



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, June 7, 2016**

Pages 441 – 486

**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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**Hon. Glen Abernethy**

(Great Slave)

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*Minister of Human Resources;*

*Minister responsible for Seniors;*

*Minister responsible for Persons with  
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(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Frederick Blake**

(Mackenzie Delta)

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**

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*Minister of Public Works and Services*

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**Hon. Bob McLeod**

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*Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and*

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*Minister responsible for Youth*

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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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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, June 7, 2016****Members Present**

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, Mr. Testart, Hon. Wally Schumann, Hon. Louis Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuyne

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty):** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 39-18(2):  
SENIORS' HOUSING**

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to supporting elders by building more seniors' supported independent living units and marketing maintenance, renovation, and mobility upgrades to help seniors age in place. I would like to advise Members that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is delivering on these commitments with five nine-unit seniors' buildings in Aklavik, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort Good Hope, and Whati. In each of these buildings, eight units will be occupied by seniors, and one unit will be designated as a caretaker unit. Designed in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services, these buildings include common areas where therapeutic and lifestyle programming can be delivered directly to seniors. These buildings will let our seniors live longer in communities and may prevent early admission to long-term care facilities.

The Aklavik seniors' complex, the Joe Greenland Centre, was completed in the fall of 2015. The Fort Liard seniors' complex is near completion and will be ready for occupancy within the next month. The Fort McPherson, Fort Good Hope, and Whati seniors' nine-plexes are scheduled for completion in the late fall 2016. These units are operated under the public housing program. Currently, there are 356 public housing units across the territory that are designated for seniors and that have had modifications incorporated that improve accessibility. To meet the needs of an aging population, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is incorporating specific accessibility

features in all new public housing units, whether or not they are intended for occupants with mobility challenges. These visible design features include a no-step entrance area, wider doorways, and a bathroom on the main floor. Other visible design features may include reinforced bathroom walls for grip bars, levered door handles, raised electrical outlets, and lowered light switches. For seniors who need preventative maintenance, repair assistance, or modifications to improve accessibility in their own homes, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is consolidating a program information package to inform seniors and their families about assistance available to age in place. To further support senior homeowners, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will meet with seniors in their own homes to increase access to preventative maintenance. Application processes can sometimes be confusing and challenging. We will be proactive in contacting seniors and deliver multi-year services rather than one-time applications, greatly enhancing access for seniors. As June is Seniors' Month, Mr. Speaker, we should all take time to celebrate our seniors and reflect on how important a resource they are. Seniors are never far from the thoughts of our government, especially given the coming demographic changes. The population of seniors in the Northwest Territories is forecasted to nearly double by 2031. Meeting the needs of our growing senior population will need to be a focus for all of us in the coming years. The federal government has also recognized this changing demographic and has allocated one-and-a-half million dollars to support seniors' housing needs over the next two years within the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is working in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services to respond to the growing numbers of seniors in our population and ensure that our government is positioned to address the housing and long-term care needs of seniors, so they can remain in their own homes and their own communities as long as possible and be assured of appropriate options if the time comes when they need a higher level of support. Mr. Speaker, we will do a better job communicating our programs for seniors and ensuring that they can be easily accessed. Our seniors deserve that. I know that everyone in the House views seniors as a

priority. These actions will help our seniors age in place, and in so doing, improve their wellness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 40-18(2):  
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Glen Abernethy will be absent from the House today due to illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**Members' Statements**

MEMBER'S STATEMENT  
ON DAVINA MCLEOD, 2015-16 ATHLETE OF  
THE YEAR

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating one of my constituents from the hamlet of Aklavik: Ms. Davina McLeod. Ms. McLeod was recently recognized by Sport North and awarded the 2015-2016 Female Athlete of the Year. Mr. Speaker, at a young age, Davina was taught how to skate by her father, Dave McLeod, and how to compete competitively at hockey tournaments. The support from her mother, Nina McLeod, has never stopped. Regardless of where Davina had to travel, Nina was in the stands cheering on her favourite hockey star. Mr. Speaker, in March, at the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, the female hockey team made history, with Davina the captain of the team. They went on to win first place in Iqaluit. This is the first time that Team NWT female hockey won gold in the history of the Arctic Winter Games. Mr. Speaker, at the all-native hockey tournament in Whitehorse, Davina played on a team with her brother and cousins. Their team made it to the finals. After three periods and a tie game, they went to OT and still no score. The game went to a shoot-out and the only goal came from none other than Davina herself. Davina was named most valuable player for the tournament. Davina also played numerous times in the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Cup. She has participated at various Canada Winter Games as well as the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships. Aside from her hockey career, she has excelled in soccer and baseball. She also graduated this past weekend. Mr. Speaker, the 2015-2016 Female Athlete of the Year: Ms. Davina McLeod. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SEASONAL FIREFIGHTER POSITIONS

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

A lot of opportunities are critical to our small communities, as is the case with many of my colleagues, and any community in my riding. One or two positions make a big difference. A single job loss has a ripple effect through families and will be noticed at school, the store, and the local RCMP detachment, for example. New jobs are few and far between. Like anywhere, job loss is a major disruption to a person's lifestyle. So, Mr. Speaker, I was not surprised when the chief of Fort Resolution was upset that ENR had reduced the number of seasonal fire fighters it is hiring to the communities due to changes made in the fire crew configuration. Mr. Speaker, I share his frustration. Two positions is an unacceptable impact to Fort Resolution. I agree that changing the configuration of fire crews has some merit, but it is unfair to the communities like Fort Resolution who will see fewer seasonal positions as a result. Even if ENR thinks the overall distribution of resources is more efficient, the redistribution and the loss should not be borne by seasonal workers in small communities. It does not reflect the value of local employment to residents in rural and remote communities. The individuals who might have been hired as firefighters this season are capable of working. Although the total number of firefighters across the NWT has not changed, those people do not have jobs. There are opportunities in the warehouse to work as backup or another part of the GNWT. Some people thrive on the seasonal nature of firefighting work and the flexibility that provides. GNWT programs need seasonal workers with flexible hours. I can think of one individual who does not fit that 8:30-to-five office work, but this person would be an excellent youth officer from after school to maybe eight or nine at night. Mr. Speaker, ENR took steps to minimize the impacts of the change.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, your time has expired for Members' statements.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ENR took steps to minimize the impacts of the change to crew configuration by offering more permanent jobs. When it comes to small communities, people are much more vulnerable in situations of job loss. Mr. Speaker, the loss of

seasonal positions in Fort Resolution is unacceptable. The precedent it sets is a critical issue not only for my riding, for all small communities across the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SUPPORT FOR THE MINING AND MINERAL  
EXPLORATION INDUSTRY

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, recently the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines and the Mining Association of Canada commissioned a survey conducted by Abacus Data. It clearly shows that the citizens of the North overwhelmingly support the mining and exploration industry. More to it, Northerners not only believe the industry's economic contributions are substantial, but that our safety and environmental standards go beyond regular expectations. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, our residents believe that the development of new mines is a positive contribution to our economy and that this government must further support this key industry. To add more clarity, let's delve into the survey numbers. Mr. Speaker, 86 per cent of the respondents believe a strong mining sector is vital to the long-term health of the NWT economy; 83 per cent say regulation of the sector works well; and 82 per cent would like to see more mining projects in the NWT. That translates into eight out of ten people having a positive outlook on the mining and mineral exploration industry.

Mr. Speaker, though these numbers are almost resoundingly optimistic, 84 per cent are still worried about the future of the NWT economy. Frankly, this is unacceptable. We have a responsibility, as leaders in this territory, to soothe the fears of our residents of our dismal economic expectations while also offering a real plan for growth and job creation. Clearly, a lot of faith is where these solutions lie in the industry that contributes almost 40 per cent of our GDP: mining and mineral exploration. This budget now proposes to grow the mining industry by increasing the mining incentive program, both with no new mines opening other than small grassroots projects, unsettled land claims, and with little or no new investment for the private sector. I am obliged to ask: where exactly is this government's often-touted Mineral Development Strategy? When is it going to deliver real results for our economy? Mr. Speaker, according to the survey, 88 per cent of our people believe that the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly is supportive of the mining and mineral exploration industry. I urge the government to prove to the residents of the NWT that their confidence in this House and in this

government is not unfounded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CLARIFICATION REGARDING ECE POSITIONS  
IN NAHENDEH

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday and today was a learning opportunity for myself as we started going through the Department of Education's mains. As many may have heard in the Committee of the Whole, I was very disappointed to hear that we lost two half-time positions within the department. One was a vacant position that was moved to the North Slave and the other one was to be eliminated as part of the reduction plan. I was really concerned because I was not aware of the eliminated position. As we were going through the business plans, the departments identified potential reductions whether it was program, services, or staffing. The proposed reductions were clearly identified by the departments during committee and by the Finance Minister during many briefings. During this time, the committee identified their concerns with the proposed reduction and provided the department and the Finance Minister with our recommendations. This led to another round of discussions about the proposals. This was challenging, but as I was finding out, this is all part of the consensus government.

However, yesterday during the Committee of the Whole, as we were going through the Department of Education mains, we had a hiccup. It seems that we had two half-time positions removed from the Dehcho. When I questioned the Minister about these reductions, he said they did go before committee with all the reductions and all the information provided to committee. My reply was that I thank the Minister for his answer but I regretfully disagree. I go on to say that at no point was I aware that these positions were going to be cut. This leads to my second lesson today. As I was doing research on the cuts, after speaking with research, the Minister of Education, Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Finance's special advisor, we were able to find out there was only one half-time position being transferred to the North Slave, which was vacant for a long time in Dehcho. The other half-time position was not going to be eliminated in the Dehcho. Therefore, when I make a mistake, I own up to it as my father tells me to do. The Minister of Education was correct that the half-time position was identified in the business plan. I apologize to him and his department. As well, I am happy to tell the people in the Nahendeh riding that there were no positions being reduced from this

department. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the research department, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and the Minister of Finance's special advisor for helping clear up this issue. As I said before, this was a learning opportunity to get better as an MLA and to better understand dealing with the business plans in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN FOOD SECURITY

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, hunger is a reality in the North. Caregivers can't afford to feed their children a balanced meal. They reduce the size of their kids' meals because they don't have enough food. They are going hungry themselves because they can't afford to buy food. Some lose weight as a result. These findings are part of a report by Food Banks Canada with the title, "What Will It Take to Make Real Progress on Northern Food Security?" It was published last month.

Mr. Speaker, 20 per cent of NWT households don't have enough food. Why not? Because of the high cost of store-bought food, because of the high cost of going out on the land, and because of the decline in the number of animals harvested for food. These are a few of the many reasons the report gives. Here in Yellowknife, Food Rescue distributes 200,000 kilograms of food discarded by grocery stores each year to schools, soup kitchens, and low-income families in need. Volunteers across the NWT have established soup kitchens and food banks. In fact, Food Banks Canada estimates food bank usage has increased across all three northern territories by 247, yes, that is 247 per cent, since 2008. Let me provide some numbers which explain this increase. The federal government has estimated that food for a family of four costs \$23,000 annually. Yet, half of the households in the small communities of the NWT have income below \$30,000 a year. That equation equals hunger. Mr. Speaker, it is a shocking fact that households who rely on government income are those most likely not to have enough food at home, according to the report. This is a fact acknowledged by the GNWT when, in 2015, it raised the food allowance for income assistance clients for the first time in six years. The Finance Minister of the day said that the food allowance would be increased annually until it caught up to the Market Basket Measure. But there was no increase in this budget. Increases are scheduled for the next two years. Mr. Speaker, the Food Bank's report makes recommendations which provide long-term solutions rather than opening more food banks. I want to highlight the

recommendation to increase support for the consumption of traditional food with programs that increase access to the land as well.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member of Yellowknife Centre, your time has expired for Members' statements.

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The territorial government has a role to play in lobbying the federal government to expand and improve the Nutrition North Canada Subsidy. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the issue of an ombudsman. Mr. Speaker, during last fall's election, we were told by residents loud and clear that they wanted openness, transparency, and accessibility in government. This Assembly has responded. We focused on openness in the selection of the Cabinet. We enshrined it in our mandate. The government has even designated a Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency.

Mr. Speaker, all these are moves in the right direction and we should go further. One important way to do this is to establish the Office of the Ombudsman. An ombudsman is a public representative who looks into situations where ordinary citizens feel they have not been treated fairly by government. An ombudsman can help people understand their rights and investigate imbalance or unfairness in how people are treated. An ombudsman is a neutral investigator resolving disputes, analyzing how the government works, and helping it serve people better. Mr. Speaker, as MLAs, it is an important part of our job to be available to our constituents, to assist them with the concerns about how government affects their lives. That is a part of this job that I eagerly take on because the ability to help constituents is at the heart of public service. We live in a complicated world and this is a complex government. In that environment, it is easy to imagine where different interpretation or application of different laws or regulations can wind up in a situation of uneven or unfair treatment. In fact, we are aware of some

individuals' matters that have been unresolved for years. An ombudsman can help make sure citizens aren't left behind by the complexity of government. If someone is treated unfairly or unequally, an ombudsman can ensure he or she has an avenue to understand the process and address the inequality. It can help government be more efficient by correcting areas where the system should work better. Mr. Speaker, nine provinces and the Yukon have ombudsman offices. The importance of the office is illustrated by Yukon, in fact. Its office began as part-time and became full-time in 2013 because of the high demand. It recently expanded to a five-person office. Yukon has also adapted its legislation to allow Aboriginal governments to request ombudsman services. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, we committed in the mandate to develop legislation within two years to create this office. That was the right thing to do. It is an important element of government openness and accessibility. I urge the government to maintain this commitment as a high priority. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Justice regarding this important matter at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANGILALUK SCHOOL IN TUKTOYAKTUK

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now in the communities throughout the Beaufort Delta region only 30 per cent of the students in grades 10, 11, 12 are going to school. Beaufort Delta District Education Council describes the situation as critical. Mr. Speaker, I know there are many reasons students skip school; attendance goes down as weather gets warmer, or young people may be staying up late and sleeping in. Sometimes the work can be discouraging too, especially if young people have to leave their home communities to finish their high school education. Another factor, Mr. Speaker, is the school's capacity, its ability to deliver what the students need. Let's consider Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk. First built in the 1990s, Mangilaluk School was originally built for kindergarten to grade nine, then expanded up to include up to grade 12. It now supports 18 teachers, not including other staff, and 225 students.

Back in the 15th Assembly, the Member of my region raised the first alarm of the concerns about students of all ages having to study and learn in

close quarters. Later, in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the previous Member for Nunakput said in the House, "at Mangilaluk School we are seriously over crowded. Mangilaluk School desperately needs an extension to accommodate growing needs of the community." Now here we are in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly and Tuktoyaktuk's population has continued to grow over the past five years with the number of children and young people aged zero to 24 either holding steady and, in some age groups, even growing. Junior kindergarten also means more students, Mr. Speaker. The community will be well-served by plans for a new school and knowing how long these projects take, Mr. Speaker, the time to start is now. I'll have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGHWAY RESCUE SERVICES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss a subject that's been a sore point with the Town of Hay River for quite some time: the provision of highway rescue services. Highway rescue services involve the extraction of victims from accident scenes and the transport of victims to medical centres. The governments of the Yukon and British Columbia have assumed the responsibility for providing these services. In Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario the provinces regulate highway rescue through legislation. In the NWT, however, the responsibility for highway rescue is stuck in a perpetual grey area. As far as I've been able to ascertain, no single entity in the territory is responsible for providing this service and, as a result, no one funds it adequately. A report by MACA in 2006 identified this as an ongoing issue. As a frequent observer of town council meetings in Hay River, I can tell you that it is still an ongoing issue. Despite the lack of funding, the Town of Hay River has taken on the responsibility of servicing 800 km of highway in the South Slave and sometimes into Northern Alberta. Highway rescue vehicles, tools, and training are an added expense beyond what is needed for in-town ground ambulance services. This means that the town incurs higher operational costs and higher recurring capital costs. Some funding for ambulance service does exist: the town receives about \$50,000 annually from the health authority and MACA. However, that is for in-town ground ambulance service. The pot of money MACA does have for available highway rescue is slated to be cut in this budget from \$400,000 to \$185,000.

To summarize the situation, the GNWT has absolved itself of providing or paying for highway

rescue services because they know that the good people of Hay River aren't prepared to let people die on the highway. That, Mr. Speaker, is no way to govern. In addition, it appears that the recommendations from the 2006 MACA report haven't been implemented in the 10 years since. According to the government's business plan, the public safety division of MACA is leading an interdepartmental committee composed of Justice, Transportation, and Health to develop a strategy to support delivery of this service. I'll have questions for the Minister of MACA to see if in fact any progress has been made on this lingering issue and how we can move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Recently in my riding a long-time business was destroyed by fire that might have been controlled by the presence of a modern emergency reporting system. I'm talking about 911, as this Assembly has been discussing 911 for over 10 years. In the case of the recent fire, media reports indicated that a person new to Yellowknife called 911 to report a fire only to find out there was no such thing. In desperation, the person actually drove to the fire hall to report the fire, but by then it was too late. As I said, 911 has been studied up and down through the terms of at least three Assemblies. The most comprehensive report published in 2015 indicates that a Yellowknife-based 911 service could be set up for about \$600,000 and run annually at a net cost, after service levies, of about \$250,000. This isn't nickels, but territory-wide rapid-response coverage for about a quarter million dollars after the start-up fee seems good value for money.

While we talk as much as we like about how people should learn the emergency numbers and keep them handy, the very existence of 911 call services worldwide shows that just doesn't work, so what is it going to take? The NWT Association of Communities has had a standing resolution on its books since 2009 urging "the GNWT to adopt a phased approach for implementation, beginning in the regions with pre-existing telephone switching infrastructure suitable for 911 services." Talks on the introduction of the service have taken place between MACA and the City of Yellowknife as recently as this year. Both parties are still supportive of the service introduction, subject of course to the availability of funds. Creation of 911 capacity would involve the city expanding its current dispatch area at the fire hall and hiring additional staff. Both parties agree a phased roll-out of the

service is preferable, starting in Yellowknife and then adding communities. A roll-out to the six tax-based communities, plus Behchoko, would represent three-quarters of the territorial population. What is clear is that we need the introduction of some service, but before another tragedy. I'll have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Members' Statements. Member for Deh Cho.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2016 MOREL MUSHROOM HARVEST

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not talk about mushrooms at least once this session. Mr. Speaker, morel mushrooms attracted a lot of visitors to my riding last year. People from all around the world flocked to the Deh Cho to pick mushrooms. Never before had we seen so many people camped along the road north of Providence and in the bush. Mr. Speaker, this is the second summer after the forest fires of 2014. Are we expecting a better crop of mushrooms this summer? A buyer has settled in the bush past the Chan Lake Tower and vehicles are parked alongside the road toward the North Arm. I understand there are more harvesters around Kakisa as well. My constituents tell me they had to install last year's signage so that people wanting to pick morel mushrooms do not stampede into the community unexpectedly. My constituents are concerned about this year's harvest. CBC North recently ran a story on the harvest thus far. It seems prices are down from last year. Other parts of Canada experienced forest fires too and there could be a large supply of mushrooms this year. Residents do not know much about what we expect the morel mushroom activity in the Northwest Territories to be. ITI has not contacted the community. My constituents tell me that when they talk to ITI, the staff people can't answer their questions. It seems the GNWT is taking a laissez-faire approach. The draft Forest Management Act, which should have included a provision respecting non-timber forest products to help regulate vegetation, such as mushrooms, was not included, thus sent back to ENR for further study. Mr. Speaker, while the people of the Deh Cho are working on governing our land area, the people of Kakisa feel there is no respect for what they are working toward. KTFN leaders are always dealing with conflicts, particularly related to land and resource use. They are aggravated by the absence of mechanisms to legally recognize Indigenous rights and title, and an apparent disregard for the Dehcho Interim Measures Agreement. Mr. Speaker, we understand the interest in the mushroom harvest and, to a certain extent, appreciate the opportunity and activity it brings to our region. But

as a government, we must address some serious underlying issues around land use and the logistics of having so many people camping in the area. We must respect the rights of First Nations people, protect the land of the NWT, and respond effectively so Northerners can benefit from this industry and First Nations' land interests are upheld. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DAYCARE SUPPORT PROGRAMMING IN THE  
SAHTU

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to discuss later and address my questions to the Minister of ECE with respect to daycare facilities and daycare homes. As you know, these facilities and supports really play a vital service to the working class families and there's a growing need in the riding that I represent. I'm very encouraged by the Minister's statements of yesterday on the restructuring or redesigning to eliminate some of the red tape related in processing subsidies to that service. I'll have questions later, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JIM  
SCHAEFER

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to tell the House about a man who has played an important role in the lives of many in the Northwest Territories.

My uncle, Jim Schaefer, was born April 7, 1937 and spent much of his early years on the trap line. He spent the early years of his adult life working for Northern Transportation Company Limited and Northwest Territories Power Corporation, travelling to many communities up and down the valley and east to Gjoa Haven, building generator stations and putting up power lines.

Jim met his wife in Fort Resolution and raised his family in Fort Smith. In 1966 Jim became a journeyman electrician, earning his certificate in Fort Smith, and being only the 11th person in the North to get his certificate. From there, he started his own business in the early 1970s. Jim was not only a hard-working entrepreneur and a dedicated family man, he was involved in the community, particularly in sports like broomball, baseball, and curling. The latter he excelled in, going to the Canadian Brier twice. Jim was also heavily involved

in the local fire department and was a two-time winner of the Canadian Firefighters Curling Championship in his four trips to the national competition.

Mr. Speaker, his accolades didn't stop there. He was involved in the Metis Association, Caribou Management Boards, Hunters and Trappers Association, and youth justice. At the age of 41 Jim wanted to reconnect with the land, and went back to trapping for five years while teaching his children to live off the land. When he returned, he started his business up again, a better man.

He then became Chief of the Salt River First Nation and played an integral role in the signing of its Treaty Settlement Agreement in 2002. He was also the first president of what was once the NWT Hunters and Trappers Association and a committed advocate for trappers' rights. Mr. Speaker, Jim was a family man through and through, and in the later years of his life, he spent much of it with family, especially his grandchildren whom he loved dearly. He never recovered from the loss of his wife Edna of 52 years, who passed away in 2014 from cancer. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 22 months after he lost his life partner, he also succumbed to cancer. Jim lived life to its fullest and has left us all with memories that we will cherish. He helped build the Northwest Territories we know today and, for that, we are all grateful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Our condolences to the family as well. Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my parents, Rocky Simpson and Betty Lyons, citizens of Hay River and constituents of Hay River South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

**MR. SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Betty and Rocky Simpson from Hay River South. Welcome.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, acknowledgements. Member for Nahendeh.

## Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 6-18(2):  
RETIRING STAFF FROM ECHO DENE SCHOOL

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the retirement of three individuals from Echo Dene School in Fort Liard: Kiatch Nahanni, who has taught for 30 years in the Dehcho; Dianne Nelson, who has taught 29 years in the NWT system and 14 years at the Echo Dene School; and her husband, Kevin Nowoselski, has 29 years within the NWT system and 14 years at the Echo Dene School. All three teachers have been great supporters of youth in the community and have done a great job impacting the youth, whether it's in the school or personal life. They will be sadly missed. I wish them all the best on their next adventure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

## Oral Questions

QUESTION 173-18(2):  
MANGILALUK SCHOOL IN TUKTOYAKTUK

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the state of Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk, and my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: in the past the department has said that Mangilaluk School was not at capacity and, yet, we are seeing overcrowding. How does the department evaluate school capacity, Mr. Speaker? Quyanainni.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We look at the capacity and the utilization rates, enrolment rates, we take everything into account, space needed in the classrooms to allow the students and the teachers to do their work in a safe environment. Mangilaluk School: it is a priority for our department and moving forward with the capital plans in the fall. We did just go do a tour in the Beaufort Delta and Tuk was one of the communities we visited. We did speak to the leadership there, we spoke with the education council chair as well as staff and faculty, and we did get a tour of the school and we do understand the issues that are with Mangilaluk School. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Mr. Speaker, my second question to the Minister is: when was the last time the Mangilaluk School's capacity was evaluated?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned, the Mangilaluk School is on our priority list. We did go

and do a needs assessment of the school. What we're looking at proposing is an additional 1,000 square metres in order to respond with our capital standards and criteria for NWT schools. We're also looking at upgrading to existing program areas to accommodate current program requirements and also do a mid-life technical retrofit that'll include an energy-efficient exterior building envelope.

As everything that comes through the government, whether it's hospitals, schools, roads, it does have to go through a capital budget review, and that's going to happen in the fall. We are going to be working with the Member to try to see how we can get this on the books for Tuk. Initially, when the school was built, it was built for kindergarten to grade nine. Now they've started offering more courses, specifically junior kindergarten as well as the secondary schools. Now we've got to look at reviewing it for junior kindergarten to grade 12, and that's what we plan on doing and hopefully get these in the capital budget in the fall time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Mr. Speaker, that answered my last and final question. More of a comment and I look forward to working with the Minister on this.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. I'll take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 174-18(2):  
REDUCTION OF FIRE FIGHTING CREWS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about the reduction of crew sizes for firefighters across the territory. I'd like to ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources questions. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise me how the overall crew configuration comes along with no actual job reductions? However, looking at it from a constituency point of view, there appears to be job reductions not only in one community of Fort Resolution, but I understand in Lutselk'e as well. I'd like to know where those positions have gone to, whether they have been amalgamated into other positions in the community or if they've left the community. Thank you.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the department anticipated this, we did a review a while back, a couple of years, on where we were going with fire crews. Over the last two fire seasons we've gone to basically having four four-man crews there with casual staff hired in these positions. We're still anticipating hiring these two individuals as casuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I didn't hear that very last part of the response. I'll continue on with my questions. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain why positions were cut from small communities where seasonal and casual employees have no other options to find employment in the small communities?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Upon doing the review of the fire crews for the Northwest Territories, we changed from a five-man crew to a four-man crew and redistributed the resources territory-wide, and what the Member is saying is not totally accurate. We went from 28 crews to 36 crews across the Northwest Territories, and have added additional crews to a couple of communities, I think in Tsiigehtchic and Wekweeti.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the GNWT lays off positions or employees there's a process that help them identify new jobs where P1s have been eliminated. In situations where only the P1 is eliminated, whether it be filled by a casual or a seasonal employee, then that person that's impacted is the only one that has to deal with it. We need to go the extra mile to try to find positions. Can the Minister advise me what efforts were made to minimize the impacts on the change of the crew configuration so that people that used to be in those positions, maybe casuals, are given opportunities within that department or with other departments within the community? Thank you.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an attempt to minimize the impact of changes to the communities like Fort Resolution, ENR over the last two years, like I've said, has gone to only permanently hiring four out of the five-man crews. The fifth person for each crew has been hired on an as-and-when-needed basis as a casual for the summer.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he can look at ways to ensure that PYs are restored in the communities. If the fifth firefighter in these communities is actually still there and still working as a casual, then that must mean that there's a function for the individual. I'd like to know if the Minister can restore the PY, whether it be in forest management or other areas that may be of interest to the casual or other areas within ENR mandate or other areas within the GNWT mandate to ensure that those PYs are not lost. Because they're not filled with actual positions, I can't really say employees, but it's just as important that the PYs remain in the small communities. Thank you.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the concern about PY positions in the communities. Moving forward, we will do what's deemed to fit the ENR's business practice as best as possible and we will continue to look at hiring as many people as possible in the communities as the fire season event moves on in the current fiscal year. We will try to hire more people as needed and we will be committed to that. ENR is always committed to hiring as many fire personnel in the communities as we can. I look forward to maybe discussing it with the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 175-18(2):  
INCREASES TO INCOME ASSISTANCE FOOD  
ALLOWANCE

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, households that depend on government for income are at greater risk of being hungry than other households with low income. The government has acknowledged this fact by raising the food allowance portion of income assistance. Can the Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment confirm his commitment to follow through with increases to the food allowance in the next two fiscal years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member's correct in her Member's statement, the last time we increased the income assistance was on April 1, 2015. We're always reviewing our programs and services that we offer to our most vulnerable people and the ones that really need some of the basic needs.

I did field questions on this topic last week. Just some extra information out there. On April 1<sup>st</sup> we did increase it by 20 per cent, 2015. We also mentioned that in the Yukon they're looking at indexing, so we've got the department looking at what they're doing in the Yukon to see if there's any way we can reflect that. Obviously, there would be some changes that we would need to make within our regulations with the new announcement of the federal funding with the child tax, and we're trying to adjust those so that our low- to moderate-income families will see a significant increase. We have gone over those numbers yesterday during the business main estimates review in Committee of the Whole. We're working with the Members and

we're also looking at what other northern jurisdictions are doing. Thank you.

**MS. GREEN:** I thank the Minister for that response. I just want to confirm with him that in fact there is a commitment to follow through with the increases scheduled earlier to the food allowance under income assistance.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As we went through our business planning review, as well as our main estimates review, and with the regulations, when those go through we're going to see a significant increase to our low to moderate-families, which the Member is bringing forward with the NWT Child Benefits and how we're going to be assessing those and addressing those now. There will be an increase to our families that have low income to moderate income. It's just going to take time, as we have to go through the regulations. We will see those increases as we move forward.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, what efforts is the territorial government making to ensure that Nutrition North becomes a more useful program in the North for providing nutritious and affordable food? Thank you.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** We're always working with other departments on how we can address some of the shortfalls in some of our communities, such as high cost of food. In 2014, we did develop a Northern Market Basket Measure. Every jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories does have a market basket measure, but it doesn't reflect what the costs are living in the Northwest Territories. We work with Yukon and we worked with Nunavut to create a Northern Market Basket Measure. We're using those statistics to reflect how we fund our income assistance. We're also working with our other departments and with adjusting some of the high costs of food prices in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that answer. What I'm wondering in particular with Nutrition North, which is a federal program, is whether the territorial government is taking a role in trying to make Nutrition North a more useful program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Of course, Nutrition North has been a concern for all Northerners in the last few years. We want to see how we can work with our federal partners to make the program more feasible here in the northern communities, so definitely working with our federal counterparts to address those issues.

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

QUESTION 176-18(2):  
ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN  
YELLOWKNIFE

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked questions to the Minister responsible for Homelessness about the Housing First plan. Unfortunately, the information we learned was incorrect. Housing First in the city of Yellowknife has made a commitment to house one person by the end of August 2016 this year, and 20 people over the life of the project, not just one person. I am wondering if today the Minister can explain why inaccurate information was provided to this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that comment about the 20 people and another in 2019. The City of Yellowknife has actually put forward in a meeting with the city councillors and the Yellowknife MLAs that they would be piloting one person this fiscal year. They also put it in their June 3<sup>rd</sup> in the media that they would be housing one person within this fiscal year to begin with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important that if this government is to invest in a real solution for homelessness, that we have a full understanding of all the options available to us. Housing First remains a viable option, and there's a big difference between building new shelter spaces and empowering people with their own homes. I'm wondering if the Minister today will commit to reconsider her plan and commit to matching the current funding for Housing First so we can address more of the critically chronic homeless who are in need and using 51 per cent of our emergency services.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The Minister is committed to addressing homelessness. We have put forward our agreement to partner with the city of Yellowknife within their Housing First model of housing one person, hopefully within the next three years to get 20 people in.

However, coming from this community, I know that if we were to only sit back and support only one agency providing one model, it probably would not be the most efficient use of our funds. To house one person within the community would not make a significant dent, and the other model would provide

for 30 people. I must say that the other model is following a Housing First model as well, because Housing First does not only belong to the city; it belongs to whoever wants to use it. Even though the shelters will be using it, the location of the units will be separate.

There is already one agency within Yellowknife, actually, that does use the model that we are looking at, and that is the YWCA within their Rockhill. They have done this model for many years and they have shown it is successful, so if we have a model that is successful within our community, why would we not duplicate that so we can get more people into housing?

**MR. TESTART:** Certainly, the Minister is an expert in this field, and I respect her expertise, but I also am a Yellowknifer and I know that this problem is only getting worse, and when you look at the evidence-tested, proven methods that have worked across the country, Housing First is a clear model, a specific model that gives consumer choice and empowers people. That's what we are talking about today. I am wondering if the Minister will clarify her comments yesterday, this plan to expand the shelters to house 30 people. Construction will begin in the summer is what the Minister said yesterday. Can the Minister clarify if these are new beds or homeless spaces that are being constructed, or if it is existing beds and they are providing more dollars to the shelters to care for more people?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As most Members may be aware, once the move goes into Housing First, then we are at risk of actually jeopardizing the emergency shelters. Emergency shelters will always be a necessity within the homeless population, especially in the North because we have such a transient population, so if I was to go out and put every single person into a house today, by tomorrow, perhaps even this evening, we would have more people. My obligation is as we move forward in the Housing First model, we need to make sure that our emergency shelters are sustainable, and through that, if they are only based on the amount that they are given now per bed night, then that is not a sustainable model. The second part of his question, will these be extra funding to the emergency shelters? The money will not go into the emergency shelter component. We are looking at totally different spaces for the shelters, and similar, I will again now use the agency that has showed the success within our community. The YWCA does have a family violence shelter, and separate from that, they have the Rockhill apartments, which is again a successful model of housing families. We are looking at a similar model to house men and females so that these shelters are sustainable and that Housing First is actually a model we are using, so totally separate from the emergency shelter, but within the

same facilities that provide those services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To clarify, I don't think this is an and/or solution we need to look at. Shelters serve a very important role. Housing First is a separate model. Both are equally important, and it's about being compassionate. Everything costs money, of course, but we need to think about the compassion and supporting Northerners and empowering them to make positive choices. That's what we are talking about today with Housing First. It's a proven model that works, gets people back on their feet, and solves a real problem in our community, in our capital city. That is what I am fighting for, and I hope the Minister is hearing me loud and clear and seeing the good work the city of Yellowknife is doing.

Just to clarify, will new construction be going on to create these new 30 spaces? Is it new construction or is it using the existing space? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Compassion is really important within the homeless population. I do adhere to the Housing First model, but I also recognize that within the North, we have other models that are successful, so I give credit to that. It's important to have a northern perspective on northern solutions. The final part to that question is absolutely yes, the units that we are going to be building for the semi-independent living will not be in the emergency shelter area. They are totally separate from the emergency shelter, and they will be independent units for homeless people, for chronic homeless people.

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

QUESTION 177-18(2):  
ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF THE  
OMBUDSMAN

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice, who conveniently is also the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, transparency and openness has been an overarching theme of political life in the NWT through the past Assembly and last fall's election. This Assembly has taken steps to recognize and address those themes. One important way we did that is enshrined in the commitment 5.3.11 of the mandate document that identifies a commitment to developing legislation within two years to establish an Office of an Ombudsman. Mr. Speaker, I would

like to ask the Minister if the Department of Justice has begun the work referenced in that commitment to develop the legislation to establish an independent parliamentary office of the ombudsman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to fulfilling the priorities developed by the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, including exploring options for the creation of the position of ombudsman. The Department of the Executive and the Department of Justice are working together to develop options for the establishment of this position. Thank you.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to go on with my questions, but quite frankly, I have to stop and ask for clarification from the Minister. Can the Minister elaborate a little bit more for us on what exploring options actually consists of?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I am pleased to do so, Mr. Speaker. There is work underway to develop materials to support a discussion by the caucus. We are having a summer meeting where this is one of the issues that is to be discussed, so we are exploring options. There are many different models in Canada. As the Member quite correctly pointed out, there are nine provinces, all of them except Prince Edward Island, I think, and the Yukon that have developed this position. However, the position is different in every jurisdiction. We need to look at options and decide which models we wish to follow. Thank you.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that a draft Ombudsman Act was prepared on behalf of the Members of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly and was tabled in this House. I think in that effort, there were probably a lot of options considered. Can the Minister advise whether the department intends to use that act to inform this work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes. There was a draft proposal which was prepared in the last Assembly which I had the opportunity of reading, but I believe that the first step would be for us all to decide which model we wish to follow, and at that point, legislation will be brought forward.

As I mentioned earlier, there are many different models. There is the Quebec model for one, which is a very extensive, expensive model, and others that are more limited. The cost has been found to be between perhaps half a million dollars at the minimum and multi-millions of dollars at the maximum. It's to be determined whether we will follow the model, and I haven't reviewed that draft piece of legislation lately, but that is perhaps one of

the models that we may follow, but that is yet to be determined. Thank you.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and what I gather from the Minister is that there is a lot of work yet to be done. Mr. Speaker, how will the Minister commit to keeping Members of the Assembly apprised of the progress that this legislation is required? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Well, of course part of that will be determined by our discussions this summer, and of course, I will keep the House apprised. We will keep the House apprised as the legislation moves forward. We are hoping to look at a series of options in the summer, choose the best option, and that would be reflected in the legislation that we will bring to this House. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 178-18(2):

#### MANAGING THE MOREL MUSHROOM HARVEST

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. As I stated earlier this afternoon, my constituents are concerned with the lack of information on this year's harvest from ITI. How does the department plan to engage with the communities to help manage the activity in the Deh Cho this year regarding the mushroom harvest? Mahsi.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The activities associated with morel mushrooms don't change from year to year. Last year, we spent a lot of time working with the communities developing materials for the communities and to assist in working with the mushroom pickers. Our regional staff have had several casual conversations with chiefs in the region, and we are willing to assist anyone interested in morel mushroom harvesting. We have brochures that guide us to morels in digital form and print as needed. Right now as the Member has stated, it is too early to say how the harvest will go this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. How is ITI building on the lessons learned from last year's mushroom harvest? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly learned a lot over the years. The goal of ITI's work last season was to raise awareness among Northwest Territories residents and entrepreneurs to the economic potential presented by the morel mushrooms harvest. Accentuating the success of this initiative is the fact that \$1.7 million of the \$1.9 million generated in cash flow stayed in the Northwest Territories last season, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** The Department of Environment and Natural Resources plans to introduce new forest management legislation during the life of this Assembly. How is ITI involved in this important work in terms of using our forest resources industry?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Last year in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, we were planning to amend our regulations so that it would provide for morel mushrooms. We ran out of time, so this year it will be provided for by ENR through the updating of the Forest Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 179-18(2):  
HIGHWAY RESCUE SERVICES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, I have questions for the Minister of MACA regarding highway rescue services. I direct my questions to him because MACA is heading the interdepartmental committee that's looking into this issue. I understand it is a complicated issue. MACA can say it's Health's problem. The department can say it's the authorities' problem, so I'm not trying to place blame. I just want to get some clarification on these issues so we can figure out how to move forward. My first question is: who actually has the legislative responsibility to provide highway rescue services in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within the GNWT, there is no single department that has legislative responsibility to provide ground ambulance service for residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SIMPSON:** I guess this responsibility has been deferred to the communities. I was wondering: what formula does MACA use to determine what funding will be allocated to communities based on the amount of highway they have to service?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The department... We provide annual funding for community public

infrastructure based on which community governments may use to procure equipment to support highway rescue and ground ambulance services beyond their municipal boundaries. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SIMPSON:** It sounds like the general money provided to communities is what they're supposed to use to provide the service. Speaking of the interdepartmental committee, I was wondering if the Minister could sort of elaborate on some of the work that they have done and how far along they are.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the committee was formed in 2012. It had representatives from the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Social Services, MACA. They were formed to implement a strategy to strengthen our community based ambulance and highway rescue services. The strategy actually resulted in \$1.63 million being provided to community governments to support their community based ground ambulance and highway rescue services, including upgrades, major repairs, or enhancements to existing mobile equipment or the purchase of new mobile equipment. Training which we found was going to be one of the major challenges for a lot of the communities, and we have taken steps to enhance our training programs to the communities so they can be a little more qualified at being first responders. There is a lot of work that has been done, and I think the next step is to try to identify the funding or find a way where we can provide the service or make it quite clear who is responsible for the service.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like the committee might be trying to focus on some legislative changes to identify who is actually responsible, which would be a nice movement ten years after those recommendations were made.

My question is: what can I do to help the Minister move this process along? Is there information I can bring back to the town? Is there some way that we can collaborate? Because Hay River does have 800 kilometres... It must have one of the largest stretches of highways, so it does affect the town quite a bit. What can we do moving forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things we could do to move forward on this. One thing I would like to see is we hear from the communities that it's costing them money and use of their equipment and that to get people out on the highway to rescue those that are in need, and one thing we know about the North is nobody is going to say no to anyone that is in need, so they

will go there. What I would like to see is justification for the money that they say that they are spending going out, and then also, we need to work as a Legislative Assembly to try and meet some of our fiscal challenges so we can free up more money to put towards initiatives such as this, so there is a number of work we can do, some work we could do, and I will commit to the Member that from my part, I will see how we can move this forward, because the Member is absolutely correct. This has been something that's been on the books for about ten years, and we hear about it every time we attend the NWT Association of Communities annual general meeting. I will do my part to try and move this initiative forward, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 180-18(2):  
PROGRAM CHANGES FOR DAYCARE  
FACILITIES AND DAY HOMES

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I mentioned that I was going to address the homecare and daycare facilities here to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. My first question is to the Minister. After reading and listening to the presentation yesterday, there are changes underway. There is restructuring and reintroduction of new subsidies, so is it sounds like the program for the day home and daycare is being revised. Can the Minister explain: when is that going to be done, and what are the main highlights or the main principles of the new program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, and I'm very glad the Member brought some his concerns with the daycares in the Sahtu, and following up to the statement that I gave in the House yesterday, we're looking at the fall in October to have these all put back into place, and it is so our daycares can actually sustain themselves. There is attendance based review, but also just funding that is going into utilities, the costs and maintenance, rent, and mortgage of these daycares. Those will all be coming into effect in October and I look forward to seeing the rollout of this program and we can start providing early childhood programs in the communities of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. MCNEELY:** One of the changes that I have heard is a concern back home, and I'm hoping and I'm getting the feeling that it is going to be in this new program. Can the Minister confirm that housing units will be made available to the day home that

operators live in, to turn that into a day home facility?

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** That's a very complex situation. Anybody who is in housing and wants to provide daycare is in day home programs, doesn't currently fall under our criteria, and in fact, it would be almost starting up a business within the housing program. It's not currently in the criteria. I don't believe we will be looking at that as an option, but we will see, if there is, what other options that we can provide in the Sahtu. I know we have gotten some requests from members in the communities that would like to open up that daycare or a day home that live in public housing units, and right now, that just doesn't fall under our criteria.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Can the Minister clarify on yesterday's presentation his statement when, and I quote, we are also changing our approach to operators in government-owned buildings? What is the rationale behind that statement?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. We do have daycare operators in some of our government buildings. Currently, we give them funding of up to 50 per cent. Under the new changes, we will be subsidizing their rents, mortgage, or their rent to 75 per cent. We already offer it to people that are doing it in their own buildings or nongovernment buildings. We should be having it equal right across the board, so any daycares that are operating in our government buildings, we will be subsidizing up to 75 per cent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is: I ask the Minister to provide me with a briefing so I can advertise and market this new service this year within the community I represent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be glad to provide a package for the Member. I know that we do have an early childhood consultant in the Sahtu region who has been working with various stakeholders to see what options we have to provide daycares in the community of Norman Wells. We will get that package to the Member, and maybe we will also see if we can set up a meeting with our early childhood consultant to see all the work that has been provided to the stakeholders and the options of possibly, if we can't find a building, looking at a day home that is not a public housing unit.

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

QUESTION 181-18(2):  
911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, who holds responsibilities for community emergency measures and response. My first question to the Minister is: what are the phone numbers for the police and fire department and ambulance service in Yellowknife? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any prefix, you dial 1-1-1-, 1 gets you the ambulance. Any prefix, you dial 2-2-2-2, gets you the fire department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Almost full marks to the Minister. He just had them in the wrong order. Sorry, I didn't really mean that as a trick question, but I guess when we tried some of these numbers ourselves, any permutation, 873, 669 goes with 1-1-1, 2-2-2, and you get the emergency numbers in Yellowknife. But if you phone 911, you get a recording that says there is no 911 service. Who actually has control over that recorded message, and is it not possible to change it to provide clear information on just what numbers should be called?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I will commit to the Member that I will follow up on that and see if it could be redirected to the department. The Member is correct. 911 is an issue that's been in the Assembly, I think, for the last ten years. We are starting to hear more and more about it, and we had done some work on it, but I will go back to my commitment to the Member that we will look and see what we can do to try and forward them to the proper numbers.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I thank the Minister for his response. I think it's an easy, quick thing that we might be able to do to at least start us down that path, so I appreciate his commitment there. I am wondering, though, about phased introduction of 911 service. One study proposal is to expand the dispatch centre already in place for the City of Yellowknife, and in fact, in the Yukon, Whitehorse introduced 911, and it was rolled out to the communities. Will the Minister consider that sort of option here for the Northwest Territories?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, once the report was done and after exploring some options, it was determined that a phased-in implementation would probably work the best. There is some cost involved with that, and I believe there is some legislation that needs to be developed. Again, we have heard from the NWT Association of

Communities and people across the territory, especially in the larger communities, the importance of this. The Member said in his statement before, I think we have studied this to death, and now is the time to implement some of the recommendations of the study, and I will commit to doing my part as I did to the Member for Hay River North to try and see if we can do this. Part of the pressures that we're feeling on the financial side; if we can help alleviate some of those pressures so we are able to invest in some of the new initiatives. We heard some Members talking about the need for a new school. Everybody has a financial issue that they want resolved. If we can alleviate some of the pressures of our current fiscal situation, then that will give us the opportunity to implement a lot of the new initiatives.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and once again, thanks to the Minister for that. Just stay tuned. I have a reply to the budget address a little later. There are some good ideas in there, I hope. I have one other idea that I'd like to pitch with the Minister. There was a recent court case where Bell lost a court case about non-existent 911 services, and that was recently a recent settlement coming out of that. Congratulations to the Andersons for bringing that case forward in their public service. Now that it's out of the courts, maybe it is time that we look at approaching Bell and the Andersons to become part of the solution here as well. Will the Minister commit to consulting Bell and the Andersons to seek renewed opportunities for introduction of 911 service in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we need to look at all of our options. If that is one of the options then maybe they can give us a million dollars to implement 911. It doesn't hurt to ask. But again, this is an issue that I would like to see resolved. It started 10 years ago, and my answer at the time or when I first got to the MACA ministry was that because of technology and the lack of cell phones across the Northwest Territories, technology has improved. That's all been taken care of. There is no reason, I think, other than financial, why we shouldn't look at implementing 911 on a phased-in approach as recommended by the report and as supported by pretty well everybody including the NWT Association of Communities. As I made the commitment to the Member from Hay River North, I will make the commitment to the Member for Frame Lake that I will do what I can to see if we can move this initiative forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 182-18(2):  
RCMP SERVICE IN WRIGLEY

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, we had a respected elder that was part of the Stanton Indigenous elders' advisory committee approach me about concerns in Wrigley with the RCMP. My question is to my favourite Minister, who is walking out the door, but...

---Laughter

I'm just messing with you.

This is a question for the Minister of Justice. Can the Minister of Justice please provide... Does the RCMP have a schedule for going into the community of Wrigley, and is it posted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not entirely sure I understood the question. I know that the RCMP, apart from the places where they have detachments, do patrols into all of the communities where there are no detachments. I don't know if they'd be posted in advance. That would kind of defeat the purpose, I think, of having that sort of activity. I'm not being facetious; I am trying to answer the question. I'm not entirely sure that I entirely understood the question, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for his answer. I'm not trying to catch you, either, because right now it's not posted, which I understand, but they come in on a regular basis at the regular time. Can the Minister work with the RCMP to change up the schedule, including going in weekends and maybe even staying overnight, so that the people that are abusing the system in Wrigley can be caught or be addressed, so that the regular people of the residence will feel safe?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Probably one of the points of having these patrols is to make them irregular so that those that perhaps would want to know when the police are coming won't know when the police are coming. I do understand, however, that there is a necessity of the police to go on regular patrols, which I understand they do. Whether those patrols are on a scheduled basis or not is really up to the RCMP. Although we do fund the RCMP to the tune of, I think, \$45 million a year, 70 per cent of their budget, I do not have much control, or any control, and perhaps I shouldn't, over their day-to-day operations. I can, however, bring the Member's concern to the RCMP, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for his answer. I understand that, you know, we don't control it and we pay for part of their salary and that. The big concern in the communities is that the

people that are breaking the laws are getting away with things and elders are feeling threatened or concerned about the well-being of the community. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister talk to the RCMP as well about checking vehicle registration, people's insurance, and their drivers' licences in these communities when they're there?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** The Member does bring up legitimate concerns. We're not in a position, of course, to have detachments in every single community. Most of the communities do have detachments; those that don't are subject to regular patrols by the RCMP. I can bring the concerns of the Member, again, to the RCMP. I expect, when they go to the communities, they do check on the items that were mentioned in the question, so I will bring these concerns to the RCMP. I think they would be largely aware of them in any case, but I can't really direct them to change their policy. That's really up to them.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Minister for his answer. Again, it is a concern; know where the detachment is; it's in Fort Simpson. The two people, two RCMP members, that are supposed to represent Wrigley, live in Fort Simpson. I understand where they are. I know who these individuals are, and they do a great job. Don't get me wrong; they're doing a great job. However, there are concerns within the communities that the service is not being provided. Can the Minister work with me to get the detachment to work with some of the elders in the community so they can hear the concerns and work out a plan that would be beneficial for the safety of the community and so the issues that they are bringing to my attention can be resolved? Thank you.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** As I said previously, I have very little control over the day-to-day operations of the RCMP. I can, however, undertake to bring these concerns that have been mentioned in the Member's questions to the RCMP. Again, all of the communities in the Northwest Territories do have police protection. Not all of the protection is provided by an on-site detachment. In a review of this matter and looking at the financials, we were given to understand that, approximately, the cost of establishing new detachments would be \$11 million, an unacceptably high cost, so the concerns are legitimate. I will bring them to the RCMP. I imagine, to a large extent, they are already aware of these concerns, because they have been expressed previously, but I will repeat them to the RCMP.

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

QUESTION 183-18(2): HAMLET OF FORT  
MCPHERSON FINANCIAL STATUS

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions for the Minister of MACA. This past spring, there was an update to the community, and I just wanted to check with the Minister to make sure that we are in fact on track as the update to the community was last given. I would like to ask the Minister: what is the status of the Hamlet of Fort McPherson? Are we in fact out of the deficit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In July 2014, we met with the community of Fort McPherson and we were concerned about their financial situation. At the time, we said that we were going to place them under a municipal supervisor, which actually became the municipal administrator as well. We dissolved council and we took over the operations of the community of Fort McPherson.

I have to commend the people of Fort McPherson. We had made some changes early on that they weren't happy with. They let us know. We made some adjustments, especially to the elders' water rates, and they worked with the community, they worked with the department, to try to address their financial situation. I'm happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that we still are on track. We are still waiting for last year's audit. That's up to, I think, March 31, 2016. My understanding is the work has been done; we're just waiting for the final audit. We're anticipating that there is going to be a surplus after many years of a very large deficit. That was a commitment of the people we had in there doing the work and the residents of Fort McPherson. We are on schedule.

**MR. BLAKE:** Also during the update, the department said they were going to go through the hiring process for an SAO for the community. I'd just like to ask the Minister: was an SAO hired for the community at this time?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I'm not quite sure an SAO has been hired. I think they were going through the advertising and maybe the interview process, but I will follow up on that. Also, I think there was a commitment at the time that we were going to have elections again. That is still the plan, to have elections in December and have the new council take office January 2017.

**MR. BLAKE:** That brings me to my next question: during this update, the department said that they will be offering courses under the School of Community Government for training for councillors and also the future mayor. I'd just like to ask the

Minister: when will these courses be offered in the community? I really look forward to that.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Through the School of Community Government, we do offer courses to elected officials after municipal elections, and we will do so in this case. It's actually a very good course and it tells them of their responsibilities, what they can do, what they can't do. Through the accountability framework that we have implemented now, I think it's going to allow us to nip these problems before they get to be to the stage where they were at in Fort McPherson. That's going to be one of the benefits of the accountability framework, is it will protect the community from getting into a financial situation like we've seen a few communities have got into in the past. We look forward to the courses that will be offered to the new council in Fort McPherson, and we look forward to them taking over the operation of their own community.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the community meeting, what the people actually wanted to see was these courses offered before the election. That way people will know which responsibilities the council will have before they actually run. I'd just like to ask the Minister if they would be willing to offer these courses through the fall. Mahsi.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Member makes a good point, and I will check with the department and see if there are opportunities. We'll explore options and see if there are opportunities for us to offer these courses before the elections actually take place, so those that are considering running for council will know exactly what they're getting into and what they're responsible for. I'll follow up on that and I will get back to the Member.

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

QUESTION 184-18(2):  
SENIORS' HOUSING

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of the Housing Corporation questions about her Minister's statement today. I realize that the nine-plexes are something that's positive for the communities in which they're going to be built. They've been on the books for some time. When this government put aging in place as a mandate, my thought was that it was going to largely be for home ownership. I would like to ask the Minister which program will be used to target to

the seniors to allow them to age in place in their own homes, in their own communities.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are actually a number of programs. Of course, there is the SAFE program that addresses immediate safety needs. There is the CARE Minor that will address things like small renovations that need to be done, perhaps a rail in the bathroom, and then there is CARE Major that will address larger things that include things like ramps going up to access into the building, et cetera, so quite a variety of programs. I also want to mention that we are doing the community needs survey. Once that comes in, we may be changing our programs based on what the communities say that they want.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** In order to keep one senior in long-term care in the Northwest Territories on average it costs about \$125,000. I'd like to ask the Minister if there will be an attempt to keep seniors in their own homes, not in the nine-plexes, in their own homes, to design a program that provides barrier-free access to homes.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes. The Minister does acknowledge that the best care for seniors and our people is to be able to be in their homes as long as possible without having to go to disturb that. There is a huge component that says wellness and individual mental health is linked to being able to stay in their own facilities. I just wanted to state that we will be looking at prioritizing seniors.

The federal government has given us within the next two years a budget of \$1.5 million that we will be using. Then, within that, the NWT Housing Corporation for this coming fiscal year, we're going to be doing 63 senior public housing units that will get the modernization and improvements for a total value of \$2.6 million we're going to be spending on that project. With the 356 units that we currently have for seniors, the extra 63 we'll be doing this year, we're looking at 459 units that are actually suitable for seniors to be able to live in by the end of this fiscal year.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister also indicated in their Member's statement that they were working with the Department of Health and Social Services. I would like to know what type of work is going on between NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure that seniors are aging in place.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT

Housing Corporation sit on a number of ministerial committees that we talk about various issues. Seniors are one of the populations that we talk within that. We want to make sure that the Housing Corporation provides these services to people as long as they can maintain their own care, and then when they get to a point where they can't, then we want to make sure that we have kind of as seamless as possible a transition into long-term care. Really working closely hand in hand is key to be able to facilitate proper care for our seniors in the long term.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along that same line, so what I'm hearing is that the work is to sort of monitor the seniors and, once a senior needs long-term care or gets to that level of care, they just move them into long-term care. My idea, and many other people's idea, on aging in place was to make it possible for them to remain in their home and get the services that they need so that they don't go into long-term care. My question is about what work is happening with Health and Social Services to allow the people to remain in their homes, not what work is happening with Health and Social Services that will give them access to long-term care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I apologize for the miscommunication. I can't really speak for the Department of Health and Social Services, and my colleague is not here today due to illness. What I can say is that we are committed to try to keep people within their communities as long as possible. However, there does come a point when the capacity of the community is such that people, some people, will need to be moved into long-term care. My commitment is, as long as we can keep people within their own homes, within their own communities, then as Minister of Housing I will do my best to make sure that we provide the services so that people can live in their own space. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, replies to budget address, day five of seven. Member for Frame Lake.

### Replies to Budget Address

#### MR. O'REILLY'S REPLY

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The new Regular MLAs have almost survived their first budget. I will use my reply to the budget address to set out some thoughts on the following: a

description of the process and how it might be improved; public engagement and my assessment of same; and substance of the budget and its consistency with the priorities and mandate of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

### The Budget Process

On the budget process, as I mentioned earlier, this was my first budget as an MLA. I followed GNWT budgets for many years as an interested observer and have partaken in many pre- and post-budget consultations with previous Finance Ministers. This budget is different in several significant ways. Largely due to the timing of the fall election, the capital budget was completed by the previous Assembly. While we had some ability to examine capital projects, it was virtually impossible to assess or evaluate these expenditures. We also passed an interim appropriation for the first quarter of 2016-17 that largely maintained the status quo, although Regular MLAs did succeed in adding in funding for an infrastructure program for small communities.

The current budget effectively covers the last nine months of 2016-17. It is based on a review of departmental budgets or business plans that were put together internally by the Ministers and their staff. Work on these budgets and plans has been underway for months, before the current MLAs had even been elected. As we learned later, each department was given specific reduction targets to support the overall fiscal strategy. Regular MLAs had no direct say in the development of the overall fiscal strategy, the reduction targets, or the actual draft business plans. Yes, we did play a role in the mandate of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, but it was clear that not all departments used or clearly reflected the mandate. For example, even though we rejected the fiscal strategy target of \$150 million in reductions and had it removed from the mandate, Cabinet keeps bringing it back like some sort of zombie. Regular MLAs have stressed that, if there is to be a fiscal context statement, there must also be a social and environmental context statement as part of the budget. To be clear, I am in favour of some financial management, but if we are to build a large surplus for capital projects, those projects should be well defined, their need researched and justified by clearly outlined cost-benefit analyses. Finally, they should not be built on the back of programs, services, and staff.

Regular MLAs reviewed departmental budgets and business plans for the remainder of 2016-17, using the standing committees during the period of April 25th to May 6th. I attended all of those meetings, even though I was not a Regular Member of two of the standing committees. We had excellent assistance from our research staff and clerks. Most of the Ministers and their staff were quite helpful in responding to questions and requests for additional

information. Some Ministers were less than helpful and even refused to provide documents. In my view, this is simply not acceptable in a consensus government system. I believe it's also contrary to the guiding principles and process conventions of the Legislative Assembly, which all Members must abide by. In any event, all of this was done in a very compressed time frame and involved several rounds of discussion and negotiations behind the scenes that was not open to the public. I think it would be fair to say that Regular MLAs were very diligent in passing their views back to Cabinet and the Finance Minister, but responses were often very slow and incomplete. As noted by the Finance Minister, the Regular MLAs worked very hard behind the scenes to secure reinstatements of program, service, and staffing cuts that total over \$4.3 million. The budget address specifically mentions reinstatements related to small community employment programming and youth. I would also add that significant effort by Regular MLAs went into reinstatements for programs that invest in the parts of our economy that continue to grow and diversity, including tourism, arts and crafts, agriculture, and more. Why the Cabinet proposed cuts to these programs is a mystery to me, in light of our mandate's call to strengthen and diversify our economy, but I digress.

As for lessons learned in the process, I make the following observations:

- We need to find ways to open up the budgeting and business plan review to allow for some level of public scrutiny. I recognize the balance of interest in a consensus style system where information can and should be shared, but the public also needs to know what is happening and what tradeoffs are being made. I don't have any specific suggestions, but would encourage us all to ponder this issue.
- There should be some firm deadlines around the negotiation process between Regular MLAs and Cabinet, including the exchange of information and views. We may need to review our current process conventions and/or develop a new one for the budget process.
- I found it very difficult to relate the information in the business plans to the main estimates. Better cross-referencing of the activities is needed. Perhaps more details from the business plans could be included in the main estimates as appendices to each departmental budget.
- There should be a clear and concise section that provides a summary of the changes in the main estimates from the business plans.

- There should be clear tables showing the changes in staffing by departments and by community in relation to full-time and part-time employees as a result of sunsetting of programs, reductions and new initiatives. Such information should be public while protecting the privacy of individuals who may be the subject of such changes.

### Public Engagement Around the 2016-17 Budget

In the past, Finance Ministers have conducted both pre- and post-budget briefings and meetings with the public, business, non-governmental organizations, and others. I've been at many of these sessions over the years and while some have been rather frustrating, if the process appears fair and balanced there will be greater public confidence in the results. Early on in the budget process of 2016-17, Regular MLAs encouraged the Minister of Finance to conduct public consultations. While I recognize the limited timelines of the current process and special timing considerations through a later election, we can and should do a much better job on public engagement. A website and a rather biased discussion paper on revenue options do not constitute adequate public consultation. Regular MLAs highlighted the extensive efforts of the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial government in consulting its citizens and we can learn a lot from those efforts. I reviewed the budget dialogue report from our limited efforts on the 2016-17 budget and it was little more than a compilation of submissions with no analysis or overall summary. It was also very disappointing that our limited consultation efforts began so late in the process and that the public was told that any substantive suggestions would only be considered for the 2017-18 budget. We can and should do a much better job in engaging our citizens about our next budget. Effective consultations on the budget should be one of the priority tasks assigned to the new communication staff approved in this budget for the Department of the Executive. The priorities and planning committee should be given an opportunity to comment on the communication plans developed for future budget consultations.

I'd like to move to the substance of the budget. Last week on budget day I said that the public at large would be wondering what the past 12 months of austerity messaging of gloom and doom have been all about. The public and our civil service have lived in anxiety at the prospect of deep cuts. This, in my view, was counterproductive and unnecessary. As the Finance Minister stated, \$27 million in spending will end with scheduled termination of some programs, and there's \$31 million in program reductions in the fiscal year. This is more than offset by \$29 million in forced growth and \$35 million in new initiatives, so spending will actually

be higher than last year at 0.9 per cent, almost the rate of inflation. This is not the austerity budget we were led to believe it would be. While the budget may not seem as harsh as was expected, there will be real losses for the 58 GNWT employees that may be out of work in the wider economic impacts. Although I pushed very hard for some economic analyses of these job cuts and the potential losses from induced and indirect impacts in the private sector and lost revenues from taxes and transfer payments, this work was not done well and it is not publicly available as part of the budget. That's why I asked the Finance Minister last week to table this information in the House.

Throughout this budgetary process Regular MLAs were firm in insisting that drastic austerity measures would not be supported and would cause more harm through removal of spending in local economies. Just as the federal government has turned to fiscal stimulus, messages of hope and change, our government was sending out very contrary signals and taking us in the opposite direction. In my view, what has been driving Cabinet is the belief that big projects and non-renewable resources are the preferred future for the Northwest Territories. We have to build a significant cash surplus to provide subsidies in the form of infrastructure to support more non-renewable resource development in the hope that federal funding will fall from heaven. That way of thinking was blown out of the water in the fall with the election of a new government in Ottawa and was further confirmed with a first federal budget in March where the new priorities for infrastructure are a cleaner economy, a more inclusive society, a low carbon economy, and transformative change. We are still locked into the Roads to Resources paradigm when we should be developing plans and strategies for adequate housing so our residents can engage in the economy, getting our communities off diesel with renewables, and developing a University of the Northwest Territories. This is where the federal dollars are and these initiatives will help us reduce our cost of living while creating a more diversified, resilient economy. These sectors also create more local jobs than non-renewable resource development. That was the kind of the leadership I had hoped for in the budget.

To be fair to Cabinet, there are good things in the budget. They include:

- increased student financial assistance for students aimed at developing their potential and retaining more of our young people;
- changes to the way that we fund daycare and day homes with a commitment to universal and affordable childcare;

- change to income assistance so the NWT and Canada child benefits and spousal support are not clawed back;
- funding for the implementation of the new Mental Health Act;
- negotiation and implementation of transboundary water agreements;
- increased funding for our community governments at about the rate of inflation, but we still need more funding to ensure a fair distribution of such funding to address the infrastructure deficit and additional funding for the Arctic Energy Alliance.

I appreciate the work of Cabinet in moving these initiatives forward and fully support them in this regard and believe they are consistent with our mandate.

While on the subject of our mandate, I think it is the root of some of the issues I raised earlier in this reply. There are simply too many competing priorities without much guidance on how our scarce resources should really be allocated. For example, the mandate refers to work to secure funding for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, a road to Whati, and a road to the Slave Geological Province. Clearly, all three of these projects will not proceed at the same time and in my view, the odds are slim that money will be found to complete any of them within the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Unreasonable expectations have been raised by our government on these projects. Some of my colleagues and I have questioned how these infrastructure projects should stack up against the competing needs for adequate housing or other priorities. I think Cabinet should show stronger leadership in working with the Regular MLAs to better refine our priorities and how we allocate our resources through the budget. There are some proposed expenditures and reductions that we reviewed during the budget process that were clearly at cross-purposes, for example, reduced funding for renewable energy in one department and increased funding in another. Or increased water monitoring in one program and reductions in another aimed at protecting sources of drinking water. All of this to say that some higher-level review of the budget should be conducted for internal consistencies, especially in light of our mandate.

Lastly, the biggest disappointment for me with the budget was the failure to seriously consider raising revenues for a more balanced approach to fiscal sustainability. The budget address boasted of no new taxes. This is rather ironic given that this budget proposes increased landing and terminal fees when flying through Yellowknife and airport improvement fees. These fees will clearly increase

the cost of living for Northerners yet are inconsistent with the no new taxes approach. I'm not opposed in principle to these fees, but we also need to develop a business plan and fully engage the public on this initiative. In addition, the revenue options discussion paper was, in my view, clearly biased against any new or modified revenue measures. We should be raising more revenues in ways that will promote healthier lifestyles and protect lower income families and remote communities. In the short term, increases in taxes on cigarettes and liquor will help reduce consumption. A tax on sugary and caffeinated drinks has been done in Mexico. Create a fifth personal income tax bracket for high incomes above \$150,000 and/or a high-income surtax. Create a hotel tax and dedicated resources to support tourism. Increase the tax rates for industrial uses in the area outside of communities to capture more revenue from the diamond mines. Over the longer term, comprehensively review and consider increases to our comparatively low royalty and taxation rates on mining and oil and gas and dedicate a defined revenue stream into our Heritage Fund. We should be investigating other ways to even out our volatile revenues from corporate income taxes through a capital investment tax, a carbon tax or a resource tax. We should also review opportunities to raise more revenues as a result of devolution legislation, for example, an increase in water use fees.

I believe there are a number of other fees that have not been reviewed or raised in years and we should seek the assistance of our departmental staff in identifying additional opportunities to raise more revenues.

I fully understand that we cannot rely on own source revenues alone to fund all that we wish to accomplish, but I look forward to a much more robust and objective consideration of revenues in the next budget. This was a difficult budget for a number of reasons. I've offered some thoughts on how to improve the process, highlighted the need for better public engagement, suggested clear messaging, a focus on diversifying our economy in line with new federal funding, and ensuring a more balanced approach that includes more revenues. Although we may disagree on a number of matters, there's some exciting initiatives in this budget and I sincerely thank my Cabinet colleagues, their staff, and my committee colleagues for their hard work in a compressed time frame. I can hardly wait until we get back at it again in about three months for 2017-18.

Mr. Speaker, once again for the second time today I finished my statement within the time limit. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Replies to budget address, day five of seven. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Notices of Motion

#### MOTION 15-18(2): REAPPOINTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEMBERS

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 9, 2016, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Legislative Assembly recommend the reappointment of the following individuals to the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission:

Ms. Marian Berls of the town of Fort Smith for a term of four years; and

Mr. Charles Dent of the city of Yellowknife for a term of four years;

And further, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of these appointments to the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

#### MOTION 16-18(2): APPOINTMENT OF THE EQUAL PAY COMMISSIONER

**MR. BLAKE:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 9, 2016, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Ms. Nitya Iyer be appointed as Equal Pay Commissioner in accordance with the Public Service Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly. And further that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of the appointment to the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

#### MOTION 17-18(2): EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO JUNE 13, 2016

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 9, 2016, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that,

notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on June 9, 2016, it shall be adjourned until Monday, June 13, 2016. And further, that at any time prior to June 13, 2016, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

#### MOTION 18-18(2): SETTING OF SITTING HOURS BY SPEAKER

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 9, 2016, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion. Item 17, notice of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Motions

#### MOTION 18-18(2): SETTING OF SITTING HOURS BY SPEAKER, CARRIED

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of just now.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion she gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with your motion Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question

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

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Motion 18-18(2): I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House. Masi.

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

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to continue to consider Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017, and today we would like to continue with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and possibly Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Agreed. We will take a short recess returning with Mr. McNeely in the Chair.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Would the Minister introduce his witnesses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right I have deputy minister David Stewart and on my left Mr. Olin Lovely, assistant deputy minister of corporate services. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thanks to your witnesses for appearing before us. We will return to page 62, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, income security, operations expenditures summary. Activity total, \$47,578,000. We will note that page 63 is information item. To page 62. Questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on page 61 under the activity description it notes that income security programs include the following programs:

- income assistance;
- seniors' home heating subsidy;
- senior citizens supplementary benefit;
- NWT child benefit; and
- student loan financial assistance.

On page 62 under the expenditure category, we identify all the respective categories, one of which is identified as "grants, contributions and transfers." In this year's main estimates it's identified for \$14,730,000. On page 63 we get a breakdown of the grants, contributions and transfers, \$13,259,000 in student grants and \$1,471,000 in homelessness program for a total of \$14,730,000.

Mr. Chair, within this area of the budget document I can't seem to find a breakdown of those things that include Income Assistance, Senior Home Heating Subsidy, Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit, NWT Child Benefit, and I think I might understand part of the Student Financial Assistance under the form of student grants.

I'm wondering if the Minister or the department, although I would appreciate that this is probably going to fall under the fees and payments category on page 62... I'm just wondering how Members decipher how those particular pots of funds are broken up? How would we be able to see that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you. Some of those programs are listed under income security but for some of the other ones that he was asking there are some allocated in fees and payments as well. If the Member would like a further breakdown we can provide that to the Member, of dollars that have been allocated for all of them. It is in the description report we are funding all areas that he's having these questions about, it's just under the operations expenditures summary. It's in income security as well as fees and payments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that clarification. Mr. Vanthuyne, any additions?

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Mr. Chair, if I wanted to know how much we paid or are proposing to pay this year in Senior Home Heating Subsidy where would I find that in this document? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, under the summary here you'd find that under utilities.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Mr. Chair, I won't belabour this. I respect where the Minister is going with this. I'm for the record expressing a challenge. The department has the following programs: income assistance, Senior Home Heating Subsidy, Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit, NWT Child Benefit, and Student Financial Assistance. It would be recommended that within the budget document that we have those actual programs broken out so that we know what the financial allocations are to those specific programs year after year. The reason why I ask that, Mr. Chair, is because a lot of those programs have been criticized in the past as it relates to their ability to keep up with consumer price index or you know indexing of some level or another. I want to be able to look at that. I want to be able to look at past years' histories on the expenditures in those particular programs and determine if there is any value in debating whether these programs should in fact receive some form of indexing. Right now as it relates to the current version of this budget document that's impossible to discuss. I would like that to be considered for future budgets, but if in the meantime the Minister can commit to Members to get us a breakout of what we're proposing for those actual programs rather than just where it might lie in the expenditure summary it'd be well appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can get the breakdown of all these programs to the Member or interested Members. We do go through a cycle. We do go through the business-planning cycle where requests like those also can be made before the main estimates are printed. In terms of more specifics on the main estimates, when we do print them maybe we can talk with Department of Finance on when they're printed out. However, we do also have a public accounts document that's tabled in this House every year. In that document all the programs the government has is able to get specifics on amount of dollars that was being allocated and the amount of dollars that were actually spent. I do know the Member has brought questions up in the House the other day and I made references, once again, to the public accounts documents that shows how our government spends dollars and once that is tabled. I'd encourage the Member to look at those numbers as well, but this is something we had discussed with Department of Finance in terms of programs services. If there's

specifics that he wants then we can get the department to provide that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. For the purposes of clarity, we will include pages 61, support detail, 63, support detail to operations expenditures summary as identified on 62. I recognize Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I know that I've asked the Minister some questions about indexing of income assistance over the last week, and there was some further discussion of that to increase that appropriately even here in the House today. I understand that there has to be changes brought in, legislative changes, in terms of the NWT Child Benefit, the Canada Child Benefit, but when I look at our schedule, it looks like that legislation's probably not going to get into the House until October or November, and presumably at the end of that session we might need the Commissioner to sign off on it, so would the changes actually be made retroactive to April 1<sup>st</sup> or for the tax year? I'm just trying to understand the schedule here and when people could expect to see changes to the benefits that they receive. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** For the income assistance changes, it will be August 1<sup>st</sup>, as mentioned in the House. We just have to get some minor changes done to the regulations for the child benefit. As the Member said, we are going to have to make some legislative changes to reflect that and that could be a little bit longer.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the answer from the Minister. When those legislative changes come through, can they be made retroactive to August 1<sup>st</sup> or do they only come into effect on the signing of the legislation by the Commissioner? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, in terms of retroactive pay, we would have to talk to the federal government in that area. In terms of the other one, we just have to wait until the legislative proposal actually gets approved.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'm a little confused now if I wasn't before. There's the Canada Child Benefit, the NWT Child Benefit. Do

we have to change our Income Tax Act to ensure that people can take full advantage of both of those benefits and when would those changes actually legally come into effect? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, and I appreciate the Member bringing up questions in terms of retroactive pay and whether the GNWT can focus that on their own in terms of funding as questions were in the House earlier today, and last time we did the income assistance increase was April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The increase was about 20 per cent. Currently, our government doesn't have any policy to reflect changes in income assistance. We review on a case-by-case basis. To get to a couple of the other details, I will ask my deputy minister to get into a bit more details of the program and where we can see some real changes. As I mentioned in the House, these are going to be some great changes for low- to moderate-income families moving forward, and the sooner we can get on that and bring it into force the better it'll be for our residents. I'll ask my deputy minister to give a little bit more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of timing, the changes for income assistance that do not include the Canada Child Benefit and custody payments as part of the calculation. That'll take place on August 1<sup>st</sup> for the calculation for the August month. My understanding is that the federal changes will start to roll out in July, so it'll time well with those changes. The changes to the NWT Child Benefit will require the legislative changes and the likely timing is the fall for that. Once we have those changes in place, then we have to work with the federal government on implementing those, although we're doing some of that already, and then once that change takes place then those payments will start to roll out. The effective date of the change to the NWT Child Benefit of course would have to be when the legislation changes.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the deputy minister for that response. I would encourage the department then to move forward then as quickly as they can so we can help our folks better on income assistance. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I appreciate the support and we want to make sure that we work well with committee when that legislative proposal comes through to get the consultation that it needs and get it passed.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We talked about April 1, 2015, as the first time it was 20 per cent. Why hasn't the department developed a policy that shows there will be annual increases to this program to the cost index? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, as I mentioned in the House when taking questions on this, we're just doing a scan right now to see what other jurisdictions are doing. Member O'Reilly has brought up the Yukon index and we're taking a look at that. We're looking at what other jurisdictions are doing. As I said, we review yearly. We always want to make sure our programs and services are adequate enough to support those that need it, but we're just doing a scan right now to see what policies are out there. The Yukon has been brought up and we're taking a look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. I understand that you do it every year; you look at it every year. I honestly believe this government needs to have a policy especially in this area here because it just seems to be willy-nilly. I mean we talk about 2015 was a 20 per cent increase issue there was nothing. I understand what the Minister's saying: you guys are going to go out there and look, but in reality I think we need to have a policy in place that says that we're looking at increasing it every year, cost of index, because we're talking about people who live below the poverty line with this money, and if we're really going to care about these people that are less fortunate, they should understand that we need a policy in place that will address this. It's not just done once. I guess the question is when was the time before? If it was done in April 1, 2015, when was the last time there was an increase to it. I guess that would be my first question on that long ramble. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do want to state that the Income Assistance Program is probably one of the better programs we offer to

those that do need it, and the changes that we are proposing are going to be reflective in increasing those changes. As mentioned earlier when I got asked in the House, we're going to see increases in some of this funding for low- to moderate-income families that are going to benefit. I mean, it's great. I've also talked about the Northern Market Basket Measure. Stats Canada has one for all jurisdictions across Canada; however they didn't reflect the costs and prices here in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, or Nunavut. In 2014 we worked together to develop the northern basket measure and that's when it reflected in the costs that were increased by 20 per cent back then. Right now, you know our focus is to make sure that we get these changes in place so that our low- to moderate-income families actually start benefitting and seeing the dollars. If we start putting our energies into getting a policy done without doing the scan, it could take away some of the work moving forward in the other areas where we'll see actually action and the benefits. Before 2014, I don't know the exact date, but because we got that northern basket measure that reflected the increase. Thank you.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not questioning you about the program. Yes, it's one of the best things and you're doing a great job in it; however, it comes back, I believe it was 2009, so six years later, 2014, you're doing it, so we're not seeing an increase. You know, six years down the road. I understand that it's a lot of work to do. I am hoping that you can do the scan, but at the end of the day, what are we telling the people of the Northwest Territories that earn low income? That, you know, it's the best program out there, but we have other priorities? That to me is wrong. I think we need a policy. We can do the scan, but after the scan is done, I'd like to see a policy implemented by the department so that the policy is linked to the market basket measure. It's there; it's not six years down the road; it's done yearly. I'm asking the Minister: after the scan is done will you make a commitment to look at developing a policy that can link to the market basket measures so every year April 1<sup>st</sup> based on that basket, there could be an increase? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, I'll make the commitment to look into creating a policy moving forward after we do the scan and see the feasibilities of that. Thank you.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that. When is the scan going to be completed? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, thank you. As soon as the questions are brought up into the House from Member O'Reilly on the Yukon index. Through the business planning session when we went through the review made; the department was looking and seeing what's happening. The Yukon index... We really weren't too sure, but that was kind of new, so we want to take a look at that one as well because it is reflective of northern residents as well.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is it going to be done this year or is it going to be next year when the scan is done? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, we could look at making sure that it's done before the end of the fiscal year.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that clarification. Regarding student financial assistance and student grants, there's a difference of about \$3.1 million. What's the difference in that? Is there something... Again, it's kind of confusing so I'm trying to figure out what the difference is between your financial assistance for the program detail and then the expenditure category? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, some of those are reflected in the changes that we made with the northern bonus for students coming back to work and the northern grant also went up. I believe in the last session we gave a really good update on all these changes that we were making to the Student Financial Assistance program. Thank you.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I understand correctly from the Minister, the \$3.16 million is increase to the program that's been part of the budget. Is that what the money is or are there

other allocations for that in financial assistance? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, as I mentioned, northern grants have increased for our northern residents, as well as the northern bonus for anybody that's coming back to work in the north or even an option for southern students that want to come and work up in the Northwest Territories. It's an increase so we can actually attract skilled development workforce as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, is that \$3.16 million increase in those three areas or is there something else in that? Because I look at the student grants, it's at \$13.25 million, and then I look at student financial assistance on the other page, it's \$16.419 million. I'm very happy if the northern grants are going up by \$3.16 million or is there other money that... Because there's a difference between what's on the grants and what's on the financial assistance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister, on extra clarity.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, for more clarity and more detail we'll go to Deputy Minister Stewart please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The value that's in there is the total cost of operating the Student Financial Assistance program. That \$16.4 million breaks down, and these are approximate numbers, there's about \$685,000 for the staff that operate the program, there's about \$13.3 million that are the grants that actually go out for the basic allowance and the supports that are provided. There's a small amount of other O and M for materials and travel, but the biggest other portion is a valuation allowance for student loans. It's about \$2.4 million. That's the difference between the amount that goes out as grant payments and the total budget of the \$16.4 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Stewart. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Now I can get a better picture of where this money is because I'm sitting there going, well, \$3.1 million going into this funding would be great, but in fees and payments there's a reduction of approximately \$1.7 million. Could the Minister

clarify what the reduction in this is? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, for the detail on that I'll go to my deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In 2015-16, we had a particularly high caseload under the Income Assistance Program. Now we received a supplementary appropriation to reflect that higher caseload. That was one-time money. It isn't ongoing at this point in terms of the caseload. But as happens in many years, if there is higher caseloads then we would have to come back for another appropriation, but in 2015-16, there were higher caseloads than the historical case. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Stewart. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I think my time is up there, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** I was going to allow you extra to make up for yesterday. I will allow one more question for Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate your leniency on me. I think the Minister will be happy when I'm done with the questioning on this page. With the heavier caseload, and I notice there's a reduction in staffing, was that part of the reduction process? I've heard that some of the caseload staff could be potentially affected by our reductions and maybe I've been misinformed, but I notice that with the heavier caseload you have a reduction of three staff at headquarters, so does that have an impact on what we're doing and was that part of the reduction-planning process? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did have two positions that I believe went through decentralization and then there was one reduction at headquarters.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Questions. I see none. Education, Culture and Employment, income security, operations expenditure summary, and detail on 63 and additional verbiage on 61, activity total, \$47,578,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Page 64, Education, Culture and Employment, income security, active positions, information item. Any questions. I see none. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Page 66, Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and standards, operations expenditures summary, total activity, \$49,718,000. This is another summary with detail on pages 67. Questions. Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks Mr. Chair. I just want to indulge the Minister. I think I may have asked this question yesterday, but I see that the contributions in particular, there's a line item here, literacy funding and there's a rather large amount of \$2.3 million. Presumably this is some funding that the NWT Literacy Council would be able to access or maybe is accessing. Can the Minister confirm for me that the GNWT's not looking at making any reductions in funding to the NWT Literacy Council? Thanks, Mr. Chair. This might be project-based, but if there's core funding being provided to the organization, is the GNWT actually looking at making any changes to its core funding? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, we're not making any reductions to the Literacy Council. We do fund them up over \$900,000, as stated yesterday. That does reflect a lot of programs throughout the Northwest Territories, but at this moment, no.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that because the council does great work and I'm pleased to hear that we're going to continue to support them in that work, so thanks again to the Minister.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you. I appreciate the comments and that's definitely a priority to increase our literacy rates throughout the Northwest Territories in working with the great work that the NWT Literacy Council does as well.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note on the detail page we've got the \$33 million in college contributions. Does the department have a

breakdown of what the cost per graduate is based on that level of funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, we could get the costs. We don't have that exact detail with us today, but we could look at our enrolment rates for all of our graduates within all the institutions that we fund and get that back to the Member.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just noted the Minister said, "all the institutions we fund." Is the \$33 million here on the description line says, "base funding for Aurora College, includes funding for Aurora Research Institute." Does this funding include other post-secondary institutions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, that's correct. It's all the Aurora College Institute's, but I was also referring to our learning centres as well.

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

**MR. TESTART:** I thank the Minister for that clarification. The inclusion of the ARI, or aurora research institution, this funding line is somewhat confusing to me. What's the exact number out of this funding that goes to ARI? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's all included in the appropriation that we have before us. We could get the detail on what's given to ARI and provide it to the Member.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to confirm, that detail can't be provided today then? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Not at this time. During the review of the main estimates, but we can get that within the next couple days for sure, if not tomorrow.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The other post-secondary institutions that have been mentioned here, College nordique and Dechinta Bush University. Do we provide funding in this section of the budget here or where can I find their funding numbers because I believe earlier yesterday that question was asked and it was deferred to later in the main, so is this where we would find those numbers and where are they located? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Minister, further contribution?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe it's under our labour and career development allocated funding.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Can the Minister provide the totals there and is there something we need to wait for more detail? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Roughly, it's about \$250,000 to \$300,000 to both College nordique and also to Dechinta. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Testart, is that satisfactory clarification?

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is satisfactory. To have the detail, I think we could be doing more to support these institutions. There's a very good business case that's been made by Dechinta in particular for increased funding. Based on their success rates, I think they're still sitting at 100 per cent success rate, granted they only take a few students, but this is a remarkably successful post-secondary education program that's tailored to the deficiencies we have in post-secondary education in the North. I know the Minister's very aware of this based on his work as chair of the standing committee in a previous Assembly, so how do we move forward on this? I know we've talked about legislation but the real issue for these institutions is giving them the funding they need to continue to do good work. I think if we take a look at the \$33 million we're spending on college contributions, specifically to the post-secondary elements, the degree-granting elements of Aurora College, the numbers are not good. They've been in decline over the years and they don't seem to be rebounding. We have some other institutions that are doing incredible work and been highly

successful, so has the department given any thought to breaking this number down and actually looking at other post-secondary education institutions that are finding success and working with them rather than continuing to support programs that aren't popular for whatever reason? It's a huge amount of money. Basically, all of our post-secondary funding is going into one basket and it's not achieving the results that I think any of us are comfortable with.

That was a whole lot. I'm not sure if I've got a clear question, but I guess, can we look into providing more funding than the very small amounts were giving to these successful programs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and we do appreciate the work that College nordique and Dechinta have been doing over the number of years. One of the unique things and great things that I'm excited about is the Skills 4 Success Action Plan. As Members are aware, we did table a labour market information and needs assessment report on April 20th. That reflected the jobs that are going to be needed throughout the Northwest Territories over the next five, 10, 15 years. We have been getting some really good feedback from both College nordique and also with Dechinta and how they're going to be reflecting a lot of their programs around what was developed out of the Skills 4 Success. We're also working with the Aurora College to ensure that as they're going through their strategic planning session this summer, that they're going to be looking at putting programs in that are also reflective of the Skills 4 Success. It is a lot of money that we do fund adult and post-secondary education. One of the things that we have done and incorporated and are going to be looking at more is developing an accountability framework with Aurora College. Hopefully those dollars are reflective of the graduates that we're getting as well as the program services that are being provided to our students. Thank you. As stated in questions yesterday in this area, we did say that we are looking at the legislation that needs to be changed so that institutions such as Dechinta, College nordique, and also look at accessing and applying for other pots of funding. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for that. It is hopeful that the department is acknowledging that there are challenges here and that the government is moving to address them. I note as well that this section has been moved to labour and development standards

rather than education. Can the department confirm that they are taking more of a vocational training approach to post-secondary education in the North with this change? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I think we are trying to hit so many different areas by moving it into labour development and standards section. We are trying to make sure throughout the board that we are actually getting the skilled developments, being able to provide other opportunities to some of our partners and stakeholders outside of the Aurora College system. We are trying to reach all areas and having this area definitely helps with that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you Mr. Chair. I am making good use of my time if you don't mind. That is good. I appreciate that. I think that we had a lot of conversations about a university of the North. My position has always been that a polytechnic is more appropriate. I think this change is the correct one, to actually take a rural college and make it more of a vocational institution for job training, give Northerners the skills they need for the jobs that we need in the future and today. How much involvement did the department have with that strategic plan? Quite frankly, I think Aurora College needs to have that message loud and clear. They are going to need to become a polytechnic. They need to become a vocational school. That is what they were set up to do in addition to the adult education, and I think it strayed from that course. Now, it is time to get them back on track. I think by putting it into labour development, you are sending a clear message from this government that that is exactly what we are up to. Can the Minister confirm that that we are moving Aurora College towards a polytechnic and we are creating a vocational college, rather than letting Aurora College be all things for all people? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. I am going to allow a reply. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we want to make sure that the jobs that we are going to have over the next 15 years... that the program services that Aurora College provides will be reflective of those jobs that are going to be needed. We will be at the table. We will be sitting with the Aurora College executive to make sure that we are working to meet the needs of the Northerners.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions to follow up on my colleague from Kam Lake. It is my understanding that Dechinta and College nordique have submitted proposals to the department for core funding to help them get established. I think those proposals have been in with the department for several months now. I am just wondering whether the department has responded to those proposals and what that response might be or when we can expect to get our responses. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned earlier, the Skills 4 Success Action Plan that we are going to be rolling out here and hopefully bringing back into the House in the fall is going to be reflective of all our partners, stakeholders, whether they are businesses, Aurora College, moving forward. We want to make sure that action plan gets done and that the business case from all areas is looked at. Hopefully we will have their input into creating this action plan as well, which we did commit to working with all our partners on the development of this action plan.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that and for his response. It seems to me then that the department hasn't formally responded to these two proposals but anticipates taking those into consideration in developing an action plan for Skills 4 Success. Is that the case? Is the Minister actually going to respond formally in writing to these two proposals that have been submitted to the Department? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have our staff that are working with both College nordique and Dechinta. We will respond with a formal response to their proposals. This is the first time we have had a comprehensive report as such, the labour market needs assessment report that came out. To make sure that we do it right and that we do get our resources in the areas that need to be done, we have to get that action plan done first. That way we can have our program services reflect that. We will respond with the formal response to both institutions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will ask the Minister to add more clarity to that. You are not quite answering the question as I

see it. I am looking for a time frame or a date, Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** We could give a formal response, but it is simply going to be saying what we are here today as the action plan. We have to get that done first. We could give a formal response this week, early next week. We still want to work with all our stakeholders when we are developing this action plan and making sure it is reflective of the comprehensive report. That will be the next steps. Yes, we will get a formal response out this week or early next week.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I do appreciate your efforts at chairing this meeting. I appreciate the response from the Minister. Why I am raising this is that I have had representatives from both Dechinta and College nordique contact me in an effort to try to find out the status of these submissions. That is why I am pressuring the Minister to find out what is going on with the proposals. I understand he has now committed to getting back to them within a week or so and that is great. If the response is that those proposals will be considered in the context of developing an action plan, that is fine. These things have been outstanding for a while now. I think we should make more of an effort to respond to them in a timely fashion. I think that is what I have heard from the Minister. Once again, I do appreciate your effort at chairing the meeting. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. I appreciate that. As I mentioned, our staff is always in contact with both College nordique and Dechinta. I believe our representative has spoken with them in the last two weeks. Any information like that... I appreciate that Members are bringing this to the table. We want to support our partners. We appreciate the work that both institutions do. There are some areas that need to be considered as well. That is the legislation that needs to be done. We also have to make sure that we are doing the things that were asked for. There was a motion in the House in the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly that we are looking at working on. There are a lot of things that have to come into place. As I mentioned, our representatives did meet with the organizations in the last two weeks. We are keeping in touch. It is not like we are not talking to these organizations, which I hope people don't think we are doing because that is what we are doing. Just to let everybody know that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly. Questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just wondering if we can get some distinction on, under grants, page 67, labour market agreement for persons with disabilities. There seems to be a significant reduction from \$198,000 to this year's proposed \$69,000. Further down, under the contributions heading, similarly, we have labour market agreement for persons with disabilities, contributions previous year was \$802,000. This year's proposed \$281,000. If we can get some explanation around those two areas that would be much appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did give somewhat of an explanation yesterday. We will go back to my assistant deputy minister, Mr. Olin Lovely, to get into a little bit more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. As you see in the 2015-16 revised estimates, you have \$198,000 under grants and \$802,000 under the contribution, and that was money that we received as part of the \$1.25 million for labour market agreement. As mentioned yesterday, we took a \$650,000 reduction as part of the GNWT-wide reduction exercise. The reduction here is reflected in those numbers for 2016-17. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to confirm, the \$1.25 million that we are referring to, was that federal transfer funding that we are not receiving this year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, that is correct. We are receiving \$600,000 though.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Nothing further. Questions? Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and standards, operations expenditure summary along with detail on 67. Total activity, \$49,718,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Page 68. Education, Culture and Employment, labour

development and standards, active positions, information item. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Agreed. Education, Culture and Employment, students loan fund, information item on page 69. Questions. Agreed. I would say none. Page 70. Education, Culture and Employment, education authorities programs and services, information item. Questions? Mr. Thompson and Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister please explain how the budgets are developed for the regional education councils? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We give all the education authorities targets to meet every year and then they supply us with what they feel are going to need to do the work. A little more detail, I will actually ask my deputy minister to get into a little more detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Member is probably aware, there is a funding framework that goes with how we fund the various boards that is linked to any wage or salary-type information as well as benefits as well as enrolments is a key input to that. That is the basis on which we come up with an initial estimate across the various components that go into the contributions to the boards. Then the boards take that and develop their budgets off of those estimates that we give them for the initial amount, working within the framework that we give them for the total. We do give them the detail on what the funding for the framework provides under the various components: administration, inclusive schooling, Aboriginal language and culture-based education, as well as the territorial schools portion, which are the teachers, and then the boards work to develop specific budgets. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the deputy minister and Minister for their answers. In regards to this here, does this include junior kindergarten in the budgets in the salaries in here? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. A lot of the questions that we talked about yesterday when we were going through this, and the other K to 12 system as well. As this is an information item, it is in these areas as well.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you for clarifying that. In regards to your guys' benefits and salaries, where do you guys earmark these numbers? How do you calculate them? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I will go to my deputy minister for that one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The wages and salaries are based on information that we get currently from the boards in terms of the incumbents that they have. In terms of benefits, it is a percentage of those salaries that we use to calculate the benefit amounts. It is a similar system than what the GNWT currently uses in terms of the rates that are used in those sorts of things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I would like to thank the deputy minister for his answer. When we talk about incumbents, is it based on their actual salaries or is it based on a calculation by the department for the next x numbers of years? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. I know we have the NWT association as well as the education authorities that have representatives under the collective agreement as well when we are looking at those areas as well. I will go to my deputy minister for more detail. It is right across the territory in terms of how the teachers are being funded. But the benefits, all those areas, we did give a brief presentation to committee in some of the ways we are going to be looking at fixing some of that, the way we fund our teachers. I will go to my deputy minister for more detail. Thank you.

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

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now, we get information from the boards on their current

suite of teachers and their salaries. We then do adjustments for any expectation, not just for teachers but for all staff, any expectation of staff increases, those sorts of things, and any collective bargaining increases that would be expected in the upcoming year. On that basis, we calculate the expected salary and benefit requirements for every board. That is what goes in for that portion of the budget, currently is the way we do it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Stewart, for that answer. The reason I'm asking these questions is I know we had a presentation in camera, but my understanding is that's confidential so I'm trying to understand what's out there. Are you guys looking at changing the process of how you guys calculate these things for the boards, and have you communicated that change if it's going to be out to the boards?

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. We're actually just going through that funding framework, but I will go to my deputy minister for more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. As the Minister noted, we've recently gone through a review of our funding framework, the way we calculate the resources to boards. There are a number of changes that we did and worked with the boards on. One of the things that we are looking at is how we fund positions. There are some changes that need to take place. This won't impact the 2016-17 school year; it will be subsequent years to that. For example, the way the benefits have been calculated in the past is somewhat inconsistent with the way it is overall in the GNWT, and we think we need to align that.

Secondly, right now, as I mentioned earlier, we're providing funding for positions based on actual salaries. Typically, in the GNWT, a mid-point is used and organizations manage their human resources around those mid-points. That provides some certainty for the government as well as for the boards. Those are discussions we're having right now with the boards, and with the superintendents more specifically, the school superintendents. Those are fairly significant changes to make, so we weren't planning on doing that, as I said, for the 2016-17 school year. Those are changes that we are looking at for probably the 2017-18 school year.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Deputy Minister Stewart, for that answer. It clarifies a lot. There is some security for the communities or the regional boards presently, so I thank him for that. I notice that we've had a teacher increase of 10 positions throughout. Is that just based on the student-teacher ratio and the influx on that?

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I think the changes that we did are seen because of the enrolment changes that we had throughout the Northwest Territories, and in some cases, there also being a decrease in students as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Have you guys seen or looked at the forecast of increases with the junior kindergarten age group and the birth population and that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I'll go to my deputy minister for that one.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Deputy Minister Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we are absolutely looking at the impact on enrolments that are likely to happen when junior kindergarten is implemented in the communities that aren't currently offering it. We're doing the modelling to try to understand what the impacts will be overall financially on the system as well, given various scenarios around how that funding may take place. Yes, we are looking at those enrolments.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Mr. Thompson asked the questions that I was going to move forward with, so thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I'll take that as a comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Questions? Education, Culture and Employment, education

authorities programs and services, information item, \$149,162,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Education, Culture and Employment, education authorities programs and services, active positions. Any questions? Page 71. Seeing none. Page 72, Education, Culture and Employment, Aurora College programs and services, information item. Any questions? Seeing none. Education, Culture and Employment, lease commitments, page 73. Any questions? Seeing none. Page 74, Education, Culture and Employment, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Any questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I note here in this departmental budget and some of the others that there is funding shown for implementation for a number of the agreements with Aboriginal governments for the Tlicho implementation. It varies quite a bit from one year to the next, so I'm just wondering what's going on. Is that part of the original contribution agreement, or is it based on some sort of level of activity or work that's being done? I'm just wondering if the department might have some explanation here that would help me. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes. The work that we do with the Tlicho Government does decrease and they give us the amount of money that we will work with the Tlicho on implementing some of the programs. It varies from year to year, yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly. Page 49, Education, Culture and Employment, department total, \$315,848,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of ECE is complete?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thanks to your witnesses for appearing before us today. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** We have concluded consideration of Education, Culture and Employment. We will now turn to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I'll turn to the

Minister responsible for any opening comments. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you. I'm pleased to present the 2016-17 main estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Overall, the department's estimate proposes a net increase of \$4.3 million, or five per cent, over the 2015-2016 main estimates. These estimates have taken into consideration the priorities and the mandate of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly while responding to the need to be fiscally responsible. Highlights of the proposed estimates include:

- \$5.9 million increase in the budget for suppression of wildland fires;
- \$1.6 million for the continued implementation of the Water Stewardship Strategy, including the implementation of transboundary water agreements with British Columbia and Alberta and the negotiation of similar agreements with Yukon and Saskatchewan;
- a net increase of \$311,000 for the expansion of the hydrometric network in the Northwest Territories; and
- \$2 million decrease in departmental spending.
- The proposed Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimates supports the priorities of the 18th Assembly, including:
  - collaborating and fostering government-to-government relations with Aboriginal governments;
  - improving food security by encouraging local food production, traditional harvesting, effective co-management of caribou herds, and other wildlife;
  - investing in renewable resources, agriculture, arts, fisheries, forestry, manufacturing, tourism, and other traditional harvesting;
  - improving coordination and effectiveness in resource management systems, recognizing traditional knowledge, land claim agreements, and devolution; and
  - implementing a strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change in collaboration with other governments and organizations.
- This budget includes a number of significant actions which will help the Government of the Northwest Territories achieve these priorities:
- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or ENR, will continue to collaborate

with Aboriginal governments to complete the next phase of regulation-making under the Wildlife Act.

- ENR will continue to collaborate with Aboriginal governments, co-management boards, and neighbouring jurisdictions to protect and conserve our barren-ground and boreal caribou populations and their habitat, as well as other wildlife species.
- ENR will continue to support emerging and existing forestry partners, providing essential forest planning, support, resource information, and advice to communities and entrepreneurs on a sustainable development.
- A new five year Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Action Plan will identify key approaches to continuing successful implementation of the strategy by continuing strong collaboration and coordination among water partners. Ongoing capacity building within monitoring and research, concluding negotiations on the implementation, implementing transboundary water agreements and providing expert knowledge and advice on industrial development.
- The Government of the Northwest Territories priorities for conservation and network planning will be outlined in a five year plan to move forward with finalizing and implementing a made-in-the-north approach to conservation and to continue the work of our Land Use and Sustainability Framework.
- The department will also continue to conduct and support environmental monitoring and research in the Northwest Territories to support and form resource decision-making and better understanding of cumulative impacts on our ecosystem. The department will lead in the development of the Northwest Territories climate change strategic framework which will identify key themes and gaps in the areas of mitigation and adaptation, monitoring, research, and public engagement.

These are just a few highlights of ENR's ambitious agenda to ensure the sustainable use of our natural resources and protection of our environment. That concludes my opening remarks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Schumann. Would you like to bring any witnesses into the Chamber? Thank you. Sergeant at Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister Schumann, please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you. To my left is Ms. Susan Craig, director of finance. On my immediate right is Ernie Campbell, deputy minister. On the far right is Dr. Erin Kelly, assistant deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Schumann. We will now proceed to consider the details for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The section starts on page 75, and I will allow Members to comment on the organizational charts if they wish, or the graphs. No? Nothing? Page 79 is the department total. We will defer that until we consider the rest of the detail. Are there any comments or questions on page 80, the revenue summary? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I got a couple questions on this page. Can the Minister or his extensive team there help me understand what the federal cost shared line item is here under transfer payments? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I will get Ms. Craig to answer that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Ms. Craig.

**MS. CRAIG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is an agreement we have with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada for cumulative impact monitoring. It was part of the devolution transfer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Great. Thanks. I'm quite familiar with what CIMP is all about, so glad to see those federal dollars continuing to flow. The next question I had was about the environment fund. This is something I had some direct experience with, because I used to be on an advisory committee for the Minister on this. It looked like at the end of 2015 16 that the fund was actually in a deficit position of \$356,000, but we are looking at making that up in the next year. I just want to ask the Minister if that's correct and what sort of actions are being undertaken there to bring it back into positive revenue position. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you for that question. We only were in deficit for that one year, but with the implementation of our new programs, that's the expected growth of this program.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for his response. Maybe I could just try to understand, so the fund went into a deficit probably in 2015 16. That was when the Electronics Recycling Program was under development and we were also looking at revising the Beverage Container Program deposits to get a better understanding of how the revenues were working and so on, so there is probably some adjustments going on. Now that that's settled down and the electronics recycling money is going to start coming in, we are looking at turning the fund around again. Is that what's happening here? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes. The Member is correct. That's exactly what we were expecting.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Glad to see the fund getting back into a healthier position. Just really good work that happens there in terms of beverage container recycling, electronics recycling, but I have a couple of other questions further into the departmental budget on those things. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Did you want the Minister to respond? Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just under timber permits and licences, I know a few years back when we started doing the volunteer permitting for driftwood, anybody that collected driftwood, it seems like the department is making it mandatory now. I would just like to get a little information on that.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The use of forest products does require a free timber cutting permit. At this point, harvesters, I guess, want to use driftwood, also require those free timber cutting permits. We do, however, at this point acknowledge that we were undertaking a review of our Forest Management Act, and certainly, this is another area that we will review with our partners when we undertake the review of that legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Yes, thank you. Mr. Chair, at the time I recall it pretty clearly, because I saw on the renewable resource consult when it came up in the meeting. You know, at the time it was told to the people, as it's voluntary. It's just there to keep track of how much wood is being used. I know it's not a big deal to get the permit. It's just the actual process of making it mandatory. I think it should go back to the communities, just so people are more aware of it. Thanks.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct that we do use the free timber cutting permits to track use of fiber or fluid, et cetera, for the residents of the Northwest Territories. As we go forward, as I mentioned, we will look at this area of using driftwood and whether a permit is required in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake? Nothing further? Are there any other questions or comments? Mr. Nadli?

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to the Minister, I just wanted to understand further to my colleague's points on timber permits and licences, there seems to be a significant decline over the past two years or so in terms of revenues from 2014 15 of \$215,000 and dropped down to \$5,000. Am I correct in that? Is that the right amount, \$5,000?

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** We'll have to get back to the Member on that particular question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Nadli?

**MR. NADLI:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. If maybe the Minister or his officials could explain what was perhaps the flat line in timber permits and the licences. You know, there seems to be the understanding that through devolution there's a greater responsibility in terms of the appropriation of lands, and especially for forest products, whether that's something that we should expect as a continuum? Maybe next year's actuals could remain at \$5,000 as well? Thank you.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Going forward, we certainly expect the revenues in that area to increase. The Member's aware, we do have forest management agreements in place with one of his communities and another community in the

South Slave where this will result in economic opportunities. We're in the process of getting that forest industry underway. We're not quite there yet with our agreements with the proponent, but once these items have been worked out, we will see an increase in revenues in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Nadli. Nothing further. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I'll actually wait until page 107 with this question here. I thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Seeing no one further on my list, we can move on to page 81, active position summary. Comments or questions? Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank the department for starting the fire crew in Tsiigehtchic once again. It's the second year after they had a lay-off of about eight years, I believe, or six to eight years anyway. It's good to see that we're actually training more people and, you know, being more prepared for major fires here. You know, hopefully, knock on wood, that the rest of the summer we don't have much activity in fires, but it's always better to be prepared and have people on standby. As we were saying in the briefings, you know, it's better to put these fires out before they get too large. You know, I hope that we practice that over the summer. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Would the Minister like to respond to Mr. Blake's kind words?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Anything further, Mr. Blake?

**MR. BLAKE:** No.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, in terms of the active positions summary, it says Dehcho, and the positions that are noted are 15. Can I get a distinction between Dehcho and Nahendeh? I know Dehcho kind of is presented as is. I mean, it's like there's 15 positions in my riding, and I really would like that, but from what I understand, Dehcho would mean either Fort Simpson or Fort Providence. Can I have some distinction in terms of which positions are situated either in the Fort Simpson region versus Fort Providence? Thank you.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those 15 positions reflect the communities of Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Wrigley, those communities. They don't include the positions in Kakisa and Fort Providence, those positions are identified under the South Slave administrative region. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Nadli. Next on my list is Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister please provide us examples of what these part-time positions are about and what they entail? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. CRAIG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a part-time position, community support clerk, in Fort Providence, we have a patrolman in Ulukhaktok, we have patrolmen in other northern communities such as Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Tsiigehtchic, a corporate services clerk in Fort Liard, and an office cleaner in Fort Simpson.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With part-time, what is that? Is that 20 hours a week? What are the hours of employment during this time? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. CRAIG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It would be hours less than 37.5 per week.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. are they full-time part-time or are they part-time just like half days? I'm confused with the 37.5 hours, less than, if it's 37 that's part-time. What's the duration of hours that these folks normally use? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Craig or, rather, Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As per the collective agreement, 37.5 is considered a part-time full-time position.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** I think I'm even more confused now. 37.5 is full-time part-time? Is it an eight-hour

day or is it a 7.5-hour day? Because if it's an eight-hour day, is it 40 hours a week; if it's 37.5, that means it's a 7.5-hour day. I guess just to clarify what the Minister meant by that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Schumann or, rather, Ms. Craig.

**MS. CRAIG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. 37.5 hours per week as per the collective agreement is a full-time position. Hours less than that would be part-time. These positions are permanent part-time positions, so they have a set number of hours per their letter of offer; it might be 20 hours; it may be 15 hours per week. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank Ms. Craig for the answer. Now that I understand them, I'm good to go on this. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Any further questions for page 81? Seeing none, we'll move on to conservation, assessment and monitoring, page 83 is the operations expenditure summary. We'll defer that until we look at the detail on page 84. Are there comments or questions on page 84? Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to ask the Minister: as we all know, we have some challenges with population of caribou herds and I want to ensure that we get developing management plans here for our wildlife. As we all know, caribou is the priority right now, and I just want to know what's the status of that? Thank you.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Regarding the population of the barren-ground caribou herds in management plans, for the Bluenose-West, the Bluenose-East, the Cape Bathurst herds, the boards that are the primary managers for those herds have developed a management plan for those herds. The management plans are being finalized at this time. For the Porcupine herd, of course, there's been a management plan in place for a number of years and the board and the partner there are implementing that management plan. For further down in the southern part of the Territories regarding the Bathurst, at this point we do have a committee underway. We hope to have the committee established by this fall. That committee will be tasked with the development of a management plan for the Bathurst herd. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Usually on these boards, we always have one designate for GNWT or all the signatories of the herds there. I just want to ensure that our member is communicating well with ENR or the department because, for example, I've noticed that PCMB... I sat on the board when the management plan was developed. It showed that the population is 198,000 which is getting to the point of overpopulation. We have to ensure that our member is aware of this and that brings this up its board meetings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We continue to provide all the information that we gather as a department on monitoring and management of the Porcupine herd and the other herds, and all our information that we have, all our datasets, et cetera, are available to all of the boards. We certainly encourage our Members as well as the Aboriginal government members to share that information, not just internally with the board but also to the communities, to the academic institutions, et cetera. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Next on the list is Mr. Nakimayak.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my questions are alongside of Mr. Blake's there. I see the actuals for 2014-15 are a bit higher than the 2016-17 main estimates. I'm just wondering if that will have an impact on co-management with Aboriginal groups for conservation and caribou management plans across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The difference between the two years is primarily suppression funding, so we're hoping to maintain our contributions to the co-management boards. At this point I am certainly not aware that we're reducing the funding that's for the implementation of the land claim agreements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That answers my question. Thank you for that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Any further comments or questions on this section? Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask, when are our wood bison management plans expected to be complete. As I understand the wood bison, their designation meant that they're... I think they've reached a category of being a species at risk or threatened. If we can have an update. Thank you.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The designation federally for wood bison is threatened, and just recently territorially with our species at risk legislation they've been listed as threatened as well and that, of course, both processes trigger recovery plans or management plans. In the cases of the three herds for the Northwest Territories we do have the management plan completed for the Mackenzie herd. We're underway, quite advanced actually, for the Nahanni and the Slave River Lowlands herd. My understanding is we expect those two management plans to also be completed within this fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just in terms of certainty, I mean, within the Nahanni, Liard, and the Mackenzie herd, you know, we have a matter where we don't have final agreements with the Aboriginal governments. I want to understand how the department is engaging communities in terms of ensuring their involvement with developing management plans for bison. Mahsi.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has established committees for the development of these management plans. Those committees consist of representatives of the Aboriginal governments as well as the residents of the Northwest Territories, and it's through that process that we're ensuring engagement with the communities that have these herds. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Nadli. Nothing further. Committee, I recommend that we continue with the detail for conservation, assessment and monitoring before going back to the activity total for that division. I think if we do that for every division it might make more sense. If there's any questions on the active positions on page 85. Questions or comments? No. Seeing none. Well, it appears we're done that division, so back to page 83, conservation,

assessment and monitoring, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$7,828,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Moving on to corporate management. The operations expenditures summary is on page 87, but we will proceed to discuss the detail starting on page 88. Any comments on page 88, corporate management, grants, contributions and transfers? Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In his opening remarks, the Minister said that one of the focuses of the department was to improve food security by encouraging local food production. Could he tell me in what segment of the budget I would find that referenced? Thank you.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On food security, our plan is to develop a country food strategy and what we're doing is not using a budget out of a specific activity, but to use money that's throughout the region under the traditional economy program that was given back to Environment and Natural Resources last fiscal year. Also with that funding we are working with others on partnering to gain more resources towards developing the country food strategy, which, again, the end result will be hopefully more opportunities for the residents of the Northwest Territories to take advantage and use more of the country foods in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the deputy minister for that explanation. Are we talking about providing the tools to people to access hunting and fishing and gathering and other sources of country food? Is that the thrust of the program? Thank you.

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

**DR. KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The intent is to work with our partners in the NWT as well as some of the others who have interest in this type of work and come up collaboratively with a country food strategy and work with the different divisions within ENR who have interest in this subject matter. There's already ongoing discussions related to that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could I learn who the partners are, please? Thank you.

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

**DR. KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those discussions are ongoing but right now they include some NGOs, some potential funders, and we're working to develop a process for Aboriginal governments and communities to be involved. This is all at the beginning stages. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could I please just have in a simple form what the purpose of the country food strategy is? Thank you.

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

**DR. KELLY:** The purpose is to promote the harvesting and use and consumption of country foods in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witness for her answer. Can we get a ballpark idea of when the country food strategy might be complete? Thank you.

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

**DR. KELLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are working on a plan right now for developing that so I don't have a concrete answer right now. As we develop the plan, we would be happy to provide that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Nothing further. Any other comments or questions on page 88. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am not sure where to ask this but it is presumably somewhere under corporate management. I guess I see a policy in strategic planning function for this part of ENR. I am just wondering if someone from the department can tell us a little bit about what sort of legislative proposals they have in the hopper and when we might get to see some of those. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we have five legislative proposals that we are developing at this time. Those are the Waters Act,

the Forest Management Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Environmental Rights Act, and an act that we are going to develop for the management of the conservation and protected areas that we hope to establish over the next while. In some ways there would be some mirroring of the Territorial Parks Act. However, at the end of the day, we will have two pieces of legislation there. The Territorial Parks Act will govern recreational wayside parks. Other types of parks or conservation areas will be governed by this new act that we will develop for conservation areas. I think I have captured all five, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I was keeping my own checklist. I have four out of five right, so I appreciate the response from the deputy minister. Any idea when we might start to see some of these move forward? The reason why I am asking this is particularly for Thaidene Nene National Park we need to have that legislation in place for that proposal to move forward. While we heard some discussion in the House earlier today about more harvesting and so on. I think there is some pressure building to get some of these pieces of legislation moving forward. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our plan would be to introduce all five of the legislative proposals. We certainly recognize the legislation that is going to be required for Thaidene Nene. There are a couple of other candidate areas in the Northwest Territories that are not too far behind Thaidene Nene as well. Once the piece of legislation is put forward and we work in collaboration with our partners to develop it, the legislation for areas like Thaidene Nene will most likely advance a little quicker than some of the others. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Might we see a conservation areas act, or whatever it gets called, move forward before the end of this financial year, and the Forestry Act as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For lack of a better term, the conservation act, certainly, once we have it in the mix, we plan on using the collaborative approach, we plan on working with other departments to finalize that one. Our plan is

to have that one done this fiscal year. The others, again, will probably take a bit longer. Again, still planning to have them done in the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** I appreciate the response from the deputy minister. I want to encourage the department to keep working away on those. Look forward to seeing them come forward to standing committee, particularly the conservation area legislation, whatever it might get called. I want to encourage them to keep moving forward on that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Would you like a response? No. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tsiigehtchic trapping, is it a headquarters function or a regional function? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** That is a regional function.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is it in a partnership with another department or is this strictly an ENR program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Tsiigehtchic trapping is a partnership with MACA and Health and Social Services.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** In this partnership, how much is actually in this budget to run this program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes. There is \$100,000 from each department plus ENR is \$125,000 so \$325,000 total

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. ENR is actually running this program through your

department with these other two departments providing funding towards you? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes. That is exactly right.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Is there any other programs that are within this department or is there ITI? I am looking for harvesting, Tsiigehtchic gardening, is that in another department or is it your guys' department mandate? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are other programs for harvesting. On a grants contributions, there is a Community Harvesters Assistance Program, local wildlife committee funding. We also have the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program that ENR administers for the most part. In the Northwest Territories, we do work closely with ITI. ITI does have a hide procurement program that uses the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, the fur database to administer, but for the most part, these programs are administered by Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** That is all the questions I have for page 88.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Sorry. I was in a side conversation. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Where to begin here?

---Laughter

**MR. BLAKE:** Start under disaster compensation. I see there is only \$15,000 there. As you may know, in previous years, especially in Fort McPherson and sometimes Aklavik, we have a lot of flooding in these areas, a lot of camps that are usually under water. This spring I have seen a couple of houses floating there. It is at the same water level as DOT stores its ferries. It is within reason. Just offhand, would the deputy minister know how many claims we have had in that area? Thank you.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This disaster compensation program with the \$15,000 is for natural disasters such as floods as the Member mentioned. I just want to touch on another program that is in place to assist harvesters as well. That is the fire disaster compensation program as well. That program starts with \$100,000. As far as the number of claims recently from the Beaufort Delta area, we would have to get back to the Member with those numbers. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it just felt like that number is kind of low, there. I know one year we had over 20 camps that were underwater, so for the future I think a little more needs to be put into that area. But in another area here, under the local wildlife committees. This refers to the RRCs, HTC's, and whatnot; one thing the RRCs in my riding have noticed is that they're using a lot of their own funds to operate the RRC. I see it says band councils here, but I'm not sure if the money goes directly to the Gwichyaa Gwich'in, for example, and Tsiigetchic. You know, they operate the RRC, and usually they get their funds from the Gwich'in Tribal Council. I'd just like to find out exactly where the money flows for renewable resource councils. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the exact numbers, we would have to get back on the numbers. The dollars for local wildlife committees or local authorities flows directly from our regional office to those co-management processes or, in non-land claim areas, to the local authority there. In some cases, they have hunters' and trappers' councils or associations. In others, the local band councils or the Metis councils are the local authorities, so those dollars flow from the regional office to those organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just under the fur pricing program, you know, I know we're well above other agents like the Yukon and other areas throughout Canada. I sure hope this program continues. It really helps out the trappers. I just wanted to commend the department on that. I know the struggles they have in the Yukon compared to our trappers here in the NWT, and I've really noticed a lot more younger people going out trapping. It goes to show that Take a Kid Trapping is very successful, and I just hope that those programs continue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The fur pricing program, or the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, is certainly a renowned program that started way back in the 1990s and I know a lot of jurisdictions in Canada certainly appreciate the program that we have in the Northwest Territories where the GNWT guarantees a price for our harvesters on the different species. I recently returned from a convention, the fur harvesters association convention. We are absolutely going to continue the program, and we're actually looking at ways of enhancing the program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just going back a couple of years ago, you know, I really like the work the department has done on the area of... You know, we have a young trapper out of Hay River. His name doesn't hit me right now, but I'm sure you know who I'm referring to. He works with the fur harvesting program, and I like to see that sort of trapping highlighted. You can even get it on satellite TV. I watch it. The reason is, here in the NWT, we use Conibear traps. These are the latest codes we follow here in the NWT, and anybody who watches Yukon Men, you know, those programs in Alaska that still use leg hold traps. I mean, the only way you could use leg hold traps here in NWT is drown sets. That sort of thing I like to see, what we do here in the NWT, because it's humane and that's the way everybody should be following. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. I believe the trapper you refer to is Andrew Stanley. Minister Schumann or Mr. Campbell?

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources continue to work with ITI, with that documentary-type stuff that's going on in the Hay River area. When I mentioned looking at other ways of enhancing our program, I think we want to explore in other regions. We can take advantage of, as the Member identifies, our approaches and how the tools that our trappers in the Northwest Territories use to harvest humanely. We started this many, many years ago on a Trap Exchange Program. It all goes back to humane trapping standards set nationally and internationally, and we're certainly a leader in the Northwest Territories in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Next on my list I have Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also have questions about the fur pricing program. I'm wondering if the department can share with us the subscription rate, or how many people are using this program, and if it's another one of our programs that's over-subscribed.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The fur pricing program has a revolving fund with the amount that we see identified there of over \$400,000. It's not over-subscribed at this point. There is the odd time where it is slightly over subscribed, but again we look internally at covering that. For the most part, it's a guaranteed price for the harvesters and, when the harvester gets the returns from the auction, a lot of that money flows back into the program. We watch it quite closely. We base our advance prices to the trappers on market prices and try to find that balance where we guarantee a price to the trappers for the species. However, we want to make sure that we don't get over-subscribed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the department for that answer. The price subsidies, are they based solely on market rates or is there a component where the trappers are canvassed on are they getting enough, and is it sustainable? Is there like a take-home survey kind of thing where the department is actually talking to the trappers and finding out how they feel it's working for them? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The process is primarily done internally. We do, as I mentioned, assess the market prices, and the advance amount that we provide to the harvesters is usually close to market price. There is the understanding that markets do fluctuate and, for the most part, the fur that's sold that meets the advance price, and goes back into the revolving fund. Any fur sold that's over the advance price, the trapper will receive those benefits. If fur is sold below the advance price that we give to the trappers, that's where the Government of the Northwest Territories absorbs those costs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the department soliciting or receiving feedback from people benefitting from the program?

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course, all of our harvesters that want to sell their fur bring it in to our offices. That allows a lot of opportunity for our officers to engage in discussions, not only about the trapping and on-the-land activities but on the fur pricing program. The majority of the comments over the years has been very positive for our department. Again, it's actually a world-renowned program, the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, just because of the way it's structured and the guarantees to our harvesters. For the most part, we seldom receive negative comments on the program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** I don't believe the department would receive negative comments from MLAs on this program, either. It does seem to be quite sustainable and quite important to creating those jobs and economic opportunity in smaller communities, so I appreciate that it's working well and that it has a sustainable model. I believe those are all my questions, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the department sponsoring a lot of these programs and community assistance, does the department set aside funding for regional awareness workshops to initiate discussions about the programs and services and subsidies the department offers?

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, for example, the South Slave and the Dehcho, those two regions alternate these regional workshops on a two-year cycle. Further up the valley of course we work with our co-management partners. However, the workshops are not formal workshops like they are in the two southern regions, they're more ad hoc and there's other types of workshops where we talk to the harvesters. One of them is in the fire program area where we have, on an annual basis, forums where we want to hear from the people on our programs that relate to fire. Of course, when you talk fire, it's broader than that, there's impacts on harvesters, on compensation, et cetera. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To add to that, more specifically there's a Sahtu MOU signed

this past June last year, June 25<sup>th</sup>, to initiate discussions of more efficiencies on a variety of programs set by this government identified in the MOU. I'm just wondering if there's funding available to exercise the MOU on the variety of services provided by the department and programs and grants? Has there been a workshop supporting the MOU identifying the programs and services, so it'll be better accessible or communication sharing of the programs underneath the MOU?

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

**MR. CAMPBELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not clear on the question, whether it's related to the broader MOU between the GNWT and Sahtu, or is it more on other MOUs in relation to maybe research or community-based monitoring, et cetera?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. McNeely, could you clarify the question for Mr. Campbell?

**MR. MCNEELY:** Yes. Not so much in the other departments, but within this department, is there evidence I would say since the MOU was signed to exercise awareness through the workshops for the programs offered by this department? Is there funding set aside to hold workshops with the Sahtu communities?

**DR. KELLY:** I know there have been workshops where community members have come down to Yellowknife and done training towards community-based monitoring, and opportunities for building capacity in the Sahtu where they're completing the monitoring themselves. There's also some work going on related to some of the monitoring work in the Sahtu region and there have been discussions with industry and community members as well as ENR on those topics as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. McNeely. No further questions from Mr. McNeely. Seeing no one on my list for page 88, we can continue on page 89, corporate management, active positions. Are there any comments or questions? Page 89.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Looks like we're done with the corporate management division details, so we can go back to page 87. Are there any comments or questions on the operations expenditure summary? Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Just a couple questions. I noticed in fees and payments there's almost a \$2,000,000 reduction. Can the Minister or his

department explain why we have such a huge reduction in this area? Thank you.

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

**MS. CRAIG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In fiscal year 2015-16, we had the settlement of a legal matter and that was an exceptional expenditure in that fiscal year.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you. Wow, that's expensive.

---Laughter

I hope we won't see any more of those. Contract services, could you explain what that involves? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. CRAIG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are the contracted services for the divisions within corporate management: contracts that may be lead by the directorate of policy and strategic planning, the field support unit, which is traditional, encompasses the traditional economy and traditional knowledge sections, and finance and administration.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank Ms. Craig for the answer. I'm good, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Are there any other comments or questions on page 87? Seeing none. Corporate management, operations expenditure summary, activity total \$14,054,000. Agreed? Agreed. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I'd like to report progress please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I'll now rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister, and I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses from the Chamber. We'll see you tomorrow.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, committee has been considering Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017. I would like to report progress, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do we have a seconder? Member for Nahendeh. Motion is in order. To the motion. A question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Item 23, third reading of bills. Item 24, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 1:30 p.m.:

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

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

- Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House adjourns until Wednesday, June 8, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

