governments that serve them.

Pending discussion in Committee of the Whole and third reading, the committee will follow the implementation of these amendments closely. Individual Members may have additional comments or questions as we proceed with the consideration of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I would, yes, please.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me on my left is Ken Chutskoff, the legislative counsel, and on my left, Debbie DeLancey, deputy minister, Health and Social Services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witnesses. I will open the floor to general comments on Bill 5. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, today my remarks are specifically about the amendment with the designation 42(1). Do you want to hear those comments now?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): You may proceed.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. As the chair of Social Development mentioned, we had several presentations at the public hearing at this bill, including one from the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife, which is a youth organization that supports people who are transgender and queer. I want to read a portion of their presentation because it helps to flesh out the section 42(1). So I'm quoting here: "Transgender identity at its core describes a person who feels like they are a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth by our medical system and/or by their caregivers or parents. There is no requirement of wanting to

change one's body, nor is there any other requirement. The only thing that makes a person one gender over another is the feeling they have inside. Some trans people want to make changes to their bodies, and some do not. For any agency to place restrictions on a person's autonomy to control their identity is an invasion of individual human rights. Trans people should have the right to have vital statistics documents that reflect their identity."

I'll just pause here at the end of that quotation to say that the Minister has already acknowledged that he will recognize X as the alternative to male or female, and so I believe it addresses that point.

To continue quoting: "We are concerned that section 42(1) remains too vague and might end up meaning that the registrar requires, for example, a letter of confirmation from a medical professional that the applicant identifies as the sex that they claim to identify as. We believe that it is important that trans people are recognized as the sole experts of their own identities, and that medical professionals are not required to provide confirmation of identity for trans people. Furthermore, we hope that there will be explicit mention of not requiring medical confirmation of gender identity as to ensure that this barrier does not disallow people from changing their sex designation. We suggest requesting that the applicant be provided with a statutory declaration to sign that states that they identify as the sex that they are requesting to be designated on their documentation."

So, Mr. Chair, what all of this means is, as the Minister said, that trans people want self-determination in their identity. They want to be able to designate their own gender without needing an intervention in the form of a statutory declaration by a medical professional, with whom they might not have any relationship and with whom, quite frankly, trans people often have very troubled relationships. So the point here is that, if a person identifies as whatever gender they identify with, this should be taken at their word.

Now, I know that the legislation does not include that level of detail. It will be included in the regulations. But what I am seeking in this forum is a repetition from the Minister that the regulations will address this point of individuals being able to practise self-determination in their identity without the intervention or support of a medical practitioner? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Member's comments. The Member has indicated that this particular area is something

that was intended and will be addressed in the regulations. Originally, we are proposing regulations with respect to sex designation which was consistent with the majority of provinces and territories and the Northwest Territories. Specifically, that a statutory declaration that an individual lives full-time in the gender they want to change to, and that this is not the gender currently listed on their birth certificate, a statutory declaration from a doctor, a nurse practitioner, a psychologist or a social worker, that the person lives their desired gender full-time and it is not the gender on their birth certificate, consent of a legal guardian if the person changing their designation is a minor, payment of a fee, and obviously the return of the previous certificate.

During the public hearing, I made a commitment to do some additional research to determine why those are the regulations that we are proposing, and we have done some additional analysis. What we can say is the requirement for declaration of the health care professional is historical; it's something that exists in most provinces and territories. But this is a rapidly changing time. Every jurisdiction is working on what is the rationale for requirements for change of sex designation. Quebec, as an example, has taken out the requirement to have a doctor, physician, social worker, or other practitioner provide the statutory declaration. Instead, Quebec does ask that a declaration of a health care provider is necessary in cases of adults that have already previously changed their sex designation, and this is to preserve the integrity of changes made to the foundational identity document.

So in light of the argument that the Member has presented and the fantastic presentation provided during the public hearing, I have directed the Department of Health and Social Services to remove the requirement for adults to require a doctor, psychologist, social worker, or other practitioner to sign the statutory declaration indicating that this is the gender that the person lives in. So that will not be in the regulations.

I have not made the same direction for minors at this point. For minors, we need to make sure that we explore all the safeguards. I'm not saying that we won't make that direction, but I am certainly asking for more time to make sure that youth and minors are protected and safeguards are there to ensure their safety. We already require their guardian to provide, but I'm asking more time and I'm going to take more time to make sure that all those safeguards are in place. So what you will see in our regulations is no requirement for a doctor unless a person is going back to change their designation a second or third time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for making that commitment to remove the requirement for a statutory declaration from some kind of health professional in order for people to change their designation. I appreciate that the situation with minors is a little trickier because they're vulnerable people just by nature of their age, and I look forward to his further information on that pending his research. So my thanks to him and his officials, and my thanks as well to the Rainbow Coalition, Coleen Canney and Teale MacIntosh who made this original presentation to us on Wednesday night. That's everything.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Testart, do you have any more comments?

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I was going to speak to the amendment that my colleague just spoke of, but it seems like there's no need for that, and I'd like to applaud the Minister for being progressive on this issue. You know, in following suit with Quebec, the North is on the progressive edge of this issue and moving forward, and it's always nice to feel like Canada's catching up with you rather than us catching up with Canada. So I applaud this decision and I think it very much supports what the standing committee heard when this bill was reviewed in public.

The other component of this bill is of course directly in line with this government's commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations and also to our stated political objective of reconciliation by allowing Indigenous peoples to reclaim names that have been lost to them, and I think this bill shows that we are a government that understands the dynamics of reconciliation are actively moving to pursue it and as someone personally who holds rights in very high, individual rights and freedoms and very value, I'm very pleased to support this bill and the amendments to the Act.

I think the community did a very good job at bringing some of the issues to light, and I thank the Minister for being willing to work with committee, willing to work with the people of the Northwest Territories and willing to be progressive for the sake of all Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I support the self-determination of individuals in terms of their gender identity and I was pleased to hear that the Minister has agreed to be more flexible on that

matter when it comes to the actual regulation, so I'm glad to hear that and I understand you'll come back, look for other information, perhaps options, position on how to handle that in the case of minors. So we look forward to getting that information from the Minister. I have one other issue though with regard to this bill. I'm just wondering how the issue of place names on birth certificates are going to be dealt with? We've got a number of official names for our community, some of which may not use Roman Orthography as their official name, so I'm just wondering is that issue dealt with in this bill or is it dealt with somewhere else, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this bill will allow us to use traditional fonts, but the place names are legal name. We will be using the official place names or official community names. If those community names include traditional fonts, then certainly those will be on the birth certificate.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I apologize. I wasn't at the hearing, and I'm probably springing this on the Minister and staff, but I'll give an example if that's okay. It's my understanding that the official name does not just exclusively use Roman Orthography, so in our documents that we issue as a government people will be able to have that appear as their place of birth perhaps and those will be accepted then by the federal government into the international system. Is that what I'm hearing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Department of Health and Social Services isn't the registrar of office names of locations, communities, towns, villages, et cetera. Those names are registered using fonts or not using. If they have fonts, traditional fonts in them, the birth certificate will now be able to include it. If the name as registered does not include those fonts, then we would be required to use the legal name of the community as registered, and if it does include fonts, it won't.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm just curious, do we now have the ability then to use non-Roman Orthography fonts on birth certificates

to indicate the official place names of communities? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Would the Minister clarify?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and as I said during the public hearing, the Department of Health and Social Services is not the expert on languages or fonts. Education, Culture and Employment certainly has a lot more of knowledge and awareness in this area. I do know that fonts are available. They exist in different formats and databases that are used across the Northwest Territories by different groups of bodies, and there are keyboards with different fonts on them. So, you know, I imagine fonts can be used in many, many different avenues other than just birth certificates. But for us, if someone's going to register their name and put it on a birth certificate we are open to using the traditional fonts, but other components like the date of their birth or their birth community, still have to be based on the official names and this does not require us to change official names as registered of communities.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, yes, look, I'm not asking the Minister to change official names of communities. What I'm wondering is if someone wants to get a birth certificate now, and they were born in Lutselk'e, and I'm not even going to say the name quite correctly, how does that appear on the birth certificate as their place of birth? Is it exclusively in Roman orthography right now or does it use the appropriate Denesuline fonts? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. So you're asking if the legal name of a community uses non-Roman orthography, will that non-Roman orthography appear on the birth certificate if that is the official legal name. Minister Abernethy, yes or no?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Once this passes and comes into effect, we'll be able to put any of the supported or any of the information in the appropriate fonts. If the registered name of community does not include a font, it will not include it on the birth certificate.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think we're getting to the bottom of this. So we don't have the ability now to issue a birth certificate with the official names on it if they include non-Roman orthography fonts? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister. That is what the Minister just stated. Would the Minister like to clarify that?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Birth certificates today do not include anything other than the Roman fonts.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Does the Minister of staff know how long it's going to take then to have the ability to do that for the official name portion of the birth certificate? Presumably it's going to happen at the same time that we fix this up for the names that can go on the birth certificate. I was just wondering when this is going to take place, when we can make this shift. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Just to be clear, we will put the legal registered name of a community on birth certificates, so if it has font we'll make sure that happens. If it does not have font in the legal registered name then it won't obviously. Going live on this particular component of this legislation, we talked about this at length at the hearing. There is a significant amount of work that needs to be done in order to make sure that we are not putting residents of the Northwest Territories in harm's way by limiting their ability to get passports, social insurance numbers.

Also eliminating their ability to travel anywhere. Once we move and move this into effect and someone uses traditional fonts on their local driver's licence, it will limit their ability to travel within Canada. So there's a significant amount of work that we have to do in order to create transliteration guides and other work that will ensure that when someone presents with a birth certificate from the Northwest Territories, they're other legal documents like passports can include a Roman alphabet interpretation in that is legal.

So we anticipate it's going to take us quite a bit of time to finish negotiations with the Government of Canada, work with Education, Culture and Employment to bring this component to reality.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I'd just like to remind the Minister, when you're done speaking please conclude with a thank you, just so the sound techs know to switch the microphones. Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister. So just in case anybody comes away with the wrong impression, I strongly support these changes to the Vital Statistics Act, and I appreciate the efforts of the Minister and his

staff to do this. I just want to make sure that we're going to be able to do it in terms of the official names as well. I'm a very strong advocate for Aboriginal languages, all official languages, and I do appreciate the work of the department and look forward to having this sorted out soon. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you very much, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I speak in favour of Bill 5, the Vital Statistics Act, more particularly for the Aboriginal languages, an opportunity for people that make a choice to formally register their Aboriginal names. I applaud the department for taking those steps. Particularly so for the young individual person that took the steps to ensure that this legislation was amended. I'd like to draw her name, Shene Catholique-Valpy that took the steps to try to, you know, have her children's traditional name recognized in vital statistics, and she couldn't do it. So this is her effort in terms of making changes to legislation. It opens the door in terms of First Nations taking the steps and choice to register their traditional names.

At the same time, you know, it also sets the stage for self-identity of First Nations people. You know, the irony of our existence in North America and the world stage is that we all have Anglicized names and Christian names. Our culture is not really reflected in our English names. So this provides an opportunity for people to distinguish themselves as First Nations and Indigenous First Nations around the world.

I understand this passage of this legislation is still not complete, there's still an exercise in terms of sorting how, you know, the technical aspect of registering your names would work. But it's a small step through reconciliation. We still have a long ways to go. Hopefully, this is not just lip service, that it will indeed be committing this department, along with other departments in this government, to provide that opportunity for people to ensure that, you know, they're recognized in their formal traditional names in their self-identity. So with that, I just wanted to speak in favour of this legislation. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Would the Minister like to make any response?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Member's comments. I just want to be clear that this is not lip service, this demonstrates our commitment to making this a reality and making this happen. With respect to change of sex designation, gender, we believe that we will be able to do the work necessary to put this into effect by April of 2017. The same is true for

single names, we believe that we should be able to get the work done through regulations and others to make it official and effective in April, 2017.

Implementing Aboriginal fonts is not as simple. The department has been reaching out to the federal government over the past year about the use of Aboriginal fonts here in the Northwest Territories. Unfortunately, we were really only able to have some successful discussions as of September. To be clear, having this bill drafted and passed, in my opinion, speaks to our commitment to making this happen. Unfortunately, it will take some time. If we implement the use of Aboriginal fonts today, those residents who choose to use Aboriginal fonts on their birth certificate would be at a real disadvantage. This is the first jurisdiction in the country to do this. Granted, we are only one of two jurisdictions that recognizes languages other than English and/or French.

To make this happen, we have to do a significant amount of technical work to have these fonts recognized in electronic systems used in the Northwest Territories, in Canada, and essentially around the world. Those systems are used in social insurance numbers, passports, healthcare cards, other documents, to name just a few. If we don't do the work and we move ahead with the fonts before the work is done, our residents who utilize the fonts won't be able to get passports, they won't be able to get social insurance numbers. They won't even be able to travel outside of the Northwest Territories with a driver's licence because those driver's licences will not be consistent with the name on a boarding pass. We've all been there; they look at our driver's licence, they look at the boarding pass, if the names aren't the same, you don't get on the plane, and other jurisdictions aren't going to have our fonts.

So the work needs to be done on the transliteration guides. We also have to look at a number of databases and other programs we're using in the Northwest Territories. We anticipate there's as many as 400 databases being used by the government alone that will have to have the fonts incorporated. So it is a significant amount of work, we have nine official languages, other than French and English, that we have to incorporate into this, and we need the federal government to be supportive.

So we are committed, the department is already starting the work, they've already been in touch with Education, Culture and Employment, they've already been in touch with the feds. I'd love to say we can make this happen tomorrow, I really would, but the reality is it's going to take some time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I want to thank all the Members for their comments as well. Seeing no further general comments, does committee agree that we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. I will call out the number of each clause, committee can respond with an agreed if they agree and, if there are questions or comments, please raise your hand and let it be known.

We will defer the bill number and title until after the consideration of the clauses, so please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 12 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act, is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you, Minister. Thank you, to the witnesses. Sergeant-At-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you, committee. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now rise and report progress.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act, Tabled Document 198-18(2) and

Tabled Document 199-18(2). I would like to report that Bill 5 is ready for third reading, and that consideration of Tabled Documents 198-18(2) and 199-18(2) is concluded and that the House concur in those estimates and that appropriation bills to be based thereon be introduced without delay.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do we have a seconder? Member for Mackenzie Delta.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Legislative Assembly Board of Management today at 2:00 p.m. in Committee Room A.

Orders of the day for Monday, October 31, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2017-2018
- Tabled Document 163-18(2) Capital Estimates, 2017-2018 for the Department of Public Works and Services and Department of Transportation

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Monday, October 31, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

