



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**18<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Monday, February 22, 2016**

Pages 63 - 90

**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

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*Minister of Human Resources;*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors;*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with*  
*Disabilities*

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*Minister of Industry, Tourism, and*  
*Investment*  
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*Employment*  
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(Deh Cho)

**Mr. Herbert Nakimayak**

(Nunakput)

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(Frame Lake)

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*Minister responsible for the Workers'*  
*Safety and Compensation*  
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(Hay River North)

**Mr. Kieron Testart**

(Kam Lake)

**Mr. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendeh)

**Mr. Cory Vanthuyne**

(Yellowknife North)

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Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Monday, February 22, 2016

### Members Present

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

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

### Prayer

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty):** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment.

### Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 2-18(2):  
SPECTACULAR STORIES – GROWTH FOR THE  
NWT TOURISM SECTOR

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the Legislature on continuing activities in support of our territory's most promising growth industry. Tourism is the Northwest Territories' single-largest renewable resource-based sector. It has enjoyed continued growth through 2015. Thanks to investments and initiatives undertaken by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and our many partners and affiliate industry organizations, we are also well-positioned today to capitalize on even more opportunities in 2016.

Later this afternoon, on behalf of Northwest Territories Tourism, the Government of the Northwest Territories' destination marketing organization, I will table the recently released "2016-2017 Marketing Plan Northwest Territories Tourism." The plan will see our successful "Spectacular Northwest Territories" brand expanded to include "Spectacular Stories" collected, submitted, and shared via Spectacular NWT's website and social media pages. This is a major piece of the organization's pivot to modern, content-focused marketing.

The new approach will provide NWT Tourism the ability to cost-effectively reach southern Canadian and international audiences with engaging, informative content and attract new and returning visitors to the territory. This type of marketing relies on stories rather than slogans and the North has never had a shortage of great stories to tell. NWT Tourism's 2016-2017 Marketing Plan will also place

renewed focus on engaging businesses and community stakeholders throughout the territory. Recognizing the importance of having regular input from NWT operators to guide their marketing efforts, the organization will be scheduling regular regional and sector consultations. In addition, it will be offering expanded marketing programs that feature a wide variety and price range of cooperative advertising opportunities and information updates.

This informed and strategic approach comes on the heels of an impressive year for tourism in the NWT. We are noting a direct result of the strategies, programs, and initiatives that are already in place. We can now see, for example, that our China trade missions are paying off. The growth of the Chinese middle-class, paired with the low Canadian dollar offer opportunities for even further growth in this area. Only 0.5 per cent of travellers from China currently visit Canada, and a fraction of this number visit the NWT. As we continually invest in improved services and new initiatives, we can obtain a greater share of this lucrative, growing market. This incredible potential is already spawning new investment for our territory. The proposed redevelopment of the treatment centre on Detah Road and several planned and ongoing hotel developments in Yellowknife are testament to the growth and potential of the Asian tourism market. With nearly 7,000 people from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan visiting the NWT last year, we are already also seeing a return on our Aurora marketing investment in higher revenues and local jobs.

But our industry is being built on more than just Asia and the northern lights. We have also seen an influx of visitors in other parts of Canada and the United States. In fact, tourism operators across the NWT reported higher revenues and visitor numbers last summer. The 2015 NWT territorial parks overnight visitor numbers were up by 17.5 per cent despite forest fires, road, and campground closures. Opportunities for whitewater adventures are attracting more and more people to the wild expanse of our territory. We've always known the Nahanni to have a great reputation amongst adventurers, but the winding mountain rivers of the Sahtu are attracting a growing crowd of adventurers as world-class paddling destinations. We saw

year-on-year growth in sport fishing, outdoor adventure, and visitors of friends and family amounting to 24 per cent, 12 per cent, and 22 per cent growth respectively in 2014-2015. The low Canadian dollar and the robust economic recovery in the US is reflected in a strong surge of Americans coming back to fishing lodges in the NWT, which is great news after several consecutive years of decline in this market.

Many communities in our territory now have ambitions to create and improve their own tourism products, working to capitalize on the unique opportunities that this sector, Aboriginal tourism in particular, provides. To assist and support these ambitions, ITI delivered over \$1 million in funding for the development of exciting new tourism products and over \$300,000 in tourism infrastructure development and education opportunities in 2014-2015. Our regional offices put in the hard work each and every day to ensure efficient service delivery to each of our 33 communities. We have heard from the Minister of Finance last week about the challenge that slow economic growth is creating for this government. Strategic investments in promising sectors of our economy like tourism are one of the best ways to address this challenge. We will continue to invest in the opportunities tourism offers in the Northwest Territories in pursuit of a vibrant, diverse economy in step with the economic priorities of this 18th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 3-18(2):  
INUVIK-TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the economy, environment and climate change among the priorities identified by the 18th Legislative Assembly, the Government of Northwest Territories is pleased to highlight the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway construction project as a leading example of economic diversification and environmental stewardship. Since the third construction season began in early January, already more than 300 individuals are back at work on the project. Over 70 per cent of the contractors' 24-hour workforce is comprised of residents of the Beaufort-Delta region and other NWT communities. The contractors' workforce peaked at over 600 employees during the busiest part of construction season in March of last year, a substantial contribution toward creating northern jobs.

The project is also fulfilling the 18th Assembly's priority to foster life-long learning, skills development, training, and employability by delivering meaningful training opportunities. Already over 130 people have taken advantage of the

training offered on different types of rock truck and excavator equipment using a simulator. Ten heavy equipment operators received additional training over the summer of 2015 and another 12 heavy equipment operation training opportunities are anticipated in 2016. Frontline project personnel are also receiving valuable training on practices necessary to protect water resources during highway construction through a Department of Transportation developed course called Working Near Water. Nationally accredited training in erosion and sediment control practices has also been delivered. This is in addition to the Predator Defence Training to ensure continued safety of staff on site to help minimize potential negative encounters with wildlife.

Our contractor EGT Northwind is focused on hauling and placing approximately 1.4 million cubic metres of material this season to construct approximately 50 km of embankment. Work also includes installing four bridges and 19 major culverts. The contractor's goal is to see the north and south construction spreads joined towards the end of April. We are pleased to confirm that the project remains on schedule and continues to be managed within the \$299-million budget. All operations of this project are subject to continuous monitoring by regulatory agencies. The Department employs construction and operational procedures that use the best environmental practices to ensure wildlife, land, fisheries, and water resources are protected with wildlife and environmental monitors on site 24 hours a day. Staff continues tracking progress on the 286 regulatory commitments to ensure the project is delivered in a manner that addresses the concerns, expectations, and requirements of all parties involved.

This is a one-of-a-kind highway infrastructure project. It's engineered to protect the region's continuous permafrost environment by adapting innovative construction methods. The Department of Transportation is organizing a science summit in April for world experts in permafrost, cold-region engineering, and northern infrastructure to see the project, watch construction, and visit two separate research-development test sites sponsored by Transport Canada's Northern Adaptation Initiative. One project constructed at Kilometre 22 will test the performance of alternative drainage structures. The goal is to find ways to minimize ineffective water drainage on highway embankments near drainage structures. A particular focus of this project is to reduce heat transfer through various types of drainage structures. The second research project, at Kilometre 82, involves building a deep-fill embankment section to assess the benefits of adding geotextile materials between successive lists of material to add stability. In addition, the embankment is instrumented with over 70

thermistor devices to monitor ground temperature. The aim is to improve highway construction methods in the future by gaining a better understanding of permafrost conditions.

In addition to the science community, the construction project continues to receive attention from international audiences already planning to drive or cycle what will become Canada's only public highway to the Arctic Coast. The author of a recent feature in the New York Times' travel section wrote that during his career as an American diplomat visiting places like France, Israel, and Haiti, the Arctic expanse in Canada is the most exotic place he's been. Progress of the construction of the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway is exciting to observe. Once completed, Northerners will have the contribution, fulfilling a vision of Canada's connection by road from coast to coast to coast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 4-18(2):  
EXPANDING LOCAL HOUSING SERVICES

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, increasing the availability of safe affordable housing and building stronger relationships with community governments and other stakeholders are two of the priorities agreed to by Members of the Legislative Assembly. I am pleased to report that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is working on both of these priorities by creating new local housing organizations in Fort Liard, Gameti, and Whati. Not only will this create jobs in the community and increase economic development, it'll also greatly improve service to community members. Residents who previously had questions about their housing corporation of rental units or homeowners that were interested in repair programs previously had to contact their housing corporation district office for more information. These changes mean that the residents get the answers that they require immediately.

The investment in new local housing organizations in these communities will result in the hiring of fulltime housing support staff, including a housing manager, a maintenance supervisor, and a housing maintainer for each community. In Gameti, the housing office and workshop have been setup and are now open for business. Planning for housing offices in Whati and Fort Liard is now underway. In the communities of Colville Lake and Wekweeti, the Housing Corporation and the Department of the Executive will be partnering in an initiative that will have Government Service Officers provide some housing information and administrative support. The expansion of housing services in communities and the increased emphasis on a more person-

centred approach will make the delivery of services more accessible to community residents across the Northwest Territories. These changes respond to the needs of our people and will build community capacity as local residents will be hired and trained to take on the roles in the new LHOs that are being established. These actions support our government's priorities of ensuring that we invest wisely in our workplace and that we have a housing system that is safe and affordable.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the special guests in the gallery today. We have 10 young men and women who are participating in the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme, visiting us for the rest of the week along with their academic director. I understand that they are looking forward to seeing consensus-style government in action, and I want to assure them that they have come to the right place.

---Applause

On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, may I extend a warm welcome to the Northwest Territories and to the Chamber. Masi and welcome. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FISCAL  
RESPONSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, the Finance Minister provided the people of NWT with the government's fiscal update. It was interesting, to say the least. The Minister said the government is committed to fiscal responsibility and the government's Fiscal Responsibility Policy. He went on to say we need to live within our means, not just for today or just for this year, but for all four years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. After reading this, I tried to wrap my head around what he meant by "fiscal responsibility." I spent the weekend doing research on what fiscal responsibility should mean to the government. This is the definition I like best: "A pledge of fiscal responsibility is a government's assurance that it judiciously spends, earns and generates funds without placing undue hardship on its citizens. It includes a moral contract to maintain a fiscally sound government for future generations on the understanding that a functional society is difficult to maintain without a fiscally secure government." As I read more articles about fiscal responsibility, it became clearer that government can take these necessary steps to be responsible to their citizens. All that is needed is to develop and implement some sort of fiscal transparency. This would involve a number of things, including the

ones that I will identify here: finding areas to reduce waste; identifying areas of financial ineffectiveness; identifying ways the government can function better; and identifying other funding opportunities.

I know it is sometimes hard to make all aspects of the budget visible to the public, but the government needs to look at better ways to engage the public and the public servants, not just the senior staff.

Later on in the speech, the Finance Minister said, "We cannot take the position of an ostrich and bury our heads in the sand and pretend and hope to escape reality." I agree. However, the government cannot be like Chicken Little and go around crying, "The sky is falling" every chance they get and expect business and people to want to come and invest and live in the NWT. I agree with the Minister that we were aware that there were going to be some challenging times and hard choices to be made during the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and sorry for not getting that right. I will hopefully get it right next time. I agree that we must work together to address these fiscal challenges. Unfortunately, I'm not sure what we meant by working together. Later on, I'll have some questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SAHTU REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I address in my Members' statement a building under construction in Norman Wells, a building that is going to cost this government \$35 million to provide well-needed healthcare to the surrounding communities. For the newcomers in the audience, I represent five communities in the Central Mackenzie. It's remote. We've got three ways to go in there. We have no all-weather road, so the government provides meaningful institutions and services to our five communities. Getting back to the statement here, the facility is under construction, but is going to be seeing the opening of the doors within this calendar year. In addition to the regional facility, we are going to see 18 rooms to accommodate long-term care for elders as well, so that's very exciting news for the area. Later I will have questions for the Health Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT MCPHERSON ELDERS' HOME CARE FACILITY

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in February 2010, the Hamlet Council of Fort McPherson passed a motion supporting the construction of an elders' homecare facility in the community. The hamlet council and community members were very happy when this \$3 million facility was put in the GNWT's Capital Plan. Construction was scheduled for 2015-2016. Like every other community in the Northwest Territories, Fort McPherson is challenged to provide appropriate housing for its residents. Our esteemed elders deserve comfortable and secure accommodations during their golden years. This nine-unit multiplex, which is designed to house eight seniors plus a caretaker, is much needed in the community.

Since the hamlet council motion six years ago, the community has waited patiently for this important project. Community members are concerned, and so am I, Mr. Speaker, that progress on this project seems to be stalled. During last year's construction season, the contractor drilled half a dozen pilings on the site. I was told that work halted when they hit water during the season, which was August, Mr. Speaker. There has been no visible progress on site. Therefore, today I will be seeking an answer to the questions: What is causing the delay in the construction of this much-needed facility and when can community members expect to see it completed?

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BATHURST CARIBOU HERD MANAGEMENT PLAN

**MR. O'REILLY:** The Bathurst caribou herd has suffered a catastrophic decline over the last 30 years from 472,000 to as low as 16,000 animals today. The response from this government to date has largely been centred on restricting the harvest by non-Aboriginal people and more recently, on Aboriginal peoples who have agreed to not take any caribou from this herd. The causes of the decline are not clear but we do know that the herd is less resilient when numbers are low and any further cumulative impacts may push the herd beyond the point of no return. A recently released study by the Tlicho Research and Learning Institute found: "The establishment of large-scale mines and associated industrial activities on the Bathurst caribou habitat as the main factor behind caribou health defects and changes to their behaviour and migration." It also states, "In response, caribou have chosen to avoid centres of mining activities due to poor-quality forage and noise and dust pollution. The activities of the resource extraction

industry around the Ekati, Lac de Gras, area, have established a 'wall' blocking the main caribou migration route."

This study also marks a remarkable convergence of traditional knowledge and western science. Data from collars and aerial surveys have established a Zone of Influence around the diamond mines where caribou calves and cows are less likely to be found. I attended a cumulative effects workshop for the Slave Geological Province in 1993 following two mineral staking seasons where an area the size of France was taken up. There have been many, many workshops and meetings since then on cumulative effects on the Bathurst caribou herd but there is still no management plan for the herd, no legally binding land use plan for the Northwest Territories' portion of the range of the herd, and I am not aware of one square centimetre of land that has been permanently protected for the caribou in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, I seek a unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. O'REILLY:** It is not just this MLA that is concerned about the state of the Bathurst caribou herd. The Mackenzie Valley Review Board said this in its February 1, 2016, report on the Jay Project, "The lack of a management plan for the Bathurst caribou herd during a period of very low numbers and a declining population is unacceptable to the Review Board. There is no evidence the GNWT is developing a herd recovery strategy. The Review Board notes that the GNWT was required by Section 12.11.2 of the Tlicho Agreement to prepare a comprehensive proposal for the management of the Bathurst caribou herd within three years of the effective date of that land claim."

That was 2005, Mr. Speaker. "There is no evidence before the review board that this legal obligation has been satisfied. The GNWT needs to complete and implement an interim recovery and management plan for the Bathurst caribou herd before this herd's population is so reduced that recovery of the herd is no longer likely." That's the end of the quote. I will be tabling the Tlicho Research and Learning Institute Report I mentioned earlier, and I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIORS' HOUSING SHORTAGES

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, the NWT's population of older adults is projected to grow dramatically in the next ten years. The number of adults over age 75 across the NWT is expected to double, and here in Yellowknife it's expected to triple. These numbers come from a strategic plan developed by Avens – A Community for Seniors.

If we want these seniors, along with their transfer payments and consumer spending, to stay in the NWT, we need to offer them affordable housing. Instead of enjoying a comfortable and secure old age, many seniors in Yellowknife face long waitlists to access the housing they need. A total of 54 people are on the waiting list to get into Aven Ridge and Aven Court. They're going to wait a long time for those 32 units. In fact, if you join the list today, you may wait as long as six years for a unit to become available. Meanwhile, people who are unable to live independently are also waitlisted for long-term care at Aven Manor and the Territorial Dementia Facility.

The situation of people who are waiting for long-term and dementia care is especially troubling. Here's why: One of my constituents has been living independently all his adult life. He's now in his late 60s. But he's developing dementia. He lives alone. Sometimes he walks away from where he lives very late at night, not dressed properly for the weather, confused and unable to find his way home. His dementia is putting him in danger. Family have been helping. They take turns cooking for him and they take him to medical appointments, but they have full-time jobs so it's hard to keep him safe on a 24-hour-a-day basis. Neighbours keep an eye out for him, too. His doctor believes the best place for him to go is the Territorial Dementia Facility, but it's full. He was offered a spot in Fort Smith, but his family said no because they all live here in Yellowknife and he has lived here all his life. He doesn't know anyone in Fort Smith. His family is worried that he is now at the bottom of the waiting list because he won't move.

The GNWT informally committed \$12.5 million to building an athletes' village for the 2023 Canada Winter Games with an additional matching amount from the federal government. Now it looks as if we won't need an athletes' village because there isn't enough public support to bid on those games. May I seek unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to conclude my statement? Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now it looks like we won't need an athletes' village because there isn't enough public support to bid on those

games, but we still need the housing. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Seniors about committing money pledged for the athletes' village to seniors' housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDRESSING SMALL COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS

**MR. NADLI:** Mr. Speaker, homelessness looks different in the North than in southern Canada. Homelessness is less visible here, but just as distressing. Our harsh winter temperatures force the homeless indoors where they wind up couch surfing, moving between the homes of family and friends for two or three days at a time. They arrive late, leave early, and spend their days walking around. They struggle with addictions. They hide from local housing organizations so their hosts don't suffer the consequences such as increased rent or renovations for housing an extra person. It's a hard life.

The statistics on homelessness are unreliable and vary widely. For example, the City of Yellowknife estimates their homeless population at 150, while The Homeless Hub, the Calgary think tank, and the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition would estimate the number of people who access Yellowknife shelters at over 900 per year, almost five per cent of the city's population. A lot of people from small communities migrate to Yellowknife when they are homeless, meaning they may have even less support from family and friends. Because the homeless have no permanent address, they can't be easily counted. This makes it difficult for governments to assess the size of the problem or to adequately address it. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has introduced Northern Pathways to Housing, a program to partner with three smaller communities to operate transitional housing. That's three communities out of 27, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, the GNWT underestimates the size of the homelessness problem.

In Fort Providence, five per cent of the population equals 40 people. This is the number of homeless estimated by a new not-for-profit group called the Community Advancement Partnership Society, or CAPS, which has formed in Fort Providence. Their goal is to fund the construction of a multiplex with seven single-bedroom units to provide the Housing First for those who need it the most. The Housing First report has been used successfully by the City of Medicine Hat, which launched the program in 2009 to provide small permanent apartments to homeless residents. Six years later, they have housed 885 homeless adults and children and are nearing their goal of eradicating homelessness. Mayor Ted Clugston makes financial sense. You can actually save money by giving somebody some dignity and giving them places to stay. Mr. Speaker,

I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. Fort Providence CAPS is using some creative approaches to raise funds, including an online crowdfunding campaign on GoFundMe.com and a "chase the ace" funding campaign, which works a lot like a payday pool and is becoming a popular way for charities to raise funds. It could take three years or more for CAPS to achieve their funding goal. In the meantime, there are homeless people needing assistance. Fort Providence needs support from the GNWT in the form of transitional housing, income support, and addictions treatment to lift the homeless up and help them turn their lives around. The Housing First approach has proven successful in reducing homelessness and saving program dollars in communities across North America, including Saskatoon, Medicine Hat, and Montreal, to name a few. When is the GNWT going to get on board and make this program available to every small community in the Northwest Territories that needs and wants it? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BALANCED APPROACH TO FISCAL PLANNING

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Mr. Speaker, as the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly gets down to business, there's a degree of uneasiness out there among the people of the Northwest Territories. Notwithstanding the Premier's good-news comments just now on tourism, there's been very little good economic news of late. The oil patch has slowed to a standstill, our friends to the south in Alberta have seen up to 35,000 people laid off over the past couple of years, and the Canadian dollar is only worth 70 cents U.S. Although there was a partial restoration of our Territorial Formula Financing funding, a significant portion still remains in question. Here at home, oil and gas exploration has slowed down to nothing. One of the three diamond projects has gone into care and maintenance while also moving their head office to the South. Right now things aren't that good, and that gives all of us a sense of uncertainty, and that's not comforting for most folks.

I share in the concern of many, that this government has chosen this time to pile on with drastic fiscal measures in the interests of balancing the books by the end of our term. While balanced books are a nice thing to have, they should not be the single overriding factor determining our fiscal direction over the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. In challenging times, it is important to be cautious and

sensible in allocating public resources, but austerity for its own sake does not constitute a benefit to families, businesses, and communities. It does not constitute better government. We must take a triple-bottom-line approach to conducting our business, one that sees a balance struck in managing our financial, social, and environmental responsibilities. I'm also concerned that decisions taken now in response to the current economic climate will tie our hands over this Assembly's entire term. A year from now the economic picture might be very different. We should not make decisions now that will restrict our flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. Northerners demand that we be sensible with public dollars, indeed. But they also call on this government to do careful research into the impacts and consequences of fiscal decisions. They need us to conduct open and thorough consultation with Regular Members, Aboriginal governments, the business community, and the public on government priorities and initiatives. They call on us to not commit ourselves to a direction we cannot change. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. They call on us to not commit ourselves to a direction we cannot change, and they call on us to not prioritize balanced government books over the real needs of families, businesses, and communities. It's a crucial time in our history, Mr. Speaker, and our decisions will have extensive impacts across the territory. I call on this government to engage in broad consultation, conduct careful research and consideration, and apply a balanced approach toward the way we conduct our business before we commit to a course of action that may tie our hands later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TUKTOYAKTUK SHORELINE EROSION

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will talk about the community of Tuktoyaktuk and the major changes to come in the next 10 to 20 years. Shoreline erosion has major effects on the housing infrastructure, as well as some of the roads in the community completely flooded during the fall storms. This has since eroded the shoreline on the northwest side of the community, and if there are no action plans in place some homes will collapse into the ocean, which will result in families and the GNWT losing much-needed homes. This will also create environmental issues, as a majority of the community harvest beluga and fish in and around the harbour, which

will affect the social and cultural well-being of the community.

Currently some of the areas of the community are no longer suitable for building with encroachment and some homes will have to be moved to higher ground. With the completion of the all-season Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway, it will have major positive and negative impacts in the community. Having access in the summer will give the GNWT a better window of access to work on the shoreline erosion, as well as set the tone for relocating homes that are immediately affected. Tuktoyaktuk will require a new land use plan to better manage development within the community's boundaries. Some action plans may include identifying some of the land parcels for development that will protect against flooding in the fall season. Today I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DREDGING THE PORT OF HAY RIVER

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm using my first few Members' statements of this Assembly to inform the other Members and the people of the NWT about the major issues affecting Hay River. I know the returning Members are aware of this particular issue, because my predecessor made countless statements on it.

I'm speaking of the build-up of sediments in the Port of Hay River, which has reached a crisis level. The federal government used to dredge the waterways around Hay River and at points on the Mackenzie River. That program ended in the early 1990s and virtually nothing has been done since. The result is that tugs are dragging barges through silt, boats are being damaged, and veteran commercial fishermen aren't willing to go out on the water because it's unsafe. I'm aware that dredging is the federal government's responsibility. That was the answer my predecessor received over and over again when he tried to spur this government into action. Regardless of whose responsibility it is, it's our problem and we have to do something about it.

Safe marine operating conditions are vital to maintaining and growing the South Slave economy. The Port of Hay River is the largest inland port in Western Canada. It is home to a Canadian Coast Guard base, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans office, and NTCL's operations headquarters. It's the heart of the NWT's fishing industry. The port is the reason that the town of Hay River exists, so it's shocking that we've let its condition deteriorate to this level.

The proposed mandate contains a bold vision for the NWT's fishing industry. The problem is that if the fishermen can't get to the fish because the port is too shallow and unsafe, then we don't have an industry. It's as simple as that. Hay River has a burgeoning tourist industry with amazing potential. With our southern proximity and access the town could be a destination for recreational boaters and sport fishers, and in fact, there are entrepreneurs making investments in that market right now. Without action on dredging, that opportunity is lost. The viability of our shipping industry and the cost of goods up the Mackenzie are also directly and negatively affected by our lack of action. This problem has consequences beyond Hay River. Finally, as each year passes and the sediment builds up, the risk of flooding grows greater. We've been lucky recently, but the flooding in 2009 is a reminder that our luck won't last forever. From what I can tell, the previous government did little more than encourage the federal government to dredge, which seems to have gotten us nowhere. I hope this government will be more proactive. I will be working towards finding solutions, so hopefully together we can fix this problem once and for all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, one of the highest priorities of any government must be the health and well-being of its citizens. The delivery of quality and affordable healthcare is a cornerstone of good government in Canada and it's something that Northerners have come to expect. Yet the standards of the Northwest Territories' healthcare system vary wildly across regions and not all of our residents have the same standard of care. The 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly recognized the need to take action on improving healthcare and began the process of health system transformation in an effort to provide the best possible care to patients and clients. A system that is focused on the needs of clients and that is efficient, sustainable, and accountable. Standardized levels of care and healthcare policies will also make it easier to implement broad policy changes that may be required by emergent concerns, such as the imminent issue of physician-assisted dying. How our government proceeds with that and other issues is just as crucial as having a means to deliver on those new policies and a stronger healthcare system, and is a welcome initiative on the part of this government.

While it is agreeable that our government continue to make progress and improvements to our healthcare system, we owe it to Northerners to

ensure that a holistic and integrated approach is taken that respects regional differences and ensures that all of our people have a voice in how system operates. Significant changes to how our government provides any public service must be carefully implemented and effectively communicated, especially as it relates to the provision of healthcare. I will have questions for the Minister on the current status of health system transformation, as well as questions on the structure and overall benefits to healthcare this new system will provide to Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. –

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIORS' "AGING IN PLACE" HOUSING PROGRAMS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** [English translation not provided.] Mr. Speaker, today I will be making a Member's statement on aging in place. Aging in place will keep seniors in their own homes and their own communities for as long as possible. In order to do this, the NWT Housing Corporation will have to make adjustments and changes to their repair programs. Mr. Speaker, aging in place, when the NWT Housing Corporation works with the Department of Health and Social Services' homecare program, can defer \$125,000 per year per senior. That, Mr. Speaker, is the current cost of having one senior in long-term care for one year, not to mention the cost of building more long-term facilities. The capital cost of building long-term facilities is between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per bed.

Many seniors across NWT are now finding it difficult to remain in their homes. Most of them need their units to be retrofitted to a barrier-free or senior-friendly state so that they will not have the burden of a poorly functioning house in their later years. Once the seniors have their homes retrofitted to meet their needs they will need homecare services to remain in their home, and the NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services must work together to make this possible. In addition, the seniors themselves want to remain in their homes and in their communities for as long as possible. Seniors wish to remain as independent as possible. This will give them the independence they so desire.

Currently about 15 per cent of the population across Canada is 65 years and over, and this number is expected to grow by about a half per cent per year, actually slightly under a half per cent per year. Therefore, the government should have programs for the costs of modifying the homes to accommodate the changing needs of aging elders and support should be put in place so they can

continue to enjoy a high quality of life in their own homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to recognize the NWT Tourism executive director, Cathie Bolstad and marketing director, Ron Ostrom. Welcome.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

**MR. SIMPSON:** This week we have two Pages from Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River. I'd like to recognize them, Riella Bordey and Marcel Frise. They're grade 9 students and they'll be helping us out all week, and I thank them. I'd also like to thank my constituency assistant, Anne Peters, in the gallery. She's also a constituent. Prior to this, she was an executive assistant at the Chamber of Commerce in Hay River and spent 22 years with the Canadian Armed Forces. I'd also like to recognize Mandee McDonald and Erin Freeland Ballantyne from Dechinta University.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake,

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Mandee McDonald and Erin Freeland Ballantyne. Both work with Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, which is a great made-in-the-North post-secondary institution, and it's good to see them here. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also recognize a couple of Pages from East Three Secondary School in Inuvik: Kylie English-Traer and Chantal Schab. They are here with my constituency assistant, their chaperone, Christine Cardinal.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with my colleagues, I'd like to recognize Mandee McDonald and Erin Freeland Ballantyne, who do some very good work with Dechinta University. Welcome to the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must, like my colleagues, pour it on. I want to recognize Erin Freeland Ballantyne and Mandee McDonald from Dechinta. Dechinta's offices are in the riding of Yellowknife North. Like the Premier, I also want to take the opportunity to recognize the executive director of NWT Tourism, Cathie Bolstad, as she is also a resident of Yellowknife North. I thank them all for coming today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed those individuals in the gallery I'd like to welcome everyone for being here today with us. It's always great to have an audience in the gallery.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 6, acknowledgements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Acknowledgements

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 3-18(2): RETIREMENT OF JANET DIVEKY

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Janet Diveky on her retirement from Public Works and Services. Mrs. Diveky taught throughout the Arctic before moving to Yellowknife with her husband and family in 1988. She joined Public Works and Services as a Library Technician then and again in 2003, with a return to teaching in-between. Mrs. Diveky is known for her volunteer efforts, especially with the Yellowknife Association for Community Living. She's also well known for her skills as a potter. I'd like to congratulate Mrs. Diveky on her career at Public Works and Services and wish her and her family well in her retirement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 23-18(2): PORT OF HAY RIVER DREDGING EFFORTS

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Member's statement today, I have questions I'd like to direct at the Minister of Transportation regarding the dredging of the port of Hay River. Given the importance of safe marine operating conditions to the physical well-being of those using the waterways and the economic well-being of the industries that depend on those waterways what, if any, responsibility does the GNWT have in regards to ensuring safe marine operating conditions?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Transportation.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Canada has

legislative and regulatory authority and responsibility for marine operations and conditions. The Government of Canada is also the federal regulator responsible for safe marine operation and conditions on navigable NWT waterways, including the Great Slave Lake, the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers, and the port of Hay River. The Department of Transportation's advocacy regarding marine issues with federal departments, including the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard, including safe operating conditions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Given that during that the last Assembly, the then Minister of Transportation recognized the importance of a viable harbour in Hay River to the economic well-being of the community, the region, and the territory, has the government analyzed the potential economic benefits of taking concrete action in regards to dredging?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** The economic importance of the Hay River harbour to private industry, commercial fishing industry, tourism, and recreational users in the public sector, the Canadian Coast Guard and the National Defence marine supply operations will have an impact on the cost of living. Twelve communities depend on marine resupply for delivery of essential cargo; four communities depend exclusively on marine and air resupply. Fifteen per cent reduction in maximum barge loads last summer for Hay River; a significant infill and the siltation are key locations in the Hay River harbour and East Channel impacts on NTL's commercial fishing vessels and other vessels.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Because the GNWT does undertake the obligation to encourage the federal government to dredge, has there been any progress on this issue during your meetings with the new federal Minister or with the Prime Minister?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I recently met with Minister Tootoo, the federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, in January in Ottawa. We discussed the NWT marine issues, including dredging of the Hay River harbour. We also followed up with Minister Tootoo on a formal request for reinstatement of the federal Arctic marine resupply sites and the management program within the NWT, with emphasis on critical need for proper maintenance of the 14 federally owned and operated community marine facilities in the NWT, including the Hay River harbour. Proper maintenance is essential to safe and timely cost-effective marine resupply in NWT communities and industry.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to hear that we're engaging the appropriate federal Ministers on this topic. Finally, in addition to encouraging the federal government to dredge the areas in question, would this government be willing to provide any assistance to the federal government such as planning, logistical support, or possibly committing a small amount of resources towards it if such assistance was required to initiate the project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** The fiscal and legal responsibility to ensure safe marine operation conditions in the Northwest Territories and across Canada is a federal responsibility. This includes dredging of the Hay River harbour to ensure safe operating conditions for all vessels with sufficient water depths to ensure safe and unobstructed passage. The Department of Transportation continues to press the federal government to maintain marine facilities in NWT. The Department of Transportation is also finalizing plans for a workshop in Hay River in mid-April with the focus on the Hay River harbour and dredging. Key stakeholders have been notified. The anticipated workshop will result in an effective dredging plan for Hay River harbour, and marine stakeholders are very interested. I expect a positive result for the Hay River harbour and the town of Hay River.

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

#### QUESTION 24-18(2): HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance of the health care system and that any major changes to it are significant concern for our residents, will the Minister of Health and Social Services provide an explanation for the delay of the transformation of health care in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the legislation has given us the authority to move to one authority in the Northwest Territories, as well as the Tlicho and Hay River Health authorities, was passed in May/June. It was initially intended to go live on April 1, but as a result of a number of factors including our difficulty getting the financial system for use by all the authorities; some delays we experienced during the election campaign; communication; and our ability to set up those wellness councils; and our delay in hiring a CEO -- I've decided to move forward the go-live date to August 1, 2016. That will give us the time to do that incredibly important work before we

go live with the one authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** On to the issue of regional wellness committees, what progress has been made in selecting those committees? What kinds of input are going into those choices?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Last year I convened a meeting of Aboriginal leadership from across the Northwest Territories and had discussion around this exact topic. We sought input and advice from them, as well as other stakeholders from across the Northwest Territories on what the make-up of those committees should be. We are just in the process right now of doing some call letters out to the different organizations, including MLAs, on nominations for individuals to go on those wellness councils, based on the work that was done. Once that's done, we'll move forward with the establishment of those wellness committees.

**MR. TESTART:** Given the imminent concerns of our fiscal situation in the Northwest Territories, will there be cost-saving efficiencies as a result of standardizing care in the NWT?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We've been very clear since the initial discussions around health transformation that this isn't about saving money, necessarily. This is more about improving the quality of care that we're providing to our residents by removing some of the barriers that exist for them today. We do know that there's a number of functions that occur in each of the authorities, that by working together we'll be able to control our costs and possibly have some savings, but mostly this is focused on improving our care for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and onto the point of improved health care. Will there be reduced wait times and more access to medical professionals after the implementation of the new system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** One of the things we are attempting to do with this health transformation is remove some of the barriers that exist today as one individual moves from authority to authority to get the different services. As we tighten up our services, come with more standard procedures, more standard guidelines, as well as clinical standards, we should be able to improve the turn-around and more importantly, the response and the care that our residents get.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Ms. Green.

QUESTION 25-18(2):  
SENIORS' HOUSING SHORTAGES

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Seniors. How is the government preparing for the greater number of seniors and their needs? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister responsible for Seniors.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of things we're doing, but I'll focus primarily on the beds that we're going to need for seniors here in the Northwest Territories. We've just completed our long-term care review, which I'm going to be sharing with committee in the coming weeks. I'm in the process of drafting a letter to send to committee so that I can share it with them, and hopefully we'll have an opportunity to sit down for a meeting. But I'll give some up front numbers: By 2026 this government is going to be 259 beds short in long-term care. Forty-seven of those are in the Beaufort-Delta, ten of those are in the Sahtu, 29 in the Deh Cho, five in the Tlicho region, 123 in Yellowknife, 31 in South Slave, and 14 in Fort Smith. This is a significant number. On average, it costs us about \$130,000 a bed to operate a long-term care bed in the Northwest Territories, and on average anywhere from \$800,000 to \$1.5 million per bed to construct long-term care. We have a significant challenge in front of us. I'm looking forward to bringing the report to committee and having discussions on how we can move forward on this. We are starting to put together a draft plan to have some discussions with committee. The bottom line is we're going to have to think outside the box on this one. We're going to have to look for creative solutions. We're going to have to work with partners to find a way to provide these 259 beds for our aging population here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Minister, for that response and for that new information that quantifies the size of the problem. It's actually much larger than I had anticipated. There's some long-term work that needs to be done, but there are immediate needs, too, that come out of our broken continuum of housing for seniors, with these seniors who have dementia and long-term care needs that are currently inappropriately housed. What kinds of short-term solutions might the government be able to offer these seniors?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We do have the Territorial Admissions Committee that actually helps us in focusing and prioritizing individuals, so individuals with higher needs can move up the list, but as I have indicated, we have a significant shortage of beds. Currently, I believe we're about

60 beds short here in the Northwest Territories, and that will be part of the 259 that we're going to be short by 2026. We're working with CAP, we're working with Avens on coming up with some solutions in the short-term for Yellowknife. But this isn't just a Yellowknife problem. We've got problems in the Beaufort-Delta where we have our residents in acute care units rather than long-term care units, which isn't desirable at all. We're looking at putting together a plan, working with committee for some short-, medium- and long-term wins. I don't necessarily know what all those solutions are at this point, but I really do look forward to having a sit-down with committee, and as I said, I am drafting the letter to send to them to share the report and to have initial discussions on how we can move together to address this oncoming problem.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now, there was going to be money set aside from an athletes' village for the Canada Winter Games, which is likely not going to be needed because the bid won't take place. Is it possible to use that money and multiply it with federal money in order to provide an additional \$24 million to go into seniors' care?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** No official dollars are actually allocated. We had committed as a government in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and I know the Minister today is also committed to working with the Assembly to find the dollars to support the Canada Winter Games bid. We were going to find those dollars, but no official dollars have actually been allocated into our budget. I can say that the federal government has announced they're going to invest in social infrastructure and I had an opportunity to meet with the Minister responsible, and we talked about some of the needs that we have in the Northwest Territories. Seniors' housing was one of the issues that we raised with them, and it's also one of the pillars that were identified. We don't have a lot of detail on how those social infrastructure dollars are going to be spent or what the criteria are, but we are working closely with the federal government so that they can inform us so that we can apply for it accordingly. But as I said, we're looking for pretty much any avenue we can to find a way to meet our needs and we do need to think outside the box on this one. We're going to have to seek partners in every area to help us meet this 259-bed shortage by 2026.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister look at the possibility of a P3 arrangement to provide this kind of care for seniors? Thank you. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'd like to remind Members that they direct the questions through the Speaker, please. Masi. Minister responsible for Seniors.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we need to look for any avenue to help us. Traditional procurement might be appropriate in some communities and regions; it may not be in others. Our minds need to be open to pretty much any option. The federal government is a potential other partner. In the previous government, I'd been asked whether or not we would be supportive of private businesses coming in and setting up long-term care facilities. This is something that we're supportive of. There's no reason somebody couldn't come in and start up a long-term care facility if they wanted. At the same time, we need to make sure that we have a plan and a system to put and support 259 beds in the Northwest Territories by 2026, which isn't a long time, and the demand is increasing daily. This is a significant amount of work and I, once again, am looking forward to working with committee and sharing the report with them so that we can begin those important discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Vanthuyne.

QUESTION 26-18(2):  
THAIDENE NENE NATIONAL PARK

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before my questions, just in the event of support and a small glimmer of hope, today I wear my Canada Winter Games pin here, just so we know.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, through you, my questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. During campaigning, many residents raised the issue of the Thaidene Nene National Park. While most were supportive of this development, some were confused with the overall structure of the park. From what I have learned recently, part of the area will be a national park under federal control, with others being under territorial control. I'm wondering if the Minister can give us a little more detail on what is planned for this important and beautiful area of the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Member for the question. The Member is right: This is an important and extremely beautiful part of the Northwest Territories, truly an area worth protecting for the

current and future generations of people of the Northwest Territories and Canada. The GNWT has worked collaboratively towards that goal of protection with Aboriginal governments, Parks Canada, and other stakeholders. Our aim was to develop the made-in-the-NWT solution that gave us the exposure and investment associated with the federal and national park, while at the same time allowing us to use our legislative and regulatory instruments, policies and strategies, et cetera -- for example, northern tools -- to achieve northern land management objectives. The concept of northern tools is not new. It comes from Land Use Sustainability Framework finalized during the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. That document outlined a vision for land use in the NWT, and I would invite all Members to review this important and well-crafted document. We've come a long way in a short time on our first rollout of northern tools, but much work remains. I will be looking for the support of the Assembly to continue that work and to help realize our goal in protecting this important area.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** I thank the Minister for his reply. I have heard from numerous constituents that they are concerned about accessing the area after a park is created. Can the Minister provide us some details around access issues? I'm thinking specifically about whether there will be a fee for residents to access either federally or territorially controlled areas and/or if there will be other restrictions placed on residents entering the area once the park is created.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** There may very well be a nominal fee for park access, but we are in the early days on this issue. I can say that we intend to work with Parks Canada to ensure that the experience for park users is seamless, so that people can move between the territorial and federal portions without really knowing that they are doing so.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** We often say that the North is unique, and that is true in many respects, Mr. Speaker. For example, parks in the North are large, open and undisturbed areas where wildlife roams free in their natural habitat. As a result of our uniqueness, some of the rules used in national parks may not be appropriate for the NWT. Has that been taken into consideration by the department as this initiative has advanced and, if so, can the Minister elaborate?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Absolutely. These items have been and will continue to be taken into account as we move forward. A good example of this is we use the firearms for personal protection. We need to make sure we consider our unique northern context when we approach such issues. Our northern tools approach offers us that flexibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and lastly, I asked earlier about what limitations this new park might have on residents. I'm wondering if the Minister can expand on his response and provide more detail on what limitations, if any, this new park will have on industry.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I want to be clear, there will be areas where industrial activities will not be permitted within the park. Our research, however, has helped to ensure that areas of high mineral potential have been excluded and it will allow some industrial activities to take place. This too is part of the balance approach offered by northern tools. Beyond this the possibility, more importantly, the creation of this area also allows us to diversify the economy by opening up an entirely new industry, the conservation economy, with focus on tourism and recreational activities.

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

QUESTION 27-18(2):  
TUKTOYAKTUK SHORELINE EROSION

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Shoreline erosion has been affecting the community of Tuktoyaktuk for some time. Mr. Speaker, my question is how long has the department been aware of this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk completed a shoreline protection study in 1994 and they said at the time that their preferred recommendation was to relocate infrastructure currently on the peninsula. From 2007 to 2015, the Hamlet has had a shoreline erosion project on their capital plan. However, I understand in the 2016 capital plan they've removed the use of CPI funding for this and instead are seeking to try to obtain some federal funding or other forms of funding to help deal with the issue. Thank you.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** My second question is what options are available to the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk to help them address the issues of shoreline erosion?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Community governments have the authority and the control to make decisions about infrastructure in their community. The Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk is

responsible for developing and implementing a multi-year capital development plan on how to fund capital projects. Through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, we provide regular support to communities should they seek our advice on some of the projects that they have in mind.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** The Government of Canada has recently made an announcement about the National Disaster Mitigation Program. Could this be a solution for Tuktoyaktuk?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** In April 2015, Public Safety Canada launched the National Disaster Mitigation Program, and it does offer some cost sharing, funding, to support national disaster mitigation projects. We would have to work with them to see if this particular project falls under that program, and what the funding sources and funding levels are like. Like many of the programs with the federal government, there's a cost-sharing component to it, so we would have to work with the community of Tuktoyaktuk and the federal government to identify different types of funding that might be available to the community should they decide to pursue this.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what other types of funding and support from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs are available to support Tuktoyaktuk if they want to address shoreline erosion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I spoke briefly to the National Disaster Mitigation Plan. Again, we will explore the options there. The Hamlet also receives \$899,000 annually in funding through the Community Public Infrastructure Program from the department. As well, a project dealing with shoreline erosion would be considered eligible for one-time funding in the amount of \$789,000 through the Building Canada Small Communities Fund. The hamlet has chosen to utilize its funding on another project in the community. Again, the support that they would get from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is that we'd be pleased to go in there at the community's request, work with them on planning for this and identifying any types of funding that are out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 28-18(2):  
FORT MCPHERSON ELDERS' HOME CARE  
FACILITY

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a follow up to my Member's statement. I have questions for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. I'd like to ask the Minister: how was the location for this new facility in Fort McPherson selected and was the community involved?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Ms. Cochrane.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The selection for the seniors' facility was done in June 2013. We met the Fort McPherson Hamlet Council during their meeting to discuss the building and the location. In July 2013, we met with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and provided information on the building. In September 2013, we had a community consultation in the community. The location of the building was discussed at that point as well. December 2013 was the only time that we had an issue brought forward that talked about the location and we were asked if we could move it to the river. At that time, we looked at it and we realized that the lot was too small and also, we were using that building for market housing, so we didn't want to tear it down too, which would mean more housing needs in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** I'd like to ask the Minister: what problems are causing the construction of the elders' facility to be delayed?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** We had a couple of problems, actually, with the starting of it. We negotiated with the contractor in 2015 and this summer, he started working on it. He installed 11 piles in July, but we didn't have our geotechnical inspector on-site so we stopped work on that project. We need to have the proper regulators watching when they're doing the construction. As the MLA had stated earlier there were also some water issues and we are working with the contractor. Now we're back on track and the building will be completed within this fiscal year.

**MR. BLAKE:** When can the people of Fort McPherson expect the work on this facility to be completed?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** November 2016.

**MR. BLAKE:** That sounds great. Hopefully we have no other issues and if we do I'll have more questions for the Minister later.

---Laughter

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

QUESTION 29-18(2):  
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions to the Minister of Finance. Can the Minister of Finance explain what he means by working together to make these hard decisions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Honourable Minister of Finance.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a process in the Legislative Assembly that we go through where we appear before a committee with our business planning process outlining some of the challenges we're facing and then we get feedback from committee, and we will develop our main estimates that we will debate in the May/June budget session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Can the Minister please provide us with a picture of who was involved in coming up with these ideas for cuts, reductions, and revenue options?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we have tasked our senior officials with providing us with some options to have a look at the workings of each department within the Government of Northwest Territories and we will work with committee. I have committed to the Priorities and Planning Committee that I would have a discussion with them again and that we will go through the business plan planning exercise. We will get more feedback from Committee as to how we are going to deal with the situation that's facing us, and then we will develop our main estimates that we will table in May/June. I must emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that we are still spending approximately \$1.7 billion in our budget for the people for the people of Northwest Territories.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I'd like to thank the Minister for his answer. Can the Minister of Finance please tell us how the frontline public servants have been involved in providing recommendations to this government?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, again, we have tasked our senior officials, our deputies, with finding some options and bring forward to Cabinet that we can in turn share with committee. As part of that process, they would talk to all those in their department right down to the regional level as to some of the recommendations that they may have as to how we can address some of the challenges

that are facing us. I'm sure there's a process that goes down and then they report back to the deputies who in turn would come forward to this Cabinet with some options and we would share them with committee and get their feedback as well.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer. Is there any way that you can provide the Regular Members with a flowchart or how this message was relayed to the public servants, and if there's a way that the public servants are encouraged to provide this information? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** There has been no decisions made yet, but I take the Member's point. We will have a discussion with all those involved because this would have far-reaching implications across the Northwest Territories, at the same time we need to make sure that we live within our means. It's prudent on us as government to seek input from all those involved across the Northwest Territories and we commit to doing that, and I've committed to the committee that I would find some time with them during this particular session and give them an update as to the work that we're doing.

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

QUESTION 30-18(2):  
SAHTU REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had mentioned here earlier in my Member's statement, my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services about the newly constructed, still underway, facility in Norman Wells providing a modern medical care system to the residents of the whole area. It's the first of its kind in the area to also provide long-term care units and availability to 18 seniors in our community and our area. Taking into account a building of such, there's a transitional phase that would take place prior to the building being functional and ready to provide that service. I'm asking the Minister if I can get a copy of the transitional plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within the budget there are actually some dollars allocated for the transition from the old facility into the new facility. It's about \$200,000. Our intention is to develop a transition plan, but we do have a bit of time. This facility doesn't open until tentatively March 2017, so the transition plan hasn't been fully formed. Once it's

done, I'm happy to share it with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MCNEELY:** In that case, my next question, Mr. Speaker, is to seek who is actually holding the transition plan. When I talked to the CEO in Norman Wells, she says they're moving in in November. So actually, which is it?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I'd need to confirm. The information I'm familiar with suggests that we will take ownership of that building in March 2017, at which point we will start moving into an official opening of the building. I don't believe a date has been determined, but I will talk to the CEO to see which date she is working on.

**MR. MCNEELY:** My next question to the Minister is: If there is going to be a transitional plan for a portion of the department moving into the building this coming November, can the Minister provide the documentation to discuss some of the logistics and staffing that would be eventually included in the transitional plan?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Some initial work was done identifying the types of positions that would be required in that new facility as a result of it taking a new function in the Sahtu. The 18 long-term care beds was something that didn't exist in the region before. I'm happy to share the information that we have as we develop a transition report. I'm happy to have a sit-down with the Member and bring him up to speed on what's happening in that region. I do believe we have a bit of time. It's my understanding, as I indicated, that we're not taking ownership of that building until March 31, 2017, so we still have a bit of time.

**MR. MCNEELY:** I welcome the Minister's invitation and look forward to our further dialogue and meeting on that.

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

QUESTION 31-18(2):  
ADDRESSING SMALL COMMUNITY  
HOMELESSNESS

**MR. NADLI:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Homelessness. The question is in regards to the conflicting figures that sometimes we use. The point is that homeless people are just not numbers. They are actually people, so my question is to the Minister: what steps is the Minister taking to correct the conflicting figures in terms of homelessness and to try to get a true picture, especially as it relates to engaging our federal colleagues in regard to funding on housing and homelessness? Mahsi

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The Minister responsible for Homelessness.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To actually get an accurate count on homelessness is something that is a huge challenge, because you can just look at the shelters. You can get numbers from there. You can actually get numbers from the RCMP, but there is a whole population of hidden homelessness that is unmanageable or unrealistic to be able to count, and those include people that are youth, that are sleeping on couches, a lot of families sharing accommodations. Unless people identify as being homeless, then it's really hard to get those numbers. To get an accurate figure, I'm afraid that that would be a real challenge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** I'd like to thank the Minister for her reply. Three out of 27 communities are part of the Northern Pathway to Housing. Is the department contemplating expanding the plans to include all of the communities in the NWT, and at what point?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** At this point, yes, the Northern Pathways to Housing is putting in seniors' facilities into Behchoko, Fort Simpson, and Aklavik. Actually, Fort Providence is the next community on the table. I can't guarantee whether they will be able to put homeless shelters into every community, but we will be looking at putting a homeless shelter into every region. That would be the goal at this point.

**MR. NADLI:** I would like to thank once again the Minister had indicated that it's actually unrealistic for us to come up with a true figure for homelessness. We've seen other jurisdictions across Canada, including the city of Medicine Hat, that set out a goal to eradicate homelessness, and they are pretty close to that reality. Is it the goal of this government to eventually eradicate homeless in NWT?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I am certain that it would be the goal of the GNWT to eradicate homelessness and to provide housing for every person in the Territories. However, would that goal be realistic would be the other problem to do. This will take time. It took a lot of time to get here. It's going to take a lot of time to fix. We are hoping that the federal government will follow through on its promise to invest in social infrastructure funding, though.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 32-18(2):  
BATHURST CARIBOU HERD MANAGEMENT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, [English translation not available]. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I talked about the catastrophic decline in the Bathurst caribou herd, and I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. It appears that the burden of the management responses to the decline of the Bathurst caribou herd have fallen on the resource harvesters. Can the Minister tell us what concrete actions have been taken in terms of habitat protection for the Bathurst caribou herd? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Weke'ezhii Renewable Resource Board has started public meetings on this process, starting tomorrow, I will have to take the Member's question on notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The question has been taken as notice. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 33-18(2):  
SENIORS "AGING IN PLACE" HOUSING PROGRAMS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As is in our mandate, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation if she has had any discussions about changing housing repair programs to accommodate aging in place with her staff. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, actually. The NWT Housing Corporation is actually looking at all of our programs to see if we can make access to the programs easier, to assist in things such as land tenure. That's been an issue within the communities, so we are looking to see if we can take that out. As well, just to give notification that the NWT Housing Corporation will be sending out, in April, a survey to all of the LHOs, to all community workers, or to people that are using public housing to see what programs are working well and what we need to change, and then we will develop a plan going forward based on that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I'm interested in aging in place as a concept or idea. So, specific to that, I recognize that there may be a need to change many of the housing programs. However, I was particularly

interested if there have been any discussions beyond just conceptual, but discussions to a point maybe the staff are looking at some money that may be put into aging in place. Has the Minister had any discussions monetarily about how much money could be put in the budget for aging in place?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** On March 10<sup>th</sup>, I will be meeting with the federal housing Minister to talk about the social infrastructure money that may be coming to the Territories. Once the federal budget is defined, then we will be able to put forward cases to look at that issue.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** There was going to be a question of mine on the federal commitment. However, after March 10<sup>th</sup>, after the Minister meets with her federal counterpart, what type of plan is there in place to roll up the communications for people, so people understand what is available from the Housing Corporation in the area of aging in place?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Part of the process that we will be looking for consultation from the communities on changes to the Housing Corporation will include a summary of all of the programs, a two-page summary, very basic, very plain. Within that, we are looking to help people understand what we have and what we need to change. After we get award from the federal government, at that point we will be looking at doing a communication strategy so that people understand what programs are available.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure that we had ruled out our mandate relying on federal commitments on social infrastructure in order to move forward with our mandate. In our mandate, we say aging in place is a priority. I gave some of the numbers here on why it should be a priority, the amount of money we would save even in the capital construction or just in the people who are in long-term care now versus what it would cost to keep people at home, the health of the individuals, the elders that remain in their own homes, and so on. I am interested in that. Have there been discussions on aging in place, not all the programs on aging in place, with the staff from the Minister? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Absolutely. Yes, there have been discussions on aging in place. The GNWT is really supportive of our seniors and supportive of them living within their communities and within their homes and families as long as possible. That is a priority for us. We have talked many times about the incidence of seniors increasing, and so we will be developing a plan to

be able to support aging in place as long as possible.

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

QUESTION 34-18(2):  
RESOURCES FOR "AGING IN PLACE"  
PROGRAMS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In the planned mandate for this government, we plan to have seniors age in place. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he has begun any sort of planning at all with his staff on increased spending and homecare to accommodate aging in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have an Aging in Place Strategy that we're following here in the Northwest Territories. Actually, in the previous Assembly, we had already agreed to go out and do some work to review homecare services in the Northwest Territories. That review is currently underway. Once that review is done, I have an opportunity to speak to committee on how we can actually enhance homecare services here in the Northwest Territories, whether it's through new programs or whether it's through modified programs, but it needs to focus on providing services in communities. Once that work is done, I will be in a better position to have a conversation with the public and with committee on how we can enhance and improve homecare services for all of our residents here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I'd like to ask if the Minister has had any discussion with federal counterparts in the area of increased homecare support from the federal government.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I did have a meeting with a federal Minister when we were at the most recent federal/provincial/territorial meeting. We did talk about seniors. We did talk about aging in place. We do understand that there is going to be some dollars available through the federal government, but we haven't got clear indication of exactly how those dollars can be spent and what they can be spent for. But there is certain going to be money available for social infrastructure through the federal government at some point. We will certainly keep committee and Members apprised of our discussions with them, so when we know something, they know something.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I'd like to ask the Minister if there will be more education and training for homecare workers in the NWT, should the money roll out? I don't want to make it a hypothetical question. I want to ask the Minister if there will be more education and training for future homecare workers in the NWT.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The homecare review that we're doing right now isn't dependent upon the federal government. We're doing that work because it's necessary. Once we complete that work, we'll be in a better position to actually have a conversation with committee and the public about how or what needs to be done around homecare. I wouldn't think it's too much of a stretch to assume that we need to look at our programs and provide different, maybe alternate training, than we currently do, so that we can help people age in their communities, which we know is better for patients and residents and clients to stay in their homes and age in their homes for as long as they can until it is no longer safe. I anticipate there will be training, but I can't say at all what that might look like today.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to avoid a hypothetical question. Has the Minister and the department talked about the use of homecare nurses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Homecare services that we provide are a wide range of services. Not of all of it is nursing services. We do provide homecare nurses in a number of communities and regions throughout the Northwest Territories, but we do provide home support workers in every community in the Northwest Territories, with the exception, I believe, of two. We actually have contract relationships with those communities to provide some of those services. It may not be practical to assume that we'll ever get to a position where we can have a homecare nurse in every community of the Northwest Territories, but we are certainly looking for ways to enhance our services, whether that's additional home support workers, or maybe nurses in some regions where appropriate and where practical.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Item 7, oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's Opening Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 7-18(2):  
2016-2017 MARKETING PLAN - NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES TOURISM

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "2016-2017 Marketing Plan, Northwest Territories Tourism."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance, Mr. McLeod.

TABLED DOCUMENT 8-18(2):  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS 2014-2015

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Public Accounts 2014-2015."

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 9-18(2):  
'WE LIVE HERE FOR CARIBOU' - CUMULATIVE  
IMPACTS STUDY ON THE BATHURST CARIBOU

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I talked about the document "We Live Here For Caribou: a Cumulative Impacts Study on the Bathurst Caribou Herd." I'd like to table this document.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

### Motions

MOTION 9-18(2):  
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 1-18(2):  
PROPOSED MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, 2016-2019  
TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,  
CARRIED

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** WHEREAS Tabled Document 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 requires detailed consideration;

NOW THEREFORE, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Tabled Document 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 be referred to Committee of the of the Whole for consideration.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried.

Motion is referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of Government of Northwest Territories, 2016-2019; Tabled Document 2-18(2), Interim Estimates 2016-2017; Tabled Document 3-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2015-2016; Tabled Document 4-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operation Expenditures), No. 3, 2015-2016, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chairman, the committee would like to begin the review of Tabled Document 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of Government of Northwest Territories, 2016-2019.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The Committee will take a short recess and discuss the matter when we get back.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document No. 1-18(2) titled, "Proposed Mandate of the Government of Northwest Territories, 2016-2019." I will turn to Premier McLeod for opening comments.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** One of the priorities set by all Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is to improve governance through more accountability, transparency, and collaboration. The development of this government's mandate is the first step to achieving that priority and strengthening consensus government. For the first time in the NWT, we have tabled a proposed government mandate. The mandate explains how the government will advance the priorities established by all Members of the Assembly this past December. The mandate enhances accountability by producing clear commitments that elected representatives and the

public can point to when asking questions of government Ministers. The government's proposed mandate enhances the transparency of the GNWT because elected representatives and the public can now better understand how the government gets from the Assembly's 25 priorities to a particular set of programs and services. Finally, development of the mandate has increased collaboration by creating a dialogue between all members about the best way to achieve our priorities. MLAs have helped Cabinet to focus, strengthen, and clarify our commitments. Overall, the mandate enhances accountability, transparency, and collaboration by having the debate about the mandate right here in public on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Through the priority-setting process, all Members decided what was important to prioritize. Through this mandate, Cabinet is proposing how to accomplish those priorities in ways that are effective and affordable. The purpose of developing the mandate was to make strategic choices. All of us knew coming into this Assembly that our resources would be finite and that the economic climate would be difficult. The process of developing the mandate has allowed us as Members to have a conversation about what choices are most strategic and why, before we get into the business planning details of how much and how fast.

As a result of your feedback, we've added commitments to communicate to our residents the potential risks and benefits associated with various resource development options; strengthen our commitment to land use planning; expand pathways to graduation; acknowledge Housing First as a proven method to address homelessness; reflect the importance of the fishery to food security and our economy; prioritize mental health supports in schools; fully support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; be clear about our commitments to resolving outstanding land, resource, and self-government agreements; work with the Government of Canada to reduce the cost of living by improving Nutrition North and lowering taxation; and advance the principles of open government by making the GNWT a better government. This mandate is responsive to the majority of views expressed in Caucus. It commits us to a course that is ambitious, but within our means. I welcome discussion and debate on the proposed mandate before ultimately putting the mandate to a vote.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Do you wish to invite witnesses to the table?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I would.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the table.

Premier McLeod, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left I have Mike Aumond, deputy minister of Finance and secretary to the Financial Management Board, and to my right, David Brock deputy secretary to Cabinet.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I will now open the floor to general comments on the tabled document. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** I'm happy to have the chance to address this important mandate document and see the progress that we've made over the past couple of months. Members, we've all gone through the campaign trail and emerged from the other side. I found the months leading up to the election and the election period itself as a great opportunity to meet many of my constituents, to hear from them, and seek their input and learn their priorities. That has been important for me in developing and refining my own platform and to bring to the priorities in mandate conversation here in the Assembly. I know we have all done that same work, so I'd like to take this chance to thank everyone here for their hard work and contribution to the important work of setting priorities in developing the mandate. As a new MLA, this was a new process for me. On balance, I think it was a good way to set our course. In the interests of continuously improving the system, I suggest that as a Caucus we should have a discussion about the process and make suggestions for improvements for future Assemblies. Now that we have this mandate document, I'm looking forward to putting some meat on the bone, so to speak, reviewing the business plans and engaging in budget deliberations so we can start putting money where it needs to go to make these things happen. The one part of the mandate document I am not comfortable with is the "Fiscal Context" page. I'm not comfortable with our broad long-term statement of vision containing such a restrictive, temporary assessment of current economic conditions. I've addressed my concerns on this to Members previously, and I will elaborate on my concerns again in more detail when we discuss each section of the mandate document.

Again, thank you to everyone for your good and hard work over recent weeks. I look forward to further discussions and the opportunity to present a completed mandate document to NWT residents in the coming days.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** I had a very close look at the mandate over the weekend and tried to follow its development from the first draft to the third draft,

and have a number of observations I'd like to offer today. I recognize this is a new process for everyone and that it was really intended to improve consensus government and build stronger accountability. I think it may be a bit scary to some to develop specific measurable commitments and deliverables for which you would be held accountable, but I guess that's what I had expected to see in the document. I want to start with some positive comments and thoughts, then move to what should be changed, in my opinion, and then some reflections on what should happen next time around, and then some conclusions at the end. The concept of a mandate document that builds from an agreed upon set of priorities is a sound one and the Process Convention on Priority Setting and Reporting from the previous Assembly, I think, was a commendable initiative to help improve consensus government, but the devil is in the details. I think our staff did a great job to document our individual priorities and recommend a process to reach a collective set of principles, which went very well in my view, although we ended up with too many priorities without a sense of what was really important. To be fair to Cabinet, there were some changes and improvements made to the proposed mandate during its review. Some of the most important for me were a clear commitment to completion of land use plans for all regions; adding in co-operatives and condominiums as eligible partners in energy efficiency programs; revitalization of the fisheries as part of building food security and lowering the cost of living; work that should be undertaken with Yukon and Nunavut on the Northern Residents Tax Deduction and Nutrition North; some specifics on what the open government policy might achieve; and a detailed section on reporting.

I want to move on to some areas where I think there needs to be some improvements. In terms of the process, Regular Members generally receive drafts of the mandate with not a lot of time to review them and, at least in one case, with as little as 36 hours to review it. In my opinion, that's not enough time given our busy schedules and I don't believe that's even in keeping with the process convention on communications. I spent many hours preparing detailed comments on the second draft. These comments varied from fixing typos and grammar to questions to seek clarification and recommended language for additions with some rationale. About 25 per cent of the basic grammar and typo comments were incorporated; the rest of my comments were apparently ignored. I believe I deserved at least some sort of an explanation, but never really got one. It's not clear to me whether my comments were even considered by Cabinet. The proposed mandate sets out, in my view, a set of vague and often unmeasurable objectives rather than specific actions, targets, or end points. For

example, "capture opportunities" appears in several places in the proposed mandate. How does one measure progress or success on such a statement?

The document still contains errors or information that is outdated or not relevant. For example, the correct figure on the reduction in Territorial Formula Financing funding is no longer \$33 million, but \$9 million, as we understand it. The correct name of the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework should have been used. It's not clear why compliance with the new Financial Administration Act should even appear in the mandate, as this government should just follow its own laws. The language in the document should have been plainer or a plain language summary should have been included so our residents can better understand what we've actually agreed to do together. No public input or comments have been sought on the proposed mandate other than through the efforts of individual Regular Members.

A few reflections on the process, if I may: I think if this is to be done next time around, spend some time setting out the expectations for the mandate, including the form and precision of the document, and how Regular Members can have input and how Cabinet will respond, preferably with some reasons. Work jointly on an outline of the mandate and perhaps even one section to get a sense of what it should start to look like. Craft the mandate in such a way that there are measurable commitments, targets, initiatives, and actions. Reporting can provide reasons as to why specifics were achieved or not, but to prepare a mandate that is vague and without clear end points is not helpful for establishing accountability and not supportive of consensus government. Developing the mandate in an iterative fashion, trading drafts back and forth with Cabinet holding the pen on its own report card is a bit of a bizarre process. This document should be a product of Caucus with all the Members agreeing on the report card that will be used to evaluate the success of the government.

I'd just like to move on to some conclusions, Mr. Chair.

I carefully compared the mandate to the commitments I made during the fall election and the priorities I identified and set out on December 14, 2015 in this Chamber. I'll focus on the matters from my priorities that have, in my view, not been adequately reflected in the proposed mandate:

- Specific commitments to expand or increase access to energy efficiency programs, including empowering local governments to create revolving funds;

- Re-orientation of the NWT Power Corporation towards renewables and community energy self-sufficiency;
- A public review of resource revenues to ensure there's a fair return to the public purse;
- An independent regulator for oil and gas resources;
- A coherent financial security system to prevent further public liabilities on contaminated sites;
- A public review of the Heritage Fund to ensure a defined revenue stream and stronger public governance; and
- A clear commitment for ombudsman legislation and an ombudsman office.

I made efforts in good faith to try to improve the proposed mandate through discussion in Caucus and in detailed written comments, but cannot support the document tabled by Cabinet.

I look forward to working with Regular Members in Committee of the Whole to make the necessary improvements that will allow me, and perhaps others, to support a mandate that achieves a greater degree of consensus and purpose as we move forward together. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. NADLI:** I just wanted to take the opportunity just to say briefly in my language in terms of the topic of discussion at this point, just for the sake of our Aboriginal listeners. [English translation not provided.]

Thank you, Mr. Chair. The mandate is essentially the agenda, or the work plan, of this government for the next four years. I support the mandate, the spirit and intent of ensuring that we have an agenda in the next four years in terms of addressing the priorities of the people of the NWT, ensuring that the families and individuals in our communities are well taken care of. That's basically the mandate that we have. Almost to a degree, it's a reflection of what we've come up with today in our efforts in terms of making the consensus government work. I see it as a positive step forward. It's an exercise that we have to routinely do to ensure that we do have some goals that we set for ourselves for the next four years on behalf of the people. The priority of the mandate, of course, and I'll focus on the big picture in saying that, too, as part of our constituency, we have some real immediate needs. Sometimes it's challenging to focus on the big picture, but at the same time when you have some very pressing and immediate needs, it's hard to focus on and keep focusing on the big picture,

when there are struggles in the communities that we have to address. For those reasons I support this whole initiative, but at the same time, I remind my colleagues that we come from small communities, most of us, and geographically, of course, small communities are isolated. My hope is that, through this document, those small communities will not be isolated from opportunities. That along with the bigger centres like Yellowknife and Fort Simpson or Hay River, small communities will be still in the forefront of this agenda. I'm hoping to see that in the next four years. In terms of priorities, of course, just to name a few, there are small communities. There's need for jobs. We have some issues in terms of regarding youth. Housing continues to be a big issue. We need to move on and ensure that those priorities are met on behalf of the people.

Trying to draw at least some closing remarks, the mandate is of course developed through the efforts of everyone here, and, of course, it's based on our campaign, what we've heard from the people of the NWT. It's essentially the agenda for the GNWT, but it's being led by the Cabinet. At the same time, as Regular Members, we need to make sure that the public sector and the government officials that do implement this plan. That we all keep in contact keep the lines of communication open, for the better interest of the public to be served. What I'm saying is that while Cabinet would take the lead in terms of ensuring that those goals and the priorities of the mandate are met, we shouldn't lose sight that on this side, the Regular Members, that working relationship has to be strong and it has to be maintained. In the next four years, I look forward to ensuring that happens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** I think that to start off I'd like to thank all the colleagues and all the MLAs for their hard work on this document and for collaborating effectively to bring something complete to the table. That being said, there are several issues with this process that I think need to be improved upon. The mandate ought not to be a business plan. We have business plans for those. It ought not to be a budget document. We have a budget process for those. What it ought to be is a set of political commitments that are gathered together to form a concise plan that gives certainty to Members of this House and also members of the public to know what the government is going to do. I have said it before and I'll say it again, often many of our Ministers respond to the commitments made by the Government of Canada, and those commitments follow through from their election campaign. Most of those commitments are not made directly. They come from that election. People have certainty in what they're going to get from the Government of

Canada because those clear, precise commitments were made, and people are looking forward to those commitments optimistically. We've heard it today in the House about how some of the social housing programs and infrastructure programs we're looking to capture as opportunities can only be done if the Government of Canada holds true to its promises. That's what this document should be, and quite frankly, there's simply too many vague statements in here.

My colleague spoke previously to "capturing opportunities" as being mentioned many times, and there are just a litany of examples of some very good, clear statements about supporting certain things or implementing certain things, but not how much they cost, not how much they're going to make more resources available to communities or to governments, and actually commit to put things on the ground. It's all very vague and hard to measure. How do we hold a government accountable to see how many opportunities they've captured? That's a perfect example; that commentary was made multiple times and it continues to remain in the document.

What we have as a proposal is a very risk adverse document that wants to be realistic and play it safe. There are good reasons to do that, as to not raise hopes. Occasionally you can't fulfill everything, but you can present a bold and ambitious plan that gives people confidence, especially when our fiscal and economic circumstances are extremely challenging. The conversation today in our communities is one of, quite frankly, fear. Fear about the future and a lack of knowledge about what the way forward looks like. I would be hopeful for a document that would allow people to have those fears allayed. Unfortunately, there's more "hurry up and wait" that's produced by this. Really, what this ought to be is something that gives that certainty of moving forward. Perhaps you can't meet all your political commitments, but you can try and that's part of the role of a Minister, to explain why things aren't on schedule and why things haven't been met. You have to take risks at certain points in the process. I do think that there's a list provided in the opening comments by the Premier that does show the document did change. Some of these items are more or less clarifications of some of the points that were in there, but that still shows change, so I do think there was a high degree of collaboration. But the other thing to think about is that this is a document that Cabinet is working to implement, and they should be the pens on this. They should hold to things that they think are achievable and that they think are things they can accomplish within their four years. It's really their mandate and we have tools like a mid-term review and other things like that to hold them accountable. That being said, those commitments need to be

measurable and clear, and that's still absent from this document.

Going forward to our successor Assembly, I would say that this needs to be primarily directed by Cabinet Ministers and the Premier. It can't be solely on the advice of deputy Ministers and departments. It really has to remain at that level, at that high level of political discussion and political commitments, and show vision and ambition, and give people something that's clear and concise and that Cabinet Ministers, as well, can take ownership of, and that Members from the other side of the House can take ownership of as well. And that shows a clear path forward. I think that's what we need to strive for in the future: To be clearer, more concise, and keep it at a level of political dialogue that is in as plain language as possible. There's ways to take hundreds of commitments and boil them down into five-point plans or three-point plans or four-point plans. There are ways to do that. Again, poring through this document takes some time, and there's no succinct statement that's very clear to the public about how things are going to move forward and how their lives, the lives of people that we serve, are going to be improved by implementing of this plan, and that's really why we're here. Those are the kind of long-term strategies and goals that should be implemented.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. Are there any more general comments? Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** I won't repeat the points that have been made by my colleagues, although I agree with them. This document reflects some of the major points that I campaigned on. The process has not been very gratifying. When the document was created, I thought that we had an agreement to make a limited number of very specific priorities for the Assembly, but it turned out that refining the document meant adding so that we went from five major areas to, I don't know, 137 sub-areas or something like that, and in the process what we lost was the ability to make SMART goals. What I mean by that is the acronym SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Very few of these priorities fit into this framework of being a SMART goal, and as a result it will be difficult for us to show progress on the realization of this mandate. Maybe not coincidentally, it will also be difficult to hold the Executive Council to account for what they have achieved or not achieved, because the goals themselves are phrased in such a vague way.

While I appreciate that there have been a number of changes made, I still feel that there were some changes that were never on the table. I guess to the point of trying to create an atmosphere of greater collaboration and consultation, I think it's

worth remembering that consultation doesn't mean only "I discussed it with you." It means that "I discussed it with you and you had an opportunity to influence the outcome." You have an opportunity to help us change directions. I guess I didn't really feel that that was the case with this document. I didn't feel that it was a process of equals, but a process that was really led by the Executive Council and with us running behind. As others have said, while there are many good things in this document that are aspirational, there's almost nothing that can be measured, and I think that that is a failing of this document.

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

**Mr. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had faith in consensus government. When we talk about consensus government, it is exchanging ideas, listening to people, and hashing it out until you come up with a consensus to it. Not, "well, here it is, we'll bring it to the floor and we'll hammer it out here." To me, consensus government is working together so we're here and now. To the credit of Cabinet, I appreciate the work you guys did to this. You guys did a lot of work and took a lot of time into it. I don't think you've heard everybody's comments or concerns, because we wouldn't be here if you did. I think we would have been able to pass the mandate as is, but right now I can't, as my colleague Mr. O'Reilly said, I can't officially agree to it. There is a lot of things in here that were part of the mandate from my election, and I appreciate that in there, but there's other things that weren't. I struggle with this whole process, and maybe just because I'm new. I was inside the government system and was able to work with it. I find that being outside the government system and being at the top of the heap or the political chair, we don't have the ways to deal with things. We get a wall blocked up, it's a bureaucratic answer, or it comes across that way. When I looked at this mandate, there were things put in there that should not have been in here. Like, the fiscal responsibility part of it. It's a mandate paper. This is what we're talking about. This is what we want to do: doom and gloom.

You know, I understand we're in a fiscal situation, but when we keep on hearing doom and gloom, why would anybody want to be living in the Northwest Territories? I'm a proud Northerner. I was born and raised here. I believe in the people of the Northwest Territories and I believe in the public service. However, if we're going to put up barriers and we're not going to listen to the Regular Members, it's going to be a long four years for myself. So in saying that, I hope we're able to move forward, be productive, and we can actually weather the storm and fulfill this mandate with the proposed changes that we are trying to get across.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess firstly, in my language, just briefly. [English translation not provided]

Mr. Chair, I look at this mandate as a guiding document for the government as we move to try to improve the lives of our people in the Northwest Territories. I think the intention of all of us in the room is for that to happen. I think that we have the government, the people, to do that. We're able to look at the more serious areas of government, the more high-cost areas of government -- for example, health costs -- and I think we're doing things in here that will lower health costs. I think this is what this mandate must do. It should lower the cost of justice and it should lower the cost of addictions across the Territories and lower the cost of education, improve our educational outcomes, improve our health outcomes, and improve our justice outcomes. I think that if we're able to achieve that with this document, this mandate, then I feel very positive to be associated with a mandate like this. I know that I've been looking at this probably for eight years and I've been saying the same thing during all that time, and that is, we need to have people employed. Now this document, if you look at it, and it looks at the ways that we're going to engage the small communities where employment is needed badly, we will see all those things happen, and I think it's something that I'd hope for. I know that we had never as a government gone through this type of intense review of the mandate. This is the third government that I've been in and for the first time we've gone through an intense mandate. It's not everything for everybody, but I think it's a move in the right direction, and we agreed that after two years we would review the mandate. It'll be interesting to see how much of the mandate can be carried out by government and to see if some of the things that we hold dear to our hearts as MLAs are changing, that are improving, the things that we want to see improve.

I want to see the people in the small communities to become contributors to our society. Right now, there's so few jobs that most of the people are dependent on government, and even the people that are trying not to be dependent on government are having a difficult time just paying for the things they need to harvest, like gasoline, snowmobiles, and so on, to hunt and so on. These are some of the things I'm hoping can come as a result of this mandate, where individuals are able to improve their lives and improve the lives of kids. I would say that kids are not going to school in small communities. I will certainly be engaging the Minister of Education throughout these next four years for that. Just to see an increase of kids going to school because their parents have work would

be a real positive thing. People have a tough time getting out of bed every day, sending your kid to school, and then sitting around doing nothing all day. Because that's what they're left with: nothing to do. We need to look at that. We have a section for the cost of living. Those are important things. But I think, either you help them pay for the high cost of living or you give them the ability to pay for it themselves. I'm hoping that this mandate, at the end of the day when it comes out in the wash and the government's carrying out the various portions of this mandate, it's going to give the people of the NWT that are not working the ability to find work and pay for their own things and not be dependent on government. The government is not always the driving force. It's the people that are the driving force behind the Northwest Territories. That's all I have to say.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Just a few comments I'd like to make on our draft mandate here. As one of our former Members always said, we have 1,356 days left in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

---Laughter

That's referring to Mr. Miltenberger. He told me that last week and I just thought of that. A lot of good ideas we have here in our mandate. I'm hoping that, working together, we can accomplish many of these challenges that we have here in the territory, and I look forward to working with everybody here.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** As you all know, I'm one of the new Members here coming into this Assembly and the principle intent of the mandate, I really strongly believe in that directive: setting the goals set by the priorities identified by all representatives. To create a dialogue for people out there that we serve in all our ridings, let them know that we now have a plan. Here is a plan set out to try and achieve these. In reality, I don't think it's doable, but we have a document to start from, identifying everything from child development to creating and improving our economy to continuation of programs and services under our limitations. But in the view of the reader, once the document is publicized, we can probably come back to our constituency and say, "At the Assembly we have a vision. We have a plan." It's not as if we are running in all different directions without any guidance of any centralized focus on priorities identified and having the input of all of us. It's based on that methodology and based on that principle, I respect the mandate itself. As said in previous meetings, we have measurables. We have a mid-term review to see how we're progressing.

It's been several weeks now and it's been several times we had this on the agenda. I just look forward to concluding this so we can all go to work, and I look forward to implementing that with everybody around this table.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank everyone for all the hard work on the mandate and I know the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning has been working hard to make some changes. I look forward to moving forward and getting to work on the issues, as it's been a late election so we're left a little bit behind. We have a little bit of work ahead of us. I know I see some of the stuff on climate change and the environment, which I'm pretty fond of, as well as culture and education. I look forward to working with the Ministers in the smaller communities, as well as employment and the high costs of living. I just want to congratulate everybody on the hard work that they're doing and I hope that we can get to work on this as soon as possible.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we have concluded general comments on Tabled Document 1-18(2) and that we proceed to consideration of the document by section?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We will begin with the "Introduction" section. Do Members have any comments or questions regarding this section? I'm seeing no comments or questions. Do Members have any comments or questions regarding the "Fiscal Context" section? Mr. Vanthuyne.

COMMITTEE MOTION 1-18(2):  
PROPOSED MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, 2016-  
2019, DELETION OF FISCAL CONTEXT  
SECTION,  
CARRIED

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not seeing folks wanting to speak to this, so if I may, I'm going to make a motion, Mr. Chair, and I move that tabled document 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019, be amended by deleting the section titled Fiscal Context on pages six and seven.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. The document is being circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Members, there is really only one part of this document that I feel doesn't belong. I feel that the "Fiscal Context" portion is not really

appropriate for this document. This section was not developed in collaboration with all 19 Members. Instead, it was inserted after the discussion on priorities and after the first review of the mandate. The introduction of the mandate document speaks well to the goals and objectives of this government. The introduction speaks at length about collaboration, respect, and openness. It describes our government in the context of being socially, environmentally, and economically responsible for the greater good of the people. It speaks about these responsibilities being built by a strong consensus government. It talks about values and priorities of our people. It says that a thriving economy will provide jobs and help the government pay for programs and services. In summary, the introduction clearly supports what the mandate document is supposed to achieve on a big-picture, visionary level. But then the document switches direction to the fiscal context, a background component that reflects just a narrow point in time. Suddenly, in contrast to a long-term view expressed in the introduction, this section paints a bleak picture full of GDP percentages, transfer funding assumptions, infrastructure deficits, and past fiscal comparisons along with naming businesses, and such dreary language as "We can no longer afford the suite of programs and services we have been providing to our residents at the levels we have been providing them."

Respectfully, in my view, the entire "Fiscal Context" portion has no relevance in this important document, and per the motion, I am proposing that it be removed. I believe the public already understands the fiscal situation we face. If it requires elaboration, then I suggest the Finance Minister can say as much to the public, as he has already been doing, or add it to the annual budget address. I believe the mandate document is a great tool for communicating our vision for the next four years and beyond. As such, it should embrace our overall goals and direction and should not be used for sending a fiscal context message that carries adverse undertones and only represents a small point in time. I look forward to an active exchange and the views of this important document. If I may, I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Are there any other Members who would like to speak to this motion? Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** I would like to speak in support of my colleague's motion. When we are speaking of our overall vision moving forward, reminding people of some very specific point in time, entirely relevant statistics and fiscal challenges are not as helpful to a plan, a plan to move ahead. I would prefer, if we are going to speak to these challenges, that we do it in the context of the initiatives we are going to use to get around these, rather than focusing on the

specific numbers that are representative of our economy in decline and challenges to our government. I would rather see those numbers reflected in how we're going to get out of this. Again, that isn't done, and putting the section at the front of the document sets a tone for the rest of it that we have many things, but most likely it is going to be difficult to secure all of them. I appreciate that the intention of this is to be realistic. The intention of this is to provide a realistic sense of what's achievable, but this should be an ambitious document, and it should be designed, again, to correct these challenges, not to be mired in them. By removing it, we present a more hopeful and optimistic plan, and one that I certainly can support.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** When we first started to discuss the mandate, I had proposed some changes to this section to try to make it a little more balanced. I will give some examples of those. The focus, really, in the fourth paragraph: "GNWT has a fiscal problem that will require expenditure management." There is nothing in this section that talks about efficiencies or new revenues. I would look for a much more balanced approach. There are a couple of other parts of this that I find objectionable. Another sentence here that says, "We should not take any actions that will decrease investment or increase the cost of living or operating a business in the Northwest Territories." Changes have actually been introduced while we have been MLAs that will increase the cost of living, and I'll give an example: The electronics recycling fees. But that's for a specific purpose and it serves an end, and I'll support that. I believe all the MLAs support that sort of thing. That kind of a blanket statement, I find really quite objectionable and tried to have that adjusted during our debate and discussion around the mandate. I'm not sure I can support the approach of building up large surpluses in our O and M to fund Roads to Resources. I have been on record as saying that, and that's, I think, part of the messaging in the fiscal context here. The other sort of messages in here are around that, "We can no longer afford the suite of programs and services we have been providing to our residents at the levels we have been providing them." I don't actually accept that statement as fact, and tried to have it changed and adjusted through discussion, but I was unsuccessful. There are a couple of problems, I think, factually with the content of this. I mentioned earlier how the impact on the federal cut to our Territorial Formula Financing funding is not the \$33 million that's specified in this. This could have been corrected before it was tabled in the House, but it wasn't. We now know that it is, I believe, \$9 million.

The second sentence talks about the resource sector accounting for one third of our economy. My understanding is that it's 25 per cent.

So there are a number of issues with this. When this was first brought to Caucus, I also talked about, if we are going to have something in here about the fiscal context, we should have something about the environmental context and something about the social context, so that people have a good understanding of the situation that we're in and how that has helped shape what's in the mandate. Those other two pieces were not added. They were not dealt with in any way, in my view. Given those reservations about the content of this, I am more than happy to see the whole thing be deleted from the mandate, and I agree with my colleagues who have spoken before that this is not necessary as part of the mandate. We have better places to talk about this in terms of the budgeting cycle and so on, so I am in support of the motion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Would any other Member like to speak to the motion? Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to all the Members for the significant effort that went into developing the GNWT's mandate. With the acceptance of the mandate, the government will have the strategic direction to proceed to advance the priorities identified by the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. As we start to begin the planning to start making decisions to advance the mandate, we cannot ignore our current economic realities. As Members heard in my fiscal update, our economy has not recovered from the global economic and financial crisis of 2008. The five-year outlook for the NWT economy is not great. In fact, the data suggest a protracted decline in resource production, which will negatively impact not only resource revenue but also northern businesses and employment. Our existing diamond mines are maturing and currently planned projects will not replace their contribution to the territorial economy. At the same time, exploration necessary for new development is also slowing down. Slow economic growth and stagnant population levels produce a flat revenue outlook, meaning fewer financial resources for government programs and services. However, if unchecked, our expenditures will continue to grow at a higher pace than revenue growth.

We therefore continue to plan proactively, making sure proper resources are in place to support the government's priorities. We need to remember that the GNWT has a budget of \$1.8 billion. We will continue to invest in the NWT economy and supporting program and service delivery. Really, what we are talking about is trying to develop a mandate that means all things to all people. When

a mandate becomes a wish list, it needs to be tempered by reality. The "Fiscal Context" section is an attempt to mitigate the expectations of a new mandate so that people realize we need to look at our financial situation before we as a government spend money on improving or instituting new programs and services. Taking the "Fiscal Context" section out of the mandate document does not change the realities we face as a government or for the public we serve, and we owe it to the public to be forthcoming with the challenges we face as we plan to implement our mandate. I believe that just shows good leadership. I would ask the Members to remember as they make their vote that removing an issue from a document does not make it go away, and the government still faces difficult challenges to finance existing programs and services that will not change.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. I'm seeing no more comments to the motion. I ask the mover to close debate. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** I am grateful for the comments that everybody has provided here today. Again, I also recognize the previous speaker's messages and the intent once again of what he is trying to describe. However, I think that the folks here within the room are of the opinion that it's not a matter of content that we're debating here. It's a matter of this "Fiscal Context" not being in an appropriate place that it ought to be in. I thank everybody for their contributions and I'd be prepared to put the motion to vote.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte):** Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Blake, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Testart, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Green, Mr. Nadli.

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

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte):** Mr. Moses, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are 10 in favour; zero opposed; seven abstentions. The motion is carried

---Carried

Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

---Carried

I would like to thank the officials and the witnesses for joining us today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Can I have a report of the Committee of the Whole? Member for Hay River North.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019. I would like to report progress, with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do I have a seconder? Seconder, Member for Great Slave. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 23, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions

9. Written Questions

10. Returns to Written Questions

11. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address

12. Petitions

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 1-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories

– Tabled Document 2-18(2), Interim Estimates, 2016-2017

– Tabled Document 3-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2015-2016

– Tabled Document 4-18(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2015-2016

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House adjourns until Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:44 p.m.