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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, October 18, 2016****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Minister's Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 82-18(2):
CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to develop a territorial climate change strategy and I wanted to tell Members about the work that is underway. As you know, climate change is occurring at an accelerated pace in the Northwest Territories. We have no choice but to be leaders in addressing and adapting to the impacts of climate change in our communities.

The Northwest Territories is warming at a rate four to five times faster than global averages and this is causing significant changes to the natural environment. These changes include: thawing and degradation of permafrost; shorter winters; longer and drier summers; changes in wildland fire patterns; shrinking sea ice; and increased coastal erosion. This is resulting in impacts on species, ecosystems, water quality and quantity, the health and well-being of residents, Aboriginal cultures, infrastructure, buildings and some economic activities.

Risks to economic, social and cultural values in our communities will intensify if climate change continues to affect our ability to maintain our traditional pursuits and lifestyles.

Mr. Speaker, climate change mitigation and adaptation, the high cost of living and reducing our territory's reliance on diesel-generated power are key priorities for the government and we are actively working on climate change at a national and territorial level.

The Government of Canada is developing a pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. Four federal-provincial-territorial working groups were established to begin implementation work. The NWT is participating in all four groups, working on adaptation and climate resilience, mitigation opportunities, carbon pricing mechanisms and clean technology, innovation and jobs.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is developing an NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework. This framework will act as a road map in our efforts during the next five to ten years as we continue to deal with the impacts of climate change. It will identify ways the NWT can contribute to national emission reductions and benefit from investments in clean energy, adaptation and low-carbon infrastructure.

The Department of Public Works and Services is leading the development of an Energy Strategy. A key objective of both of these strategic initiatives is reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, ENR and PWS are coordinating joint public engagement on energy and climate change issues.

Engagement on the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the Energy Strategy will involve a series of workshops and regional public information sessions starting at the end of October.

ENR has developed fact sheets and a backgrounder to help inform residents and interested stakeholders prior to holding these workshops and community public information sessions. Mr. Speaker, the framework will be developed in partnership with NWT residents and key stakeholders. It will rest on three key pillars: knowledge; resilience and adaptation; and economy, innovation and emissions.

It will better prepare the NWT to adapt to climate change impact by improving monitoring, planning, coordination and implementation. The framework will build on existing strategies and initiatives that include significant public engagement and input, and explore key linkages between the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the Energy Strategy. The Energy Strategy will focus on energy supply and use in the NWT, including electricity, renewable and alternative energy, heating,

transportation and energy efficiency. Development of the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the Energy Strategy will complement each other to ensure economic, social and cultural needs are considered without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their need.

Topics for discussion at workshops and public information sessions will include: building knowledge of climate change impacts and opportunities; identifying priorities for monitoring and risk assessments; finding ways to increase resilience and adaptive capacity to withstand climate change impacts; improving energy use and supply in communities; reducing greenhouse gas emissions and cost-of-living; exploring carbon pricing and making meaningful contribution to national and international efforts to reduce emissions. I look forward to thorough and meaningful engagement in the coming months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Public Works and Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 83-18(2):
UPDATE ON ENERGY STRATEGY AND
INITIATIVES

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, transitioning away from expensive fossil fuels for home heating and electricity generation will be critical to reducing the costs of living for NWT residents and protecting the NWT environment, but it will take time, innovative approaches and continued investment.

I would like to update Members on some of the work that Public Works and Services is doing this year to support the use of energy efficient technologies, as well as increase the production of renewable and alternative energy in the NWT.

The department will be undertaking several key initiatives this year as we strive to make energy in the NWT more sustainable.

We are developing a new ten-year Energy Strategy to guide our long-term approach to energy, a strategy to address the energy security and affordability, as well as address the environmental impacts of energy in the NWT. This new strategy will focus on energy efficiency, as well as on renewable and alternative energy.

To inform this strategy, the Departments of Public Works and Services and Environment and Natural Resources will partner to host a number of regional public engagement sessions in the coming weeks. We will ask questions and listen to suggestions about how we will deal with issues concerning energy and concerning climate change.

The GNWT will host regional engagement sessions in Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife. We will bring in stakeholders from surrounding communities and provide venues in which community voices can be heard. We will also host open houses in each of these centers so that the general public may ask questions and provide feedback.

I am pleased to announce that Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada is our partner in these engagement sessions, and have contributed \$250,000 to help us fund this initiative.

The GNWT has also been in discussions with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada about securing additional funding to support and deliver other energy initiatives. These initiatives include LED lighting upgrades, solar panels on public housing in Inuvik, and a combined heat and power pilot project in Fort Simpson.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has made a commitment in its mandate to continue to investigate and implement renewable and alternative energy solutions to replace diesel. While working towards a new long-term strategic direction for energy, we continue to undertake many initiatives to support efficiency, as well as renewable and alternative energy projects.

One of those initiatives in Aklavik has the GNWT working with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to install a special high efficiency variable speed generator combined with 40 kilowatts of solar power to reduce the community's dependence on diesel for electricity.

The department is also assessing the feasibility of installing a large wind turbine project in Inuvik. This project, up to four megawatts in size, has the potential to displace up to 5,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas in our largest thermal community.

The Department of Public Works and Services is also finding ways to reduce electricity costs in thermal communities. A tender was recently awarded to a northern Alberta supplier for the supply of liquefied natural gas to Inuvik. This replaces the supply of LNG from southern BC, allowing us to increase shipments and reduce transportation costs, displacing more diesel fuel and reducing the cost of power generation to government by \$300,000 to \$400,000 each year.

Mr. Speaker, we also continue to focus on energy efficiency and conservation throughout the NWT. This year we are providing the Arctic Energy Alliance with \$3.5 million to deliver energy programs to residents, business and governments. The LED swap out project will distribute 10,000 LED light bulbs in thermal communities this year,

providing residents with an energy-efficient and cost-saving alternative to traditional light bulbs. Households that receive the bulbs will save an average of about \$300 annually, and the project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 380 tonnes per year.

The GNWT has also made a mandate commitment to work with our partners in the federation and in the territory to implement the Canadian Energy Strategy. Public Works and Services is actively involved in this work; in particular, participating in the Pan-Canadian Task Force on reducing diesel in remote communities.

Another of our mandate commitments is tasked with exploring solutions to reduce diesel fuel and the use of 300 off-grid communities throughout Canada. We know that part of finding those solutions is to partner with stakeholders here at home. A Pan-Canadian seminar reducing diesel in remote communities will be held in Winnipeg this November, and I am pleased to report that the Public Works and Services has invited the Arctic Energy Alliance, the NWT Power Corporation, and representatives from seven NWT Aboriginal governments to join us and with stakeholders from across Canada at this meeting.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing a lot of important work to address energy, security and affordability, as well as to address the environmental impacts of energy in the NWT. We will continue to engage with the federal government seeking support to implement our long-term energy strategy.

As we develop our long-term approach, we will work closely with our appropriate standing committees, communities and governments and other stakeholders to ensure they address the energy issues Northerners find important. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 84-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION UPDATE

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, continuing to invest in our power system and looking for innovative approaches to meeting NWT energy needs will be critical to our efforts to reduce the cost of living for NWT residents and protect the NWT environment. I rise today to provide an update on how the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, or NTPC, is contributing to that work.

Mr. Speaker, NTPC is a member of the Northern Energy Consortium which is driven to solve electricity-related problems across Canada's North

and includes utilities in all three territories. The federal government is matching funds provided by the consortium members to support an industrial research chair in Northern Energy Innovation awarded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada to Yukon College. The chair, Dr. Michael Ross, and the consortium aim to achieve the highest level of efficiency, reliability, cost reduction, and enhanced environmental stewardship standards in the northern electrical industry through applied research and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas of this research will be the integration of renewable energy into isolated community grids. NTPC, in conjunction with the GNWT, recently introduced new solar arrays into the local electrical systems in both Wrigley and Fort Liard and in the first five months of operation has already decreased diesel consumption by 8,500 litres.

Mr. Speaker, along with integrating new alternative energy, NTPC continues to invest in its aging infrastructure to ensure safe and reliable electrical systems in all of the communities it serves. This year, \$27.8 million is being invested in capital projects including major repairs, engine replacements and overhauls, and maintenance.

One of the major projects earlier this year was the seven megawatts Snare Falls hydro plant overhaul which was completed in April and was fortunately not affected by the wildfires that burned at the Snare site this summer. Those same wildfires burned one section of the Snare to North Slave transmission line causing several outages for customers in and around Yellowknife. However a safe but quick repair was carried out, minimizing the need to rely on diesel generation.

Mr. Speaker, the past two years have seen increased diesel usage due to low water in the Snare River and I am happy to announce that water levels for 2016-2017 are average in the Snare system. The Bluefish system has also recovered although the Duncan Lake reservoir remains below normal as we approach winter.

Mr. Speaker, NTPC continues to balance safety and cost with meeting expectations of reliability from its customers. However, like utilities across the country, NWT's generating infrastructure is aging and NTPC is feeling the pressures of increases in its own operating costs, which in turn increase the rates customers pay.

I think it is important for the public to understand that power rates are not set by NTPC or the GNWT. People have been hearing that NTPC is charging Yellowknife customers a premium to subsidize the operation of the NWT power system; that is simply not the case.

First of all, rates from one electricity zone do not subsidize rates in other zones like the South Slave and thermal communities. Secondly, power rates for all utilities, including NTPC, are regulated by the Public Utilities Board through a fair, thorough and open process that examines how much it costs a utility to generate and distribute power and how much consumers need to pay to cover those costs.

NTPC filed a General Rate Application with the PUB in June seeking rate increases of 4.8 per cent, 4 and 4 per cent respectively for the next three years. These increases cover inflation and are being partially off-set by a Fuel Refund Rider made possible by lower diesel costs. Far from seeking a premium, Mr. Speaker, the latest GRA proposes to charge Yellowknife customers only 98 per cent of the cost of service for 2016-17 and to hold that rate at around 100 per cent for the next few years.

Not only is Yellowknife not paying a premium, Mr. Speaker, but the GNWT has provided direct subsidies of over \$40 million to NTPC in recent years to offset increased costs in the Snare Hydro System. Without that subsidy from government, rates in Yellowknife would already be higher.

NTPC continues to work hard to look for ways to lower costs and to ultimately lower the cost of living, Mr. Speaker, and looks forward to participating in the upcoming energy discussion and the subsequent Energy Strategy that will establish principles to guide us as we tackle climate change, manage carbon taxes and our impact on the environment, all the while managing reliability and affordability of electricity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the public gallery. I'm pleased to recognize Mr. Erin Weir that's here with us, Member of Parliament for the riding of Regina-Lewvan. He is in Yellowknife to attend some meetings. Welcome to the Assembly. Masi for being here with us.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday this is an important week for the business community. This week the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce is recognizing Small Business Week.

I have the privilege of being a small business owner and operator myself. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. They reflect the will,

resolve and dedication of individuals and families. They are people who have a good idea and want to make things happen in their community, so they go out, relying on their own idea, work hard and make things happen.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, small businesses are at the core of activities that keep our community healthy, active and vibrant. They are the corner store, the coffee shop, the gathering place. They provide the first job for a boy or a girl in their foray into the workforce; the chance of a little pocket money for a student working towards his or her future. If there is a new idea out there being tried for the first time, it's often a small business that's doing it.

I feel fortunate that my riding of Yellowknife North is home to a broad range of thriving small businesses. From artists and authors to bush plane operators; from auto body shops to the NWT's only craft brewery; from tourism operators to naturopathic health providers, a glass recycler and one of the North's oldest retailers, Weaver and Devore. I am fortunate to represent the riding that's home to these businesses, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to single out three Yellowknife North businesses that received awards at the YK Chamber of Commerce business awards gala last weekend. The Small Business of the Year award was given to the NWT Brewing Company. The Breakout New Business award went to Award Communications, and the Customer Service Award of Excellence was awarded to Quality Furniture. These successful businesses and many others are good examples of the spirit of independence, hard work and determination that makes small businesses such an important element of our economy in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the business community is always there for our communities. I ask my colleagues to join me in consciously making an effort to support our local businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACT NEAR WRIGLEY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to speak as a Member for the Nahendeh riding. It is about representing all six communities. Mr. Speaker, Wrigley is facing job losses after being passed over for a highway maintenance contract. Pehdzeh Ki Contractors bid on a contract to do the maintenance on part of Highway No. 1. Unfortunately, they were not successful with their bid on this contract.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately this is not the end of the story as they say. Mr. Speaker, Wrigley was the last community of the Nahendeh tour with the three Ministers in October of this year. As we headed into a meeting the Chief and some of the counselors and community members addressed this concern. Even though the Minister of Transportation wasn't there, that was a prime issue brought forth.

Mr. Speaker, the loss of the highway contract puts five to seven people out of work, this could affect up to 10 families, which is not good at all. Mr. Speaker, this is not about the process, it is about people's lives. It is about working, not social income.

What saddened me is how the band found out that they lost the contract; the previous day they had a meeting with some public servants from Yellowknife after setting up a meeting with the Minister. Unfortunately, the very next day they were informed that the contract was awarded without even given the opportunity to discuss it with the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, it was very disappointing that the commitment was made, then it was not. To make it even more disappointing, the Development Corporation had to purchase brand new equipment in order to initiate receiving the previous contract. Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding that there would be a potential of extending the contract at least two to five years, until the equipment was paid off. Unfortunately, this did not happen. So now, not only did they lose their jobs, they also have to foot the bill to pay for this equipment.

The press reported that the Minister was unable to meet due to other work commitments, and communicated this in a letter, but not by phone which could have easily been done. Mr. Speaker, here is a perfect opportunity for the government to do something to help a small community, and they slam the door on them. To even do more damage, the airport contract was brought up at the meeting and the department wanted to discuss it with them, consolation prize so to speak.

Mr. Speaker, if this is the Minister's real understanding at what capacity building was about, he would understand for small communities you need to work harder to get things done. Mr. Speaker, today I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I made a Member statement on 911 emergency services in this House on June 7th and asked some

follow-up questions. I thought we were getting somewhere, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs committed to see whether Northwestel could change its current message when people dial that number to at least give the right telephone information rather than a simple recorded message about the absence of any service. The Minister also committed to look at a phased-in approach to implementation of 911.

Last week the new Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs tabled a written follow-up to these commitments. On the good side, the Minister has committed to advertise the fact that there is no 911 service in early 2017, and checked into the Anderson v. Bell court decision as a possible avenue for funding. She also indicated that the lack of 911 service has been brought to the attention of the federal government as a possible area of investment and said that a briefing would be offered to the Government Operations Committee.

However, the Minister also said, "In light of the GNWT current fiscal environment, 911 is not included in MACA's 2017-2018 business plan." To say I was disappointed would be an understatement. What we have here is how the \$150 million reduction target has hamstrung Cabinet in introducing the most basic new service designed to protect lives and public safety that now exists in every other part of this country except Nunavut.

To say we can't afford \$615,000 and \$266,000 a year afterwards is beyond belief, Mr. Speaker. Can we afford to continue to put our residents and visitors at risk and roll the dice in terms of liability from our failure to provide adequate services? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, small business is imperative to the Northern economy. Mr. Speaker, this is Business Development Week and across Canada people are highlighting the contribution that businesses make to our country. Mr. Speaker, independent businesses enhance our community's character, quality and the value of services available to residents.

The government distributed a total of \$21.5 million in grants and contributions in 2014-2015, almost 20 per cent of that funding went to business and

manufacturing support and 17 per cent to business support agencies.

Mr. Speaker, even our smallest communities have local business ventures. Take Kakisa, for example, where Noda Enterprises manages the local store, hotel, gas station, and campground. These services are much needed in the hamlet and offer essentials to residents and visitors. As a territory, we must ensure we support the small business sector and encourage Northern entrepreneurs who have the tenacity and courage to launch an independent business or take on a franchise.

Support the entrepreneurs in economic development contributions, the Business Development and Investment Corporation, and sector-specific funding for ventures that develop the arts, agriculture, tourism and fisheries are examples of some of the ways that GNWT offer support to small businesses.

But how well do these programs work? Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that funding was distributed in all 33 communities, proving that there's an interest and uptake. SEED funding was distributed across all sectors from mining, oil and gas, to fine and performing arts. But how do we ensure funding is being used as intended and in ways that gives us the most bang for our buck?

Mr. Speaker, we're duplicating efforts, we're paying staff to deliver workshops using funds that could be allocated to businesses that offer basically the same service. But how do we measure the effectiveness of our investments? Are we getting adequate feedback from entrepreneurs and small business owners to target funding and other resources?

Mr. Speaker, we have some good programs, we have some great entrepreneurs and the NWT offers some of the best opportunities. How are we making the most of that potential? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CHANGES TO INCOME ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS

MS GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in August of this year changes came into effect for the Income Assistance Regulations administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The department changed the amount of both the food and the clothing allowances available to low-income families. Mr. Speaker, the department refers to the number of people in a household as units. Until the end of July a household included

each member in the family counted as a unit for the purpose of food and clothing calculations.

At the beginning of August the new regulations counted only adults and mature children as units, and left children under 18 out. Take the example of a single-parent family living in Yellowknife with one child; only the parent now qualifies for the food and clothing allowance. That means the amount of money the family as a whole receives from Income Assistance has gone down.

The amount of money the parent gets for food has been reduced by \$137 a month and for clothing, \$37 a month. In this booklet of exemplars provided by ECE, living in Tulita a single parent with two children over six and one under six, her food allowance has gone from \$1,286 to \$643. For two parents and three children living in Fort Providence, their food allowance has gone from \$1,006 to \$744. I'll table this document so that Members may see additional detail.

So, no matter the example, the end result is the same, the family is getting less money for food and clothing because income assistance doesn't count children anymore. Mr. Speaker, how are low-income families supposed to get by? Why does the department think children are fed and clothed at no cost? Families have to turn to the federal government for help.

Families with income under \$80,000 are eligible for the federal government's Child Tax Benefit, paid on a sliding scale. Coincidentally, the federal tax benefit came into effect in July, just a month before the changes to the income assistance regulations. The Minister had made much of the fact that the federal benefit would not be clawed back as income. In reality, the GNWT has offloaded the responsibility for feeding and clothing children onto the federal government. So what, you may ask. May I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement? Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. So what? Well, first almost a quarter of NWT children live in poverty, 22 per cent. The Canada Child Tax Benefit is supposed to alleviate poverty for these children and low income families, but NWT families on income assistance are being shortchanged. The federal government has given with one hand, and the GNWT has taken away with the other. Poor families are the ones out of pocket. I will have questions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOUSING CORPORATION PROGRAMS TO
SUPPORT ELDERS AGING IN PLACE

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation must begin to change the way they do business. Currently, the suite of programs they deliver are not desirable to NWT seniors.

Mr. Speaker, there are very few jobs in the small communities and the people cannot afford to pay house insurance and pay the copayment requirements of the programs. Also, Mr. Speaker, elders in small communities do not have money to leave to their adult children. All they have is their homes. On applying for any substantial programs, the elders must sign a document that encumbers their house for 10 years. They are afraid their houses will go to the NWT Housing Corporation if they pass within those 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation must find a way to communicate and advise them that changes were made recently that allows 100 per cent of the outstanding mortgage should the elder pass before full forgiveness. However, Mr. Speaker, if the elder moves into long-term care, the mortgage becomes due and payable and that is still a problem. Mr. Speaker, copayment mortgage house insurance requirements are high deterrents to elders applying for help. Therefore, they continue to live in inadequate houses.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation must deliver a new program that achieves several goals that are good for the government, the elders, and the rest of the people of the NWT in as far as deferring costs go that would otherwise be a huge burden for future generations.

I am speaking of Aging in Place, which, Mr. Speaker, is part of our mandate. For example, if the NWT Housing Corporation was to develop a program that would allow a senior to remain in their home for an additional 10 years versus going into long-term care, it would defer a cost of \$1.3 million, double that if the household had two seniors.

Mr. Speaker, right now, the Department of Health and Social Services is looking at a looming issue of how to house all the seniors that must go into long-term care. Moving forward, they are short many, many beds. The program that keeps them aging in their own homes, in their own communities, will defer that cost for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, today I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation to see what she has done towards GNWT's mandate of Aging in Place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DARNLEY BAY MARINE PROTECTED AREA

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I talk about the Darnley Bay marine protected area. Mr. Speaker the people in Paulatuk are awaiting a creation of a marine protected area near their shores. Darnley Bay protected area, north of Paulatuk, is proposed to be 2,361 square kilometres, almost half the size of PEI. It would protect species such as polar bears, beluga whales, ringed seals, bearded seals, and important arctic char and migratory bird habitats. Species including octopus, crab, shrimp, krill, cod, herring, capon, and rare kelp beds also contribute to the vast ecological diversity of the area.

Mr. Speaker, the ocean is a grocery store for the people of Paulatuk. Many residents rely on the bay to feed their families and stock their freezers. The ocean is an integral part of their way of life, and protection and management would allow the area to continue to be used as it has been for centuries and would help maintain the health of the Arctic Ocean.

I'm pleased to say the people of Paulatuk have been involved since day one, when the area was first proposed by Canada in 2008. At the beginning of talks, Inuvialuit were assured that their rights and benefits would not be closed off in the marine protected area. The new designated area will not include any strict no-take zones that are limited to everyone. Other activities, like dredging in the area around Paulatuk, some shipping, and activities related to national defence and emergency service will also be allowed.

Protecting the area is a high priority as shipping traffic is expected to increase in the Arctic, Mr. Speaker. Darnley Bay also has rich mineral resources and offshore oil and gas potential. The designation would ensure long-term safeguards to the environment, help prevent species loss, and address ecosystem concerns through regulations and management plan.

Mr. Speaker, under the United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity, the federal government committed to protecting 10 per cent of Canada's oceans by 2020, but, in 2014, Canada had fully protected only 0.11 per cent of its oceans against constructive industry. In contrast, nearly 10 per cent of the U.S. and U.K.'s oceans are protected.

Originally, Paulatuk wanted almost four times larger to be designated for protection, but the community still supports the proposed amount. They say a protected area is a very good idea for future and for their children. Mr. Speaker, if established, Darnley

Bay would be the second internationally recognized marine protected area in the Arctic, after the Tarium Niriyutait Marine Protected Area in the Mackenzie River Delta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NTCL EMPLOYEE PENSION PLAN

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've all heard about NTCL's financial problems. It's been granted creditor protection because it owes over \$130 million that it can't pay. Steps are being taken to raise that money. As one such step, NTCL made an application with the Court of Queen's Bench in Alberta to cease the special payments it has been making to top up an underfunded employee pension plan. The plan is only funded to around 80 per cent, with a shortfall of about \$22 million. That application is going to be heard by the court on October 26th, next Wednesday.

If NTCL is successful, it appears as though the 622 pension recipients will be the ones to eat that \$22 million. If you're one of the eight key employees who NTCL was granted a court order to pay bonuses to, then that shortfall might not hurt you that much. However, it's more likely that if you worked at NTCL recently you were given a temporary layoff notice.

These temporary layoff notices were issued 11 days after Kyle Barsi, NTCL's vice president of finance, stated in an affidavit that it is highly unlikely that attempts at restructuring or refinancing would save the company, so he clearly believed that these layoffs would be more than temporary.

Coincidentally, under the Canada Labour Code, employees subject to a temporary layoff are not eligible for severance pay until a layoff becomes permanent. If they become permanent, it's likely NTCL won't be around to make those payments, so employees and their families face the possibility of no severance pay and a reduced pension.

NTCL has stated that the existence of the pension plan was a significant impediment to finding a buyer to carry on NTCL's business. Many people I've talked to see this as adding insult to injury, and it sounds a bit to me as NTCL's attempt to justify not living up to its obligation.

I'm aware that NTCL is a privately held company and that the GNWT can't bail out every private company that gets into trouble. However, that doesn't mean that we should do nothing to help the employees who have dedicated their lives to that company. We should be taking steps to ensure that

the promise made to the people and to the families of the people who have provided a vital service to the North for generations is honoured, and the government should be working to make sure that this doesn't happen to employees in this territory in the future, as well. I'll have questions for the Minister of Finance at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE
INMATE ESCAPE

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, on the morning of August 10th, an individual escaped custody from the North Slave Correctional Centre and almost immediately this information was in the media, sending the community of Yellowknife into a sense of great unease. Through the commendable efforts of the RCMP, the individual was apprehended three days later, on the morning of August 13th.

I applaud the efforts of our officers in "G" Division. They acted with great distinction in resolving this unprecedented incident in a peaceful manner. However, throughout the crisis the response from the Minister of Justice was lacklustre and failed to inspire confidence that this issue was of serious concern to Northerners.

On the day of the incident, it was reported that this escape exploited the pre-existing gap in the physical security to facilitate the escape at the centre and, more specifically, into my constituency of Kam Lake. I was pleased to hear that area used for the escape has been isolated and that necessary improvements are being made. It is unfortunate that it took an incident of this proportion to realize that this security gap existed, and this is a great disservice to our territorial peace officers.

Sheriffs, correctional officers and others put their lives on the line every day for the benefit of Northerners. It's crucial that we provide them with the equipment, training and facilities they need to ensure they can do their job safely and effectively. What our correctional officers go through every day in the course of their duties is something to be admired and not dismissed or trivialized.

I'm deeply saddened to see media reports questioning the ability of our correctional officers to do their jobs when, in fact, the issue was with a previously unknown security gap at NSCC. It is up to the Minister to demonstrate his commitment to public safety by ensuring the integrity of our facilities so all Northerners know that this government stands behind our correctional staff.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister directed a critical incident review after this escape took place and now has recommendations to prevent such an incident from ever happening again. I now urge the Minister to release as much information as possible from the review so that my constituents, those who live a stone's throw away from the jail, know that their homes and families are safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEMPSTER HIGHWAY WIDENING AND RESURFACING PROJECTS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during this summer in the Delta region we had a lot of rain, similar to the last number of years. It was looking like the widening on the Dempster would not be completed, but, Mr. Speaker, luckily in September we had about three weeks of great weather and the majority of the work was completed.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take this time to thank the Department of Transportation for resurfacing the road between Tsigehtchic and Wrangling River. Mr. Speaker, this has made the highway much safer. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot more work to be done on this section, but I know it will happen over the next few years as this area is the next in line to be widened through the Building Canada Fund. I will have a couple of questions for the Minister later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MACKENZIE VALLEY FIBRE LINK PROJECT SUBCONTRACTOR PAYMENTS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm going to have questions for the Minister of Finance on the fibre optic project. I understand it was initially started as a two-year project with a one-year extension, so given the fact that this is going to be the last year I'm kind of hoping that the wave of solidarity might be wishful thinking, but I'm going to ask anyway from my side having not experienced yesterday. However, this is a project that is going to be an ownership by this government for the people and at a significant price tag and I'm particularly going to ask questions and get the assurances that there's no liens or encumbrances that is going to be incurred by this government during the transitional phase for non-payment to subcontractors that are providing current services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Frame Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 1-18(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MID-TERM REVIEW PROCESS

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Establishment of a Mid-Term Review Process.

Introduction

One of the first actions by Members of the 18th Assembly was to task the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures with recommending a process for a public mid-term accountability review. Motion 7-18(1), entitled "Establishment of a Mid-Term Review Process" and carried on December 17, 2015, states as follows:

WHEREAS the Members of the 18th Legislative Assembly have resolved to work together to set priorities and to develop a mandate to guide this government over the next four years;

AND WHEREAS the development of a mid-term review process will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress on implementing the Assembly's agreed-upon priorities;

AND WHEREAS such a review will also provide a mechanism to evaluate the performance of the Executive Council and standing committees, both collectively and individually;

AND WHEREAS the establishment of a public mid-term review process will demonstrate the commitment of the 18th Legislative Assembly to greater transparency and accountability;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that this Legislative Assembly conduct a mid-term accountability review of the adopted mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly, including the performance of the Executive Council and Standing Committees, to take place in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly prior to the Fall 2017 sitting;

AND FURTHER, that this Assembly refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to recommend a process, including terms of reference, for such a review and that the standing committee report back to the House with its recommendations during the Fall 2016 sitting.

The committee met 11 times on this matter from January to October 2016, in addition to countless internal discussions with other Members, Ministers, and staff. To the best of our ability, the recommendations in this report represent a positive step in the evolution of consensus government in the Northwest Territories. We look forward to consideration of this matter in the House and by the public at large.

Despite efforts to reach full consensus of committee Members, the recommendations are not unanimously supported. The Honourable Louis Sebert, the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency, exercised his right to issue a dissenting opinion. It is included in its entirety in the addendum of this report.

Background and Precedents

The challenge in conducting mid-term reviews in a consensus government is focusing on accountability -- the government's progress on its priorities, and legitimate performance issues -- rather than individual opportunity. This uneasy dynamic has cast a shadow on mid-term reviews since the NWT's first one in 1985. It was conducted entirely behind closed doors, and resulted in a new government leader and two new Ministers. The news was delivered in a terse press release with no explanation of the process or Members' reasoning.

It is worth remembering this took place in a different time, when the government leader (not yet Premier) had much less sway over his or her Cabinet. Ministers were selected to represent a wide range of regional interests from Fort Liard to Pangnirtung. There was no guarantee this collection of Ministers would pull together as a team; they had little official direction and no mandate letters. The government's overall priorities were vague; the Northwest Territories' consensus system was in an early phase of its development.

Subsequent mid-term reviews, held only twice and in public, were much less dramatic and attempted to add a layer of accountability to our consensus government. Members of the 12th and 13th Assemblies both agreed at the outset of their terms to carry out a mid-term review of Cabinet performance. Both were conducted by the Territorial Leadership Committee, which was then, as now, the forum for selecting the Premier and Cabinet. The mid-term reviews featured extensive discussion of priorities and questioning of Ministers by Regular Members. Neither review resulted in changes to Cabinet membership, but grades from A to F were assigned to Ministers in 1993. No mid-term reviews have been conducted by Northwest Territories Assemblies since the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

Nunavut, however, adopted a mid-term review as a regular feature of its consensus system. Four successive Assemblies have conducted the review, which features public questioning of Ministers about priorities, progress and leadership. Confidence of the House was formally affirmed for every Minister but one. In the past two Assemblies, this was done by a secret-ballot confidence vote for each Minister.

Today's Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures has heeded the lessons of history, and recommends a mid-term review process that reflects the goals of the 18th Legislative Assembly, as outlined in the initial House referral motion.

Principles for a New Mid Term Review

The committee's next order of business was to set out principles to guide the mid-term review and elaborate on the goals of the process. All process options were considered in light of these principles:

- **Accountability to the Legislative Assembly:** a consistent, formal mechanism is needed to assess progress on achieving the mandate, demonstrate the responsibility of Cabinet, and make necessary changes.
- **Public accountability:** a formal mechanism is needed to improve public understanding of the Assembly's work and demonstrate the accountability of consensus government demanded by voters.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** a mechanism is needed to adjust the government's mandate at mid-term to fit changing circumstances, and in light of what has been achieved.
- **Fairness and transparency:** the process for assessing the government's progress in delivering on its mandate, Cabinet's performance, and committees' performance, must be fair, consistent, transparent, and evidence-based. Anonymous assessment surveys are not consistent with a fair and transparent process.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn to Ms. Green to deliver the next part of the committee's report. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

The Toolbox: Measuring the Government's Progress Priorities of the 18th Assembly and the Mandate, 2016-2019

New tools recommended by the 17th Assembly and put into effect by the 18th Assembly make it much easier to fairly measure performance of the

government and all Members – not just at mid-term, but also at election time. The 18th Assembly's priorities were developed by Caucus before the selection of Cabinet, with all Members having equal opportunity at all levels of their creation. For the first time, a televised roundtable discussion of priorities took place in the House on December 14, 2015, after a similar private roundtable with leaders of Aboriginal and community governments. The resulting priorities are published and available on the Legislative Assembly's website, as well as the transcript of the roundtable discussion. These priorities represent the first tool for Members and the public to use in measuring the performance of the government: its actions should advance the 18th Assembly's priorities, and be consistent with them.

However, a statement of priorities is not a realistic mandate for a government, which must be tempered by consideration of what can be accomplished in a four-year term with the resources at hand. After Cabinet was selected, it was directed to draft a mandate based on the 18th Assembly's priorities. This draft mandate was publicly discussed, amended, and unanimously approved in the House. It is a statement of goals akin to the platform of a political party. The revised Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019, was then published, re-tabled in the House, and is available on the Assembly's website. This document serves as the primary tool for measuring the government's collective performance, and that of the Premier and Ministers tasked with carrying out work in specific areas.

Other Potential Tools

A variety of other tools will be available to assess Cabinet's performance. The government has committed to public annual reports on its progress in implementing the 18th Assembly's mandate. The committee recommends that a report be completed by August 31, 2017, and include an assessment of the need for potential changes and additions to the mandate. It should also include Cabinet's formal assessment of its own performance. Those results will be compared with an evaluation to be produced by the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, comprised of all Regular Members. The committee evaluation will include consideration of the government's performance in implementing its mandate, reviews of annual business plans, the government's responses, and the Cabinet's collective effectiveness in carrying them out. These two reports should be public and tabled in the House. These are the principal tools for measuring the collective performance of the Executive Council, or "Cabinet," or "the government," as it is generally called.

Scope of the Mid-term Review

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures was directed to develop a review that "includes the performance of the Executive Council and Standing Committees both collectively and individually."

There was much debate over the need to include individual Ministers and standing committees in a mid-term review. The committee considered recommending that individual reviews of Cabinet Ministers (including the Premier), and standing committees not be carried out. Proponents of this view argued that the purpose of the mid-term review is to adjust the mandate if needed, and provide updated public direction to the Premier and Cabinet for the final two years of the Assembly's term.

It was also pointed out that if need be, a Minister's appointment can be revoked at any time by passage of a motion to that effect in the House. Some considered this method the fairest and most transparent, as voting on this type of motion is public and not by secret ballot. It would not, however, likely be a "free" vote. Cabinet solidarity is sure to be invoked, if only to preserve necessary working relationships. Motions of revocation or non-confidence are rare, of course, but past experience suggests they deepen the normally healthy tension between Cabinet and Regular Members, and undermine future prospects for consensus.

The committee considered processes and the outcomes of a mid-term review without assessing the performance of individual Ministers and standing committees, but ultimately found them lacking when measured against the principles for the review and the instructions contained in the House referral motion.

Most Members noted that a decision not to review individual performance of Cabinet Ministers reduces accountability and diminishes the potential for constructive direction, expression of renewed confidence, as well as possible non-confidence. Moreover, declining to provide an option for evaluating individual performance is counter to the Assembly's direction to this committee.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that a mid-term review be carried out in the fall of 2017, and that it include a public accountability review of the mandate, and assessment of the performance of the Executive Council, both collectively and individually

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Cabinet formally assess its own

performance, that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning produce its own independent assessment of Cabinet's collective performance, and that both reports be public and tabled in the House.

Public review and potential amendment of the government's mandate is properly in the hands of Caucus, Cabinet, and the House, as set out in the Assembly's process convention. But as noted above, the committee determined that regular House proceedings are not best-suited to a review of the individual performance of Cabinet Ministers.

In the two previous Assemblies that conducted a mid-term review, the forum was the Territorial Leadership Committee, or TLC, also the venue for speeches and selection of the Premier and Cabinet by secret-ballot vote. Members of the current Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures judged that the TLC is not an appropriate venue for the new mid-term review, given the consensus government principle that "Regular Members are not a Cabinet in waiting." A new forum is needed in which all Members are substantially equal. The committee proposes a new Mid-Term Review Committee allowing full participation of all Members (including the Speaker), enabled by the selection of multiple rotating chairs, and secret-ballot voting so all Members may vote according to their beliefs and conscience.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that a new Mid-Term Review Committee be established, specific to that purpose, with designation of multiple chairs to enable all Members, including the Speaker, to participate fully.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures further recommends that the Mid-Term Review Committee conduct its review publicly, in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly.

I'd now like to turn to my colleague Mr. Shane Thompson to continue this report.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tools for Assessing Individual Performance

In addition to the tools mentioned above, various others – all of them public documents – may assist a review of individual Minister's performance, including:

- Consensus Government in the Northwest Territories: Guiding Principles and Process Conventions;

- Ministerial mandate letters issued by the Premier;
- Speeches by the candidate for Premier before the Territorial Leadership Committee, December 9, 2015;
- Questions and answers to and from candidates for Premier before the Territorial Leadership Committee, December 16, 2015;
- Speeches by ministerial candidates before the Territorial Leadership Committee, December 16, 2015;
- Hansard excerpts of responses to oral and written questions in the House, and before Committee of the Whole.

These documents, along with performance before standing committees, also enables assessment in areas such as:

- 1) effective leadership;
- 2) responsiveness to issues related to the portfolio mandates;
- 3) ethical conduct, honesty, integrity and impartiality;
- 4) commitment to transparency and accountability;
- 5) open, respectful, considerate communication with fellow MLAs;
- 6) ensure Regular Members are informed of and given opportunity to provide meaningful input in important decisions in a timely and respectful manner;
- 7) inclusiveness, earns the support the respect of NWT residents by engaging the public, municipal governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations in the volunteer sector seeking their input and advice;
- 8) work to build and maintain respectful and effective government-to-government relations with Aboriginal governments;
- 9) work to build and maintain respectful and effective relationships with federal government;
- 10) engagement, encourage others to give full consideration to different, sometimes opposing, points of view in order to promote informed decision making.

Such fundamental matters as these should not be reviewed solely in a mid-term review after two years in office. They are currently dealt with relatively informally by standing committees or even fireside

chats between the Premier and Regular Members. While not part of the new mid-term review process, the members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures commend Ministers expressed desire for more regular feedback to promote productive relationships. We therefore make the following recommendations, Mr. Speaker:

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning meet annually with each Minister to conduct an oral performance appraisal similar to those in many workplaces, and for the Ministers to raise any performance issues that they may have with committees. The meetings should be informal, in-camera, with set time limits and strict adherence to openness and fairness.

Review of Standing Committees

A mid-term review of standing committee's operation and accountability was considered by Members of the 12th Assembly, but no criteria were developed and no review took place. This may be because of fair and productive review of the standing committee is a difficult and risky task.

Standing committees are appointed in the House by motion and are individually and collectively accountable to the whole Assembly, which also establishes the mandate and terms of reference for each committee. These are set out at Appendix 3 of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. Notably, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures include two Ministers; one is a fulltime member, and another is an alternate. Given these factors, the proposed Mid-Term Review Committee would provide the most suitable forum for a public review of standing committees' performances if one is conducted.

Standing committees are generally tasked with reviewing proposed legislation, departmental business plans, budgets, strategies, action plans and how they are implemented in overall departmental performance. Policy initiatives in the implementation plans are reviewed, as described in consensus government in the NWT Guiding Principles and Procedures Conventions. Providing advice to Ministers is a common element of all the work and can be contentious. This is a natural aspect of the job, part of the healthy tension between Cabinet and Regular Members. Standing committee may also call public meetings, issue press releases, seek external advice, and even subpoena witnesses.

The work of standing committee is therefore a key accountability mechanism in consensus government. It's primarily through these committees

that Regular Members exercise "their responsibility to review and monitor the leadership and the direction of Cabinet and to hold it to account" as set out in consensus government in the Northwest Territories Guiding Principles and Process Conventions. Committee effectiveness and the effectiveness of a consensus government requires a high level of independence for standing committee.

Standing committees select their own chairs and govern their own meetings and procedures. They are largely self-policing with members and chairs holding each other to account. There is a strong incentive to do so because standing committee performance is critical to Members' daily work. Resignations and removals of chairs are rare, but do occur as personal or performance matters arise. Members believe that this internal accountability is appropriate, practical and effective.

These considerations loom large in the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures deliberations on how committees' performance might be assessed in a mid-term review. Moreover, Members were unable to envision a public process in the House that would be appropriate, productive and efficient. The committee therefore advises that informal feedback be sought annually from Ministers as outlined in Recommendation 5 as an additional tool for ongoing self-regulation by committee.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommended mid-term accountability review not include the performance of these standing committees, collectively or individually. Further, that the standing committee complete internal evaluation annually with informal input from Cabinet as set out in Recommendation 5.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point in time, I'd like to pass over the vote to Mr. Beaulieu who will continue.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. As noted above, the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019 was drafted by Cabinet, reviewed in Caucus, and adopted with amendments in the House. The same process should be applied for the mid-term adjustments to the mandate. This work should be completed in the October 2017 Session.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Mandate of the Government

of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019 be revised, if necessary, by Cabinet with input from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, reviewed in Caucus and tabled for potential debate, amendment and adoption in the October 2017 session of the House.

The committee is mindful that time in the Chamber is at a premium and that it is in the best public interest to be efficient. The tools recommended for the review were, in part, chosen to maximize information made available to the public and to lay the groundwork for the efficient public proceedings by the Mid-Term Review Committee. Two previous mid-term reviews in the Chamber were long and arduous. Members were each permitted 12 questions for each Minister in the first review and eight questions in the second. In addition, it is only fair that the government and the Ministers know where they stand at the conclusion of the review and that the outcome is clear to the public, and therefore recommend the following procedures and time limits for the proposed mid-term review.

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Mid-Term Review Committee provide that:

- a) each Minister starting with the Premier and subsequently in alphabetical order, speak for up to five minutes on his or her performance and leadership of his or her departments. Each Member will be permitted to ask up to two questions no longer than two minutes each. Responses will be no longer than two minutes each;
- b) the Premier speaks for up to 10 minutes on his overall leadership and performance and the collective performance of Cabinet, each Member will be permitted to ask two questions no longer than two minutes each. Responses will be no longer than two minutes each;
- c) rules for the proceedings prohibit signs of approval or disapproval such as table banging and comments such as shame or hear hear during speeches and questions;
- d) a confidence vote will be conducted on the overall progress of Cabinet in meeting its mandate in an open forum by secret ballot;
- e) confidence votes be conducted on the overall performance of each Minister in an open forum by secret ballot; and
- f) overall results be announced by the chair on conclusion of the process.

In conclusion, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is honoured to present its work on the establishment of a mid-term review process. The committee believes that, by adopting the recommendations above, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories will set new benchmarks for accountability and transparency, build greater public trust, and increase understanding of the government's work on behalf of all residents. The committee thanks all Members for their input as we worked on this challenging task. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to turn the floor over to Minister Sebert.

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

Addendum: Dissenting Opinion of the Honourable Louis Sebert, Minister for Public Engagement and Transparency

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, Addendum: Dissenting Opinion of the Honourable Louis Sebert, Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency, MLA for Thebacha.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures was tasked by Motion 7-18(1), passed by unanimous consent of the House on December 18, 2015, to recommend a process, including terms-of-reference, for a mid-term review and report back to the House during the Fall 2016 sitting. The standing committee has not been able to come to unanimous agreement on a report, with Minister Sebert being the sole dissenter. The Clerks have advised Minister Sebert that it is his right as a member of the committee to submit a minority report.

The report of the standing committee includes seven recommendations, the majority of which contradict the direction as set forth by the motion. This minority report will act as a rebuttal and as an argument for adhering to the directions of the House.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that a mid-term review be carried out in the fall of 2017 and that it include an assessment of the Executive Council, both collectively and individually.

Minority Opinion

The motion clearly states "this Legislative Assembly conduct a public mid-term accountability review of the adopted mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly, including the performance of the Executive Council and Standing Committees, to take place in the Chamber of the Legislative

Assembly prior to the fall 2017 sitting." Recommendation 1 fails to meet the direction of the House for the mid-term review to be an assessment of the mandate, which includes the performance of the Executive Council and standing committees in achieving the goals of the mandate.

Minority Recommendation 1

Recommend that a mid-term review be carried out prior to the fall 2017 sitting, to assess the progress on the adopted mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly, including the performance of the Executive Council and the standing committees, collectively and individually, as directed by Motion 7-18(1).

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Cabinet formally assess its own performance, that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning produce its own independent assessment of Cabinet's collective performance, and that both reports be public and tabled in the House.

Minority Opinion

Such a process was not included in the mandate and is not directed by the motion. Members of the Executive Council are held to account for their performance in achieving the goals of the mandate and in the management of their respective departments through several means, including appearances before standing committees in business plans, legislative reviews and, at request, on specific issues of concern; oral hearings and written questions; main estimates and review in Committee of the Whole. These are tangible, measurable results that do not require self-assessment. If the House is at any time dissatisfied with the performance of the Executive Council or one of its members, a motion of non-confidence can be introduced. It is also a duplication of work to require a written assessment be created before then going into a mid-term review in the House.

Minority Recommendation 2

That recommendation 2 be deleted.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that a new Mid-Term Review Committee be established specific to that purpose, with designation of multiple chairs to enable all Members, including the Speaker, to participate fully.

Minority opinion

This recommendation creates a secondary duplicate committee as the Territorial Leadership Committee already fulfills this function when selecting the Executive Council, as does Caucus when discussing matters of interest to all Members. In the interest of public transparency, efficiency, and openness, the mid-term review should be conducted in the House, with the Speaker presiding, given that the mid-term review is meant to be reviewing process on the adopted mandate of the Legislative Assembly. This recommendation seems to be directed more at assessing only the performance of Executive Council.

Minority Recommendation 3

That the mid-term review be conducted at the opening of the fall 2017 sitting, with the Speaker presiding, and be open to the public as well as publically broadcast, as directed by Motion 7-18(1).

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures further recommends that the Mid-Term Review Committee conduct its review publicly, in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly.

Minority Opinion

This recommendation is redundant, given the express direction of the motion that the mid-term review take place in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly. It is agreed that it should be public.

Minority Recommendation 4

That Recommendation 4 be deleted.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning meet annually with each Minister to conduct an oral performance appraisal similar to those in many workplaces, and for Ministers to raise any performance issues they may have with committees. The meetings should be informal and in camera, with set time limits and strict adherence to openness and fairness.

Minority opinion

Notwithstanding that in-camera meetings are by default not open, this recommendation goes far beyond the scope of a mid-term review and the directions in the motion. It is an unnecessary exercise given that Ministers meet with the Premier to review their progress on mandate commitments and overall performance, and the Premier meets at the request of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning in fireside chats to discuss openly any issues of concern.

Ministers regularly appear before committees in business plans, review of legislation, and, at request, on issues of pressing concern. A mid-term review allows for the House to assess the performance of Ministers in achieving the goals of the mandate, and motions of non-confidence in the House can be introduced at any time against a Minister who is deemed to be underperforming.

Minority Recommendation 5

That Recommendation 5 be deleted as contradictory to the direction of Motion 7-18(1) and the established processes of consensus government.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the mid-term review not include the performance of standing committees, collectively or individually, and, further, that standing committees complete internal evaluations annually, with informal input from Cabinet, as set out in Recommendation 5.

Minority opinion

The House specifically directed that the mid-term review include a mechanism to evaluate the performance of standing committees, both collectively and individually. Seeking informal feedback from Ministers annually is not open nor transparent. Members felt that internal accountability is appropriate, practical, and fairly effective. Standing Committees, as noted in the "Consensus Government in the Northwest Territories: Guiding Principles and Process Conventions," have substantial powers, including the power to call public meetings, seek external advice, and subpoena witnesses. It would be reasonable to expect that the public would be interested in hearing how committees both hold themselves accountable and help advance the priorities of the Legislative Assembly as laid out in the mandate.

Minority Recommendation 6

That the chairs of each standing committee table a report as part of the mid-term review on actions taken by their committee on advancing mandate priorities.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019 be revised, if necessary, by Cabinet (with input from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning), reviewed in Caucus, and tabled for potential

debate, amendment, and adoption in the October 2017 sitting of the House.

Minority Recommendation 7

It is agreed that the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 be revised, if necessary, by Cabinet (with input from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning), reviewed in Caucus, and tabled for potential debate, amendment, and adoption in the October 2017 session of the House.

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Mid-Term Review Committee provide that:

- a) Each Minister, starting with the Premier and subsequently in alphabetical order, speak for up to five minutes on his or her performance and leadership of his or her departments. Each Member will be permitted up to two questions or no longer than two minutes each. Responses will be no longer than two minutes each.
- b) The Premier speak for up to ten minutes on his overall leadership and performance, and the collective performance of Cabinet. Each Member will be permitted up to two questions or no longer than two minutes each. Responses will be no longer than two minutes each.
- c) Rules for the proceedings prohibit signs of approval or disapproval, such as table banging and comments such as shame or hear hear, during speeches and questions.
- d) A confidence vote be conducted on the overall progress of Cabinet in meeting its mandate, in an open forum by secret ballot.
- e) Confidence motions will be conducted on the overall performance of each Minister, in an open forum by secret ballot; and
- f) Overall results will be announced by the Chair on conclusion of the process.

Minority opinion

There is a duplication of process, as noted previously, in having a mid-term review committee conduct this work. It needs to be noted that motions of non-confidence are only binding when passed by the House, not a committee. Therefore, any vote by secret ballot conducted by the Mid-Term Review Committee will need to be repeated in the House, which are not secret votes.

Therefore, the recommendation proposed here can be interpreted as one meant to embarrass or shame a Minister into resigning without having the

knowledge of which of their colleagues lack faith in their abilities -- an issue that does not occur when the vote is by motion of the House. Therefore, any motions of non-confidence, in the interest of timeliness, fairness, and transparency should be through the established process in the House, by recorded vote.

Specifically to each point:

- a) It is agreed in principle that the Premier speak for a set amount of time on the overall progress of the government in fulfilling mandate priorities, and each Minister on their overall progress in meeting mandate priorities and fulfilling their mandate letter objectives; however, as noted previously, asking someone to evaluate their own leadership is unnecessary.

Members of the Executive Council should be evaluated on their performance, which includes leadership of their respective departments; however this does not require self-reflection. A record of actions taken, initiatives advanced, mandate priorities fulfilled is more than sufficient to evaluate performance. Any lingering questions should be able to be answered through Members asking for details as part of the questioning envisioned in this recommendation.

It is agreed that each Member shall be entitled to ask two questions of no more than two minutes in length; however, to limit Ministers in their reply to the same amount of time does not enable Ministers to provide Members and the public with a full and comprehensive response. It is agreed with the principle of efficient debate, and to that end, recommend that questions should not be open-ended, overly long, nor on more than one topic.

- b) It is agreed in principle that the Premier speak for a set amount of time on the overall progress of the government on fulfilling mandate priorities. It is agreed that each Member shall be entitled to ask two questions of the Premier, of no more than two minutes in length, with answers being no more than two minutes in length. The same objections to evaluating Minister's own leadership listed above apply here.
- c) It is agreed that rules for the proceeding prohibit signs of approval or disapproval, such as table-banging and comments such as shame or hear hear, during speeches and questions.
- d) It is agreed in principle that a vote of confidence be conducted on the overall progress of Cabinet in meeting the priorities of the mandate. However, this should be done by motion in the House, by recorded vote, as directed by Motion 7-18(1).

- e) The direction of the House, as laid out in Motion 7-18(1) is that the mid-term review is to evaluate the performance of Executive Council and standing committees in the context of the mandate. This direction is fulfilled by questioning the Premier and Ministers on their individual actions in advancing the priorities, and by conducting a motion in the House on whether the House retains confidence in the Executive Council to continue. As motions of non-confidence in Ministers can be introduced at any time, if the actions of a particular Minister or Ministers are deemed to be contrary to the will of the House, a motion can then be introduced to remove them from Executive Council.
- f) As it is the minority opinion that any confidence vote be conducted by motion of the House, there is no need to have results announced at the conclusion, as the votes are public from the start.

Minority Recommendation 8

It is recommended that the Mid-Term Review consist of the following parts:

- a) The chairs of each standing committee table a report detailing their committee's actions in advancing the priorities of the Legislative Assembly as laid out in the mandate.
- b) Each Minister, starting in alphabetical order, speak to up to five minutes on his or her progress in advancing the priorities of the Legislative Assembly as laid out in the mandate and mandate letters from the Premier. Each Member will be permitted up to two questions, with each question being no more than two minutes in length on one topic, and each reply being as complete and concise as possible.
- c) The Premier speak for ten minutes on the overall progress of the Executive Council in advancing the priorities of the Legislative Assembly as laid out in the mandate. Each Member will be permitted up to two questions to the Premier, with each question being no more than two minutes in length on one topic, and each reply being as complete and concise as possible.
- d) Rules for the proceedings prohibit signs of approval or disapproval, such as table-banging and comments such as shame or hear hear during speeches and questions.
- e) A motion of confidence be conducted at the conclusion of the questions, waiving the 48-hour notice period by unanimous consent, on the overall progress of the Executive Council on meeting the priorities of the Legislative

Assembly as laid out in the mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi for the report. I now turn over to Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that Committee Report 1-18(2) be received and adopted by the Assembly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the Motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues for the hard work that has been done to present the mid-term review process in our report. The path is never an easy one when you're breaking trail. Every option the committee considered was looked at through the lenses of transparency, accountability and fairness. In more than a dozen official meetings and countless informal discussions, all Members were focused on living up to the directions set out in the referral motion passed by us all in this House. The committee was also very much aware of the promises that we, as Members of the 18th Assembly, have made to the public. We have done our best to live up to your high expectations.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, I ask the 18th Assembly to receive and adopt our report. It is important that the public understand what is meant to receive and adopt the report. Once the report is adopted, it will be available for discussion in the House, and this is also an indication the committee has discharged its duties. It does not mean that every, or any, recommendation in the report by the committee or in the dissenting opinion is agreed to for further action by this Assembly. Later today I will give notice of a motion to implement a process for a Mid-Term Review and look forward to that debate later this week. Until then I thank all Members for their input, their work and their support in this very challenging task, and I ask that the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Establishment of a Mid-term Review Process be received and adopted. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi.

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I request that we vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. I will call upon the Member for Frame Lake if there is any concluding remarks.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a request for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. All those in favour, 17; opposed, zero; abstentions, zero. The motion is carried.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Reports of standing and special committee. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 323-18(2): POWER CONNECTION TO MODULAR HOUSING UNIT IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Blake on Friday, October 14, 2016, regarding power connection to modular housing unit in Tsiigehtchic.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has increased the number of market housing units in small communities to meet the housing needs of critical community workers essential to the governance and safety of our residents, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and nurses. In the community of Tsiigehtchic, two new market housing units have been constructed and are ready for occupancy, which include having the necessary utility connections, such as power, needed to operate a home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Frame Lake.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. O'REILLY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Mr. John Kidder to the gallery. I had the pleasure of dining with him last night. He lives in Ashcroft, British Columbia, and he spent the first four and a half years of his life in Yellowknife so he's visiting our community and getting refreshed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Welcome to the Chamber. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, acknowledgements. Since we have gone through a detailed report the chair will call for a short recess. Masi.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome back to the Chamber, Members. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 340-18(2):
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACT NEAR
WRIGLEY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today you heard about what is happening in Wrigley with their negotiated contract for the highways. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please provide the House with the department's definition of capacity building as it pertains to contracts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Capacity building focuses on developing the skills and knowledge and abilities required to increase community workforce and capacity and also project readiness.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, in the Deh Cho Drum, the Minister of Transportation commented: "Since 2005, the department helped build capacity through a range of negotiated contracts." Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please provide the House with some of the training the department offered to help build capacity in Wrigley since this time?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, since 2005, we have done a number of initiatives with Wrigley. The contract staff has helped out with marine training for ferry operations in the region and, also, the department has offered air-side vehicle operation permanent training as well as nine-day summer maintenance and nine-day winter maintenance training programs through the Department of MACA.

MR. THOMPSON: Mahsi cho to the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, we are in a riding that understands the importance of verbal commitments. Can the Minister confirm that he will honour the verbal commitments made by the department or the senior public servants to this community?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I'm not aware of any verbal commitments made by the department.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer. It's very disappointing that we heard very loud and clear at the meeting that there was a verbal commitment, but will the Minister commit to meet with the chief and council to discuss this and other important transportation issues with this community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department staff have met with the local community on many occasions, and, moving forward, we are always willing to engage with communities that want to discuss opportunities with the department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 341-18(2):
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE
INMATE ESCAPE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning I spoke of an escape at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Mr. Speaker, what corrective actions have been taken to close the physical gap in security measures at the facility? Those questions are to the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I can advise this House that the department and myself took this matter very seriously. A critical incident report was prepared, and I also will be meeting with committee tomorrow evening, I believe. I can give a fuller answer at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I'm sure committee and members of the public are looking forward to that fuller answer. I assume this meeting will be in public so the answer will be available to the public, as they would be in this House?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the meeting will be public because we will be discussing certain confidential information that would not be appropriate to share with the public. There are, however, many of the issues around this incident that are already known. I can advise this House that the report, which was quite comprehensive, found that the escapee acted alone, he exploited a gap in the physical security of the building to access the roof of the building; the number of correctional officers on site at the point of escape was appropriate, and proper procedures were being followed at the time of the escape; the area used to access the roof was one the inmates had been using for the past 12 years, since the opening of the facility, without incident. Proper emergency procedures to address the escape were immediately implemented and no changes to those procedures are required.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, did this comprehensive review take into account any additional security concerns related to the neighbourhoods in my riding of Kam Lake close to the correctional facility? Was there an assessment done on potential security issues related to the close proximity of neighbourhoods with a correctional facility?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the report, pardon me. I think the report mainly looked at the institute itself, the walls, the roofs, and so on. Obviously, we are aware that the facility is in the middle of an urban area, so that would be an ongoing concern. I'm not sure if it was addressed specifically in the report, but I can advise this House that we are very aware of the location of this facility, of the possible dangers to the neighbourhood.

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

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, has the Minister spoken to frontline staff or personally toured the facility to see their daily experiences and the challenges they face and, if not, will the Minister commit to do that so he gets a good sense of what our peace officers go through in their daily lives?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity some months ago to go on a visit to the facility. I had been there many times in my former capacity as a defence lawyer. I do not speak to, and I don't think it would be appropriate for me to speak to the individual workers there with respect to this incident.

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

QUESTION 342-18(2):
HOUSING CORPORATION PROGRAMS TO
SUPPORT ELDERS AGING IN PLACE

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation pertaining to the Aging in Place, as it's laid out in our mandate. Mr. Speaker, in answering questions in February, questions from me, the Minister responded to a question I was asking about Aging in Place by indicating that she would be meeting with the federal government on March 10, 2016. I want to know what the results of that meeting were? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the last meeting that we had with the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers we had strongly advocated for Northern consideration within the national housing plan. The result of that meeting is that the federal government is going to do a Northern Strategy, so that meeting was very successful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister when the Northern Strategy would come into effect and if there's any money associated with the Northern Strategy insofar as money from the GNWT or money from the federal government? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I cannot say exactly if there will be any money or when there will be money. It is hopeful that there will be money, but until the federal government releases that, we don't know. I will be meeting again at the end of this month, with them again, advocating for a northern strategy, and as soon as I find out then I can bring the results back.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, our mandate is not incumbent upon money from the federal government as far as the Aging in Place goes. I'd like to ask the Minister if there has been any budgetary discussions pertaining to a program that will allow seniors to age in place?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: There's actually quite a bit that we're doing to assist seniors to age in place. So there are many programs; we have a CARE Major program that will do major renovations such as ramps up to their buildings, et cetera; we have CARE Minor; that'll do small programs, and then we have the preventative maintenance that we do every year that goes in and looks and tries to just nip it in the bud and make sure that their houses are in sustainable shape so that we're not looking at extended renovations.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke about the deterrents that were associated with a lot of the programs NWT Housing Corporation is delivering, deterrents that make the seniors apprehensive to apply for the programs that are in place. Has the Minister had a discussion with staff or with Cabinet on features that might be added to a program that specifically looks at allowing seniors to age in place in their communities without a lot of the deterrents? Right now, those individuals are not applying for the programs for various reasons. So I'd like to see if the Minister has really focused in on trying to allow the seniors to age in place without a lot of the deterrents that I spoke of in my Members statement. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: It is a mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly and we do take the mandate very seriously. I think that all Members actually have a serious concern for our elders and a respect for them and want to promote them to stay in their own communities. So we're doing a number of things. Actually, one, prior to the engagement survey, that we're asking every person in public housing, every person that is taking part in housing programs, what's working, what's not working, what they want to see, so I'm taking that very seriously. Once that's received, we'll be going through every single policy, every single program that Housing provides so that we can alleviate as many barriers as possible for people.

The other thing specifically that we're doing right now actually for seniors is since September and ongoing until the end of November we've made a commitment, and we're going into every single community and we're reaching out to seniors specifically to tell them about the programs that we have to assist them in understanding what they are eligible for and to try to identify any barriers that they have. So we're taking our commitment very seriously and we are going into every single community as of now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 343-18(2):
SMALL BUSINESS FUNDING SUPPORTS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. In my statement I made reference to SEED funding in the amount of \$21.5 million that were distributed to all 33 communities in 2014 and 2015. The question that I have for the Minister is how are grants and contributions

monitored to ensure they are used for their intended purpose? Mahsi.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to inform the Member that ITI, who currently distributes SEED, is reviewing the outcomes and effectiveness of the program and the delivery of SEED programs, and this is something that we'll be hopefully finishing up by the end of this fiscal year and be able to present to the standing committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Could the Minister state in terms of committee and this side of the House, in terms of how it is that perhaps the review's been done, whether there's a scope of a terms of reference or a framework in terms of just how detailed perhaps the report could be developed in terms of accounting for that amount of money from that year, but also perhaps for the past fiscal year?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I can't answer that question in detail, I'd have to get back to you exactly how we're doing the review. But what I can say is we are completing it. As I said, the SEED policy and programs is expected to be completed this fiscal year, and we will be tabling it with the committee as soon as that's possible.

MR. NADLI: From start to successful stage in terms of deriving profit from perhaps a business venture, what are we doing to help small businesses become self-sustaining? Mahsi.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As this Assembly knows, I'm a small business owner prior to coming to public life, and I know the importance of sustaining a small business. As of today, I actually had an opportunity to meet with a group that is working with BDIC, it's called Futurpreneur and it lays out the groundwork from the business idea to establishing a business plan to working through to marketing to become a successful business as well as matching up entrepreneurs with mentors. This is the one of things that BDIC is doing through one of the initiatives through the Department of ITI. As I just found out about it today, it's something I really want to look into to help entrepreneurs in the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are good things that this department is doing in terms of supporting small businesses in small communities. Just to name a few, like, there's a Business Incentive Policy and plus there's policy in terms of how it is that this department provides funding for small businesses. One proviso is if

there's an existing business in a small community the department heeds to the policy of, you know, not creating any market disruption and policies like that. How often are programs reviewed to ensure effectiveness and incorporate feedback from clientele?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I don't have an answer to that question. I'll have to get back to the Member on that.

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

QUESTION 344-18(2):
DARNLEY BAY MARINE PROTECTED AREA

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the Darnley Bay Marine Protected Area and my questions are for the Minister of ENR. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: has the GNWT participated in any capacity on consultations for the Darnley Bay Marine Protected Area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, when necessary ENR has been providing information and working collaboratively with our federal counterpart.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Recognizing that the GNWT does not have jurisdiction over the offshore, how much influence do we have as a government on recommending areas for protection?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as far as the protected areas, we do have some influence, I mean, we would work closely with our federal counterparts; work closely with the communities. I understand in this particular situation, the community of Paulatuk are keepers of this particular area, so we will work closely with them. But as the way things are working now we do have a bit more influence than we may have had in the past.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mr. Speaker, recognizing that all ecosystems are connected, would the GNWT be involved in the creation of a management plan for the new protected area designated for Darnley Bay?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, because we would have a vested interest in this particular area, we will work closely, as I said, with our federal counterpart. We will work closely with the community of Paulatuk and then if they determine that it was an area that needs further evaluation then I can see ENR playing a very significant role there because we do, at the end of the day, have to be the caretakers, so it would be to our benefit if we

work closely with the federal government and the community of Paulatuk.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question to the Minister of ENR, is there anything more the GNWT can do to help advance its priority on behalf of the people of Nunakput and the Northwest Territories and urge Canada to keep its commitment to protect ten per cent of marine areas over the next four years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I can work with my federal counterpart and see what they have in the works for this particular area and see what the next steps are, and again, we will work closely with them and the community to see if we can advance the community's wishes.

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

QUESTION 345-18(2):
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY WIDENING PROJECT

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement; I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Transportation. As I mentioned in my statement, most of the work was completed on the widening of the Dempster, so I'd like to ask the Minister: what is the work planned for next season on the Dempster as the widening from the border to the Peel is near completion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I want to make a comment on the Member's statement earlier today about the weather and the conditions in the Beau-Del there. I said it's been very challenging for all contractors in the region and I appreciate all the work they've done to get the work done that they did this year. We will be finishing up the border to kilometre 74 to Peel River Crossing this year because that work isn't completed. The section of highway from 60.5 to 61 will be lifted and that work is to be carried out over the next summer, and also in the next season we will be resurfacing the crushed gravel from kilometre 30 to kilometre 74.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I know over the last year here, the department has been working to find another possible gravel source to crush for this project here. I'd just like to ask the Minister have they found adequate resources to fulfill the rest of the remaining work?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Gravel sources are a very valuable resource and the challenge in the

Dempster area has been finding access to gravel. We've continued to work on our lands and Gwich'in lands to try to access this stuff; I believe we have enough gravel probably to finish the work in the next coming season. But we will continue moving forward to try to find pits that are sourceable that can work for resurfacing and reconstruction of the highway, and we need to work with all players in the region moving forward.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I know over the summer I received a number of concerns for possibly going on Gwich'in land. So once a source has been identified, will the Minister ensure that the department has a community meeting in Fort McPherson just to give an update to the residents?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Once this stuff has been sorted out and no matter where it is, we will send our staff in there to have dialogue with the community.

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

QUESTION 346-18(2):
CHANGES TO INCOME ASSISTANCE
REGULATIONS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are about income assistance, and in order to avoid the kind of misunderstanding that I had with the Minister yesterday, I just want to start by asking a preliminary question: is the Minister up-to-date with the changes that have taken place in the income assistance regulations? Masi.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are up-to-date, in fact, we're actually looking at making further changes to our NWT Income Assistance Act to include the NWT child benefit. So, in reality, from the federal government's introduction of the new Canada Child Benefit and the changes that we initially made, we're going to go one step further and make changes to the Income Tax Act and not include the NWT child benefits, so now families with low income to moderate income will start to receive more dollars in their pockets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Minister to answer this question: why did your department change its income assistance regulations and stop funding food and clothing allowances for children under 18?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The introduction of a new Canada child benefit

prompted all provinces and territories to look at their respective social programs. As a territory, what we did was we looked at our social programs, and the outcome was that we wanted to make sure that all income that was intended for children went to the children. So what we did, we made some of those changes. Some of those changes included the introduction of the community cost adjustment. Some of those calculations were based on net family income, as well as the number of children that are in the household and the age of those children. As a result, more families are receiving more money.

We've got to look throughout the Northwest Territories. Each family is unique. They're in different situations. You've got to look at our economy. Some families, some family members might be working, some might not be. So, as we went through the community cost adjustments and looking at this formula to address the income assistance, all families got more dollars.

There have been no concerns that have been brought to the office, no concerns from any of the families with the increases. As I mentioned, more dollars into the pockets of families that are low income. As we make changes to the Income Tax Act, we're going to see even more dollars into these families for low income to moderate income. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister -- and please take this as I'm concerned, and it took a lot of work to get to this point. So I'm not too surprised you haven't heard from people who are on income assistance. My question is: why did your department change its income assistance regulations and stop funding food and clothing allowances for children? So we're talking specifically about NWT income assistance regulations.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I said, when the federal government introduced the new Canada child benefit dollars and plan, we had to go and make the changes, as well. We came up with some changes like the community cost adjustment, which adjusted a lot of the way we funded families, and we also, one of those things was the food allowance rates for adults and for mature children, at 18.

At the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is, when we made those adjustments, all the families are getting more money. As I mentioned, we wanted to make sure that everything was going right and smoothly. We did a review of 171 families. Of those 171 families in July, before we introduced the new changes, \$79,000 was being assessed by our government and looked at as income. After the changes were made in September, we looked at it again;

\$166,000 was not assessed as income. That went into the pockets of families. We have had no concerns. Now it averages about \$500 per family.

Income assistance, although we did make the changes to assist low income families, families with children, and we've seen increases right across the board, we continue to give high dollars in income assistance and we continue to see that rise. We're projected, for 2015-2016, to give over \$20 million in income assistance to those that need it, throughout the territories.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the point here is that, had those regulations not been changed, the people on income assistance would have been receiving more money. What the Minister has said is that the Child Tax Benefit is the occasion for reducing those amounts of money. That means that he is making these changes on the backs of the people who most need this money. We're not talking about huge amounts of money here, but it's important to people with low income. I'd like to know whether the Minister will turn back these reductions in income assistance so that children are once again funded for food and clothing.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We went before committee in July. There was no concerns then when we presented this information, the information that was brought forward. As I said, low income families are getting more money. I don't understand, but, if Members and committee wants to have another presentation, we can walk through it.

Each family is going to be different. As we do the formula funding, it's going to be unique to each family in each situation based on the family's age, the age of the children, the number of children in the household. If the Member wants to sit down, we can get one of our staff to sit down and walk through the details of how this is calculated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 347-18(2):
911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I spoke with some developments on 911 services and a decision by Cabinet to further delay real progress. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs checked into the Anderson v. Bell court decision as a possible avenue for funding and found a dead end. Can the Minister tell this House what specific inquiries were made and the results? Merci, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of MACA actually did meet with Northwestel. We were asking them if we could utilize some of the funding for 911. We found out that that wasn't an option. The money that was brought down through the court case was offered back to people who had paid for it and, anyone who didn't want to pay for it, that the monies was provided to the Stanton Territorial Hospital Foundation. So that was the avenues that we had taken regarding working with Northwestel on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. The Minister also indicated that the lack of 911 service has been brought to attention of the federal government as a possible area of investment. What specific action has been taken, and will the Minister commit to keep this House informed of any further developments in a timely manner?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, we have met with the federal government, a couple of times actually, and we've been asking them to consider our request for 911 under public safety and under future investments in infrastructure funding. We have really put forward the case that 911 is an issue within the territories. We've told them about our difficulties with the limited population and the cost, so they're well aware of that. We will continue to advocate to the federal government for infrastructure money to implement that, and, as soon as I hear any more, I will commit to bringing it forward.

MR. O'REILLY: I appreciate the answer from the Minister, but I hope we don't have to wait for the feds to pony up before we can actually get this important service. We should be doing it ourselves. Back in June the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs committed to look into whether Northwestel could change its current recorded message when someone dials 911 to at least give the right information about what numbers to call. The response tabled by the Minister last week failed to address this commitment. Can the Minister tell this House what, if anything, has been done with Northwestel to change the recorded message to contain the right or at least better information?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, we have met with Northwestel in asking them to change the recorded message. Northwestel is not willing at this time to change it. They say it's due to technical and liability concerns. They've also talked that it would require a technical upgrade and they're concerned that it may jeopardize the current message should a new approach prove not successful. However, we

are still working with Northwestel regarding cellular service providers, and we're trying to figure out if we can actually redirect callers that call into cell service to the existing emergency numbers that we have.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the efforts on the part of the Minister, but we still don't have 911 service. Lastly, I expressed some frustration and concern that Cabinet has been hamstrung by the \$150-million reduction target, and Cabinet has used this as a reason for not proceeding with 911 services. How can the Minister and her Cabinet colleagues justify such a position and not find additional revenues or reductions elsewhere in the budget to support critical 911 services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, Cabinet is concerned about it. We had looked at a few things. The money that we had looked at taking reductions in the first two years. We had hoped that we'd be able to invest more money into the final part of our terms; we're still hopeful for that. We're not sure what will happen. We are hopeful for federal monies as well to support that. There are other options. I have requested a meeting with the Standing Committee on Governance, I believe. Let me just check. I'm hoping that offer is still on the table. I'm really hoping that the committee will meet with me to go over the various options that we have and to provide some input into how we could move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 348-18(2):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions today for the Minister of Transportation to seek some clarity around the territorial government and the federal government's commitment to the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Mr. Speaker, we know that the Mackenzie Valley Highway is an important project identified in our mandate. We know that it is a major infrastructure project, and we're all aware that there is an application into the federal government to the tune of some \$700 million of which we would be responsible for about 25 per cent of that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the federal government has also made an announcement recently that they are putting their consideration for the Mackenzie Valley Highway on the back burner. So I'm just wondering, can the Minister let us know if there has been any additional feedback from the federal

government, communication from the federal government with regard to what their commitment is to the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Is it a go or a no go? How long are we expected to wait for certainty? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government had notified us in July that they were proposing this application, but what they are doing is they were going through their planning activities and figuring out how they're going to move forward with their infrastructure plan and phase 2 moving forward, and we anticipate that they will probably be doing something within the next budget cycle. We are optimistic that this project is still alive and well from all the conversations we've had from the Minister of Infrastructure meeting with Minister Sohi and myself meeting with Minister Garneau, this project is well on the radar of the federal government and we continue to push it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: That'll be my questions for today. The following questions were in case there was a long-term understanding that we didn't know where the federal government was going with their commitment to the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I was going to ask what we were going to do with our resources and would we have a willingness to reallocate those resources to other priority projects, but it seems so far that this is going to remain a priority, to some degree, from the federal government, and I'll keep checking with the Department of Transportation as we move forward.

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

QUESTION 349-18(2):
NTCL EMPLOYEE PENSION PLAN AND
SEVERENCE PAYMENTS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I made a statement about NTCL pensions, and I have a correction to make. I stated that the court hearing regarding the pensions was scheduled for October 26th. Today CBC reported that that date has been pushed back to early 2017. It's unclear whether the pensioners will continue to receive their full pension until that date or if the next cheque will be reduced. The pensioners I've talked to have had one communication from the company saying your pension will be reduced at some date in the future. That's all they've heard about it. I've also heard of some recent developments. Yesterday, a number of NTCL employees who received temporary layoff notices received permanent layoff notices. There are issues surrounding severance that I'll probably be discussing in the future as those developments develop.

My questions are related to what, if any, role the GNWT is taking or willing to take to protect the pensions of the former NTCL employees and to ensure they receive a fair severance? My question for the Finance Minister is: what level of engagement with NTCL, IDC, any of the unions involved, or the Monitor, Price Waterhouse Cooper, has the government being engaged in so they at least know what's going on with the situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member said in his Member's statement that this is a privately-owned company and they were paying into a pension plan. To this point, we haven't had much contact with any of the parties involved. I think we play a very limited exposure that we have to NTCL and we don't really have a standing in the bankruptcy proceedings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I think I know how my second question will be answered. In 1999, the GNWT supported an application to the courts in the Royal Oak bankruptcy proceedings taking place in Ontario, relating to the termination of federally-regulated Giant Mine employees. Our government argued on behalf of the employees that the NWT Labour Standards Act had to be complied with to the benefit of the employees despite the fact that it is federal jurisdiction. Despite the fact this took place in a different jurisdiction, they did this to support our residents. So is the GNWT willing to put in the same effort to support the affected NTCL pensioners and terminate employees in terms of engaging any sort of legal proceedings?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the GNWT had a standing in the Royal Oak proceeding so it was easier to intervene and make representation. I said before, we have limited exposure with NTCL. We don't have a standing in the bankruptcy proceedings, so it would be difficult for us to do so, and it's also assumed that the pensioners and affected employees are suitably represented in the proceedings.

MR. SIMPSON: This is federally regulated. It always comes back to that. So on the federal level what is the GNWT doing to engage the federal Minister? Are they writing the federal Minister in support of the pensioners? Are they talking to the MP at least? Is there anything going on a federal level to support these residents of our territory?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, at this point, no, I haven't had the opportunity to speak with our MP; however, I will commit to having a conversation with Mr. McLeod, and as far as writing

to the appropriate federal Minister, no, that hasn't been done yet.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These answers are, I guess, what I expected. We see that there's not much happening on the part of the government to support, you know, the affected employees of NTCL. In general, these type of things can be avoided in the future. I know that in Ontario they have a system where they have regulations to protect pensions, and there was an article a couple days ago in the Financial Post talking about how even public sector pensions, the investments are becoming riskier. They're not as stringently regulated as things like banks, and so there's a risk that, you know, a lot of people, a lot of organizations can face these pension shortfalls. So is the government aware of this and doing anything to prevent these types of issues in the territory in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I'm not personally aware of it; maybe the department is, but what I will ask them to do is to do some research into the issue that the Member speaks of. I mean it's unfortunate that we have to be having this discussion on the pension of those employees in Hay River for -- or all the employees of NTCL. But I will commit to the Member that I'll do further research. I'll ask the department to maybe have a conversation with Ontario, see exactly what it is that they do there.

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

QUESTION 350-18(2):
MACKENZIE VALLEY FIBRE LINK PROJECT
SUBCONTRACTOR PAYMENTS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is in regards to the Fibre Optic Mackenzie Valley Project, and it's certainly a project that is financed by this government through the P3 Arrangement and would be coming onto the books here with an extended period of one year since the project was extended from last June to this coming June. So, therefore, it's the last year of work season and having knowledge of some previous contractors that haven't been paid over the last 24 months. Could the Minister of Finance ensure that he will look into this and also look into the fact of having a reserve holdback fund to offset or pay the subcontractors related to that service? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the P3 partner is actually the contractor on this particular project and they have deals worked out with the subcontractors, and we have no role to play, it's not our contract. So there's really not much we can do. Any issues that might be happening would be between the contractor and subcontractors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: I thank the Minister for his prudent project management, and looking back into the statements made by the Minister on March 3rd saying that, as per the project agreement, no deficiencies or holdbacks and unpaid bills would be left as part of this project come transfer day. Having said that and although it's not ours yet, but it will be, we want to get a clean bill of health that this project is met by standards and the technical issuance of the original contract are of P recognition. So I want to ask the Minister if a certificate will be coming that this government has supported a contractor and its subcontractors that enjoy working for this government knowing the fact that they will be paid a recognition or a certification of all bills paid come takeover day?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the contractor has made great efforts in the Sahtu to make good on many of the outstanding invoices. There might have been a few that fell through the cracks. Apparently there was a meeting in Fort Good Hope and nothing was really raised during the meeting. As a matter of fact, it was quite positive and they were appreciative of the work they have this upcoming winter. I can say that of the \$32 million in local spending, employment as long as 2016 the Sahtu has enjoyed the benefits of \$21 million in project spending. I can assure the Member and all Members of this House and the general public that, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we will ensure that we have a quality project when it's turned over to us and the lights are turned on.

MR. MCNEELY: Going back to a clean bill of health for all the subcontractors providing services in and outside of the Sahtu Region for the project, whether that service is coming from Fort Simpson, or other parts of Canada for that matter, it's a project that was initiated by this government and we want to ensure that we get the product that was initiated by this government as per the specifications, and a clean bill of health that all subcontractors are paid. If the Minister would provide a briefing, prior to the takeover date, that everybody is paid?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this is a project that this government has been quite excited about, and the benefits it'll bring to technology down the valley, and of course I will keep committee apprised as to going forward. I know there's a winter bill season, that's when they are hoping to

have it completed, and we are hoping to have it lit up by I believe it's this spring. So there's a short little stretch to go, but the plan is to try to have that completed this spring. But I will keep committee apprised as to the work going forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Mr. Speaker, my last question. I'm glad to hear that the lights are going to be turned on and hopefully it'll shed some light to unpaid bills. In the briefing or information supplied I know of certain companies that are in the neighbourhood of at least 17 per cent of the overall project, and the overall project is \$82 million, so 17 per cent of that, approximately, is in the form of unpaid bills. So if that could be researched and confirmed by the Minister that it's going to be paid? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we are not the contractor, however we can encourage all the groups that are involved to try and resolve any outstanding issues, because we want this to be a project that's had a lot of positive effect and will have a lot of positive effect. So we'll encourage them to try and resolve their issues and then again, as I said before, I will keep committee apprised as to the proceedings.

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

QUESTION 351-18(2): MINIMUM WAGE

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment questions on the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just as a refresher ask the Minister what the minimum wage is today in the NWT? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, our minimum wage in the Northwest Territories is \$12.50 an hour. Back in the 17th Assembly, 2014, the Minimum Wage Committee was setup of government officials, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, as well as some representatives from our most northern communities that sat down also with the NWT Chamber of Commerce and NWT Federation of Labour. They had their discussions and recommendation made to the government was that we increase our minimum wage from \$10.00 an hour to \$12.50 an hour, and I believe on June 1, 2015 it took effect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to ask the Minister if there's any plan or schedule for the minimum wage to change in the near future? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: During those recommendations it was also brought forward that a review of the minimum wage would happen every two years. So seeing how we're coming up into the second year, June 1, 2017, we will do another review of the minimum wage, we will look at recommendations that were brought from the last report, and once again go out and engage and consult with all the stakeholders that were on the Minimum Wage Committee previous.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Minister can commit to providing committee, this side of the House, with any results that he may have during discussions with small business on the impacts of minimum wage?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, we can get those preliminary results, we can also look at maybe developing a survey to our small businesses. I know it was a big concern when we're going through the review and also having those discussions in this House in the previous government about the minimum wage and the impact it would have on small business. But we can try to get that information and contact some of our stakeholders who gave that input and share it with committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. 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 commit to providing the impacts on minimum wage increases, if increases were recommended, on the minimum wage earners and how that impacts our government in the area of social programs that we often extend to individuals that are at a minimum wage? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ALFRED MOSES: It's been about 16 months since we implemented the new minimum wage throughout the Northwest Territories. I'm sure we have some information, some data. As well, you know, we do continue to promote our income assistance program and also any support that we can give to low income families that might need some assistance. But we can look at trying to get some of that preliminary information and share it with Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 352-18(2):
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACT NEAR
WRIGLEY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up with the Minister of Transportation. I know he said that the community has met with his staff to meet there, but this is an Aboriginal community, it's First Nations in government and it's part of the mandate, so will the Minister commit to actually meet the leadership to have this discussion about transportation in their riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in the House earlier that our staff has gone and met with the community and the band and discussed the contract that was put out to tender. I stand by that. If the community and chief and council want to have a conversation with me I'm willing to open up to have a phone conversation and have preliminary discussions with them in that manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: Again, I thank the Minister for sort of kind of answering. I understand that he's had his staff go in and talk to the community. I understand he sent a letter, now he's offering a phone call. Actually, the community would like to have a face-to-face meeting with the Minister. So will the Minister make the commitment to actually meet them face-to-face, not by a phone, not by a letter, so they can actually deal with some of the issues of transportation?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I've stated, I'm willing to have a phone call conversation with the leadership of Wrigley and have a discussion around this and see where it goes from there.

MR. THOMPSON: I understand the phone lines really work good between Yellowknife and Wrigley but, unfortunately, they would actually like to see the Minister come to the community and address the issue. Three other Ministers came there and they heard their concerns: transportation was the issue; the biggest issue there. They had concerns. They're trying to meet with the Minister face-to-face so they can address their concerns. So will the Minister make a commitment to go in and face-to-face meet with these people? Please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Face-to-face! Take pride in Wrigley.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I've stated, this is early conversation; the tender has already been awarded; the proponents are starting on the project. If there's other transportation issues the community wants to discuss with the Minister of Transportation

I will gladly have a phone conversation and see where this goes from there.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe we can educate the Minister on actually face-to-face that gives them that opportunity. Again, it's not about having a conversation over the phone; it's actually going in and meeting with the people. We're not talking about this one contract; we're talking about transportation issues in that community. So will the Minister please go into the community and meet with them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Please. Yes.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I've stated previously, I'm open to having a phone conversation around transportation issues with the community. Until we get that ironed out I'm not prepared to go in there until we get the basis of what the conversation is going to be, and I will gladly have a conversation with the community and council.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Time for oral questions has expired. Masi. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 155-18(2):
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGAL AID COMMISSION 2015-
2016

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Legal Aid Commission 2015-2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 156-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SPECIES AT RISK
COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

TABLED DOCUMENT 157-18(2):
CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITIES SPECIED AT RISK ANNUAL
REPORT 2015-2016

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following

two documents entitled "Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee Annual Report 2015-2016" and "Conference of Management Authorities Species at Risk Annual Report 2015-2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 158-18(2):
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT INCOME
ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 159-18(2):
EXEMPLARS, INCOME ASSISTANCE CHANGES,
JULY 2016

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the "Social Assistance Act Income Assistance Regulations" and "Exemplars, Income Assistance Changes, July 2016." Thank you.

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

Notices of Motion

MOTION 24-18(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
OCTOBER 25, 2016

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 20, 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 October 20, 2016, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, October 25, 2016. And further, that any time prior to October 25, 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 Frame Lake.

MOTION 25-18(2):
MID-TERM REVIEW PROCESS

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, October the 20, 2016, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that the

following terms of reference for a Mid-Term Review be adopted:

1. Cabinet and the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning shall each evaluate progress on implementing the mandate and make their reports and table them in the House at the earliest opportunity;
2. The mandate be reviewed, if necessary, by Cabinet with input from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, reviewed in Caucus and tabled for potential debate, amendment and adoption in the first sitting of the third Session;
3. A Mid-term Review Committee is hereby established consisting of all 19 Members;
4. The Mid-term Review Committee will conduct its sessions publicly in the Chamber and be chaired by one or more Members;
5. Meetings of the Mid-term Review Committee shall be conducted as follows:
 - a) The Premier shall speak for up to ten minutes on his leadership and performance, and the collective performance of Cabinet. Each Member will be permitted up to two questions no longer than two minutes each. Responses will be no longer than two minutes each;
 - b) each Minister in alphabetical order will speak for up to five minutes on his or her performance and leadership. Each Member will be permitted up to two questions of no longer than two minutes each. Responses will be no longer than two minutes each;
 - c) Members shall conduct themselves in a dignified and respectful manner and will follow the procedures of the Territorial Leadership Committee where applicable;
 - d) on completion of the processes described above, Members will be called upon to cast secret ballots in an open forum:
 - I) indicating their confidence or non-confidence in the performance and leadership of Cabinet as a whole; and
 - II) indicating their confidence or non-confidence in the performance and leadership of each Minister.
 - e) ballots will be counted by the Clerk; vote totals are not announced. The Chair will announce the aggregate result on Cabinet as a whole and then the result for each individual Minister in alphabetical order by surname; and
 - f) in the event of an equality of votes being cast, the Clerk shall report an expression of confidence in the Cabinet/Minister;

AND FURTHER that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning meet annually with each Minister to conduct an oral performance appraisal similar to those in many work places and for Ministers to raise any performance issues they may have with committees. The meetings shall be informal and in camera to promote frank discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Motions

MOTION 23-18(2)

APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS, CARRIED

MR. BLAKE: WHEREAS Section 23(1) of the Human Rights Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint a director of Human Rights to carry out the responsibilities set out in the act;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management is tasked with recommending an individual to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make the recommendation to the Commissioner;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that the Legislative Assembly recommends the appointment of Ms. Deborah McLeod of Yellowknife as director of Human Rights during good behaviour for a term of four years as recommended by the Board of Management;

AND FURTHER that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of appointment to the Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion carried. Masi.

---Carried

Motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2017-2018 with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to make more general comments on the Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2017-2018. Committee also wishes to try to get through the Departments of Lands; Finance; Environment and Natural Resources; and Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Noting the time and noting that we had a break earlier, if we can take a brief, five-minute break and be back here, I will call a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I'll now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to discuss Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates 2017-2018. We agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

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

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right, I have Mr. David Stewart who is the deputy minister of Finance.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome, Mr. Stewart. Now, do we have any general comments? I see Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make some comments in terms of the capital estimates for 2017-2018. The process that we saw -- this has been my fifth year in terms of at least being a witness of having the departments and the committee work together in terms of the budget process regarding the capital estimates. We're proposing to commit \$331 million estimated in spending for communities throughout the NWT. Now, one thing that I wanted to express is just a concern of the process that we experience, and it's left me to say that I know it's a bit presumptuous to act as if we have already concluded the

amalgamation of two departments or a series of departments and that any department has been formed.

While I have concerns, I mean I am encouraged by some ongoing initiatives in terms of tourism, at the same time there's initiatives towards ensuring that transportation projects will continue at the same time. We know there are initiatives towards housing, especially in regards to another reserve in terms of jurisdictions. There's been challenges in terms of trying to get the consensus in terms of trying to move forward to bring housing to the reserve. There's still of course in the riding that I represent the need for basic recreational services in terms of perhaps the contemplation of an arena on the reserve or perhaps elderly care facilities that we still need to see in terms of addressing the whole matter of aging senior population in terms of looking at the baseline infrastructure.

At the same time there's still fundamental need for schools in our small communities and, of course, basic infrastructure, services that we expect to be in small communities. An example is water treatment plants. So those are just some of the comments that I wanted to make. Mahsi.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as far as the amalgamation goes we're not assuming anything. We realize that it's a process that we have to go through called the Capital Planning Process and the main estimates being held in February and March. This is an initiative that, depending on how things go with the main estimate debate, is not going to come into force until April 1st. So the capital budget is not coming in effective until April 1st, and the same with the O and M budget would come into effect April 1st. So it's on those grounds that we bring this initiative forward.

As far as some of the other community projects that the Member speaks of, I've said a number of times in the past in my former capacity that the communities have the ability with the infrastructure money that's given them and other possible money that they're able to access to identify what some of their priorities are and use the capital money that we give them to make those a reality.

It puts a lot of responsibility on the communities, but communities have responded well to that. I've said before that if we work some of these smaller projects into the capital plan, then we're making the decisions for the communities again, and they've proven that they're quite capable of making their own decisions as to what their priorities are.

So, Mr. Chair, the communities have the ability, as I've said before, and I think I've rattled on a little too long. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list I have Mr. Blake with general comments.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a few comments here. You know, I have noticed spending in my riding has gone down a little compared to last year. No Member likes to see things like this, but you know we are happy that we are getting a couple new units in Fort McPherson because I've always said, you know, the housing does do a good job replacing units, but you know we have to start planning ahead for adding to our stock. It's always a challenge. There's a huge waiting list in both Fort McPherson and Aklavik. As we move forward, I hope we could achieve that through this Assembly.

Also, I'm very pleased to see the four-bay garage on the records here for James Creek. That's much needed infrastructure along the Dempster Highway. Also, with the Dempster widening as well, you know, as we plan for the opening of the Inuvik-Tuk Highway, it's very important that we have the remaining of the highway also in good shape for all the tourists that we're expecting for next year. It's pretty clear that we're going to have to start planning ahead here for all that traffic.

A good example is the Louis Cardinal at Tsiigehtchic. You know we have to start planning ahead for replacement of that vessel. I believe it's about 25 to 30 years old maybe, somewhere in that area. So we've got to start planning ahead. You know, right now the people on the ground are noticing that even with the vehicles we have now, it's just not feasible. We do need a larger vessel.

So you know we have to start working out costing for what it is going to take our government to replace that. I know I've always pushed for the other vessel from Providence to be moved down, but you know that's just as old as well. So you know it's better off, as we always look at the feasibilities. It's pretty much better just to get a new vessel, and you know it'll last much longer and less repairs as well.

You know, and as we move forward to next year, I'm sure hoping to see the replacement of the Louis Cardinal just so the two Ministers responsible for that could take notes for next year and I hope to see it in there next year. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: No, I've used up my quota of yesses for the week. Mr. Chair, the Member makes a good point on the housing

infrastructure. One of the challenges that all of jurisdictions are facing is, and I've said it a number of times, is the decline in funding at CMHC. I think the current Minister of Housing has made a commitment that they're going to continue to raise the issue at the FPT table, and one of the benefits with the new federal government is that they actually are willing to come to the table. We've never had that before; we were very challenged.

In all my time as Minister of Housing I think we may have had a federal presence once. I think it was the only one FPT we've ever been to, so this current government is more receptive to attending FPTs and having discussions on the CMHC funding. We're very fortunate that this government, I think in the last couple of years, has put some money towards offsetting the decline. I believe it was \$1.2 million last year, and it might have been a bit more in the last budget that we debated. So that has continued to be a challenge, but now I think at least we have the ear of the federal government.

As far as the four-bay garage goes, I am pleased to see it in the capital budget because I do know the one that the Member's talking about and good on them. I think it was our government as we put more money actually into the condition of the roads, then the condition of our buildings, and you see that firsthand, Mr. Blake, and so it's a long overdue project and hopefully it'll help them to be able to look after their equipment a bit better.

The Dempster widening, you're absolutely correct, Mr. Blake. We are going to have to take into account the increased traffic with the Inuvik Highway potentially opening. Then large sections of the road have been widened, but there's still a few more to go I think from Tsiigehtchic all the way to Inuvik is a prime example.

So we'll continue to work with transportation, and I'm not sure, I would have to have a discussion with Transportation to see what their long-term plans are for the ferry in Tsiigehtchic, and again you are correct, Mr. Blake, that we are going to see an increase in traffic and we have to be ready for it because I've been on the opposite shore when there's 15 vehicles waiting.

It takes an awful long time to get over because of the capacity of the current ferry, and traffic is increasing quite a bit too. So I'll have a conversation with transportation and see what their long-term plan is for the ferry in Tsiigehtchic. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Next with general comments, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm new to this process, so please bear with me as I go through it. I'm still struggling with some of these projects that have been out there. It seems to be not utilizing existing spaces that we have, and I will bring those concerns up later on when we look at each department. That is a concern. It's just a lot of money being used that could be used somewhere else, I firmly believe.

The other concern I have is the Department of Infrastructure. I've heard the Members here and I'm still trying to wrap my brain around it because it doesn't exist, and so I don't know how the process works, but we're talking about a phantom department. I know it is part of the business plan, but I mean it's part of long-term planning too and we don't see 19, 20, 21, 22 business plans in here in the capital. So it is a concern that we should have it in each department, the Department of Transportation and the DPW, lined out so we can actually have discussions on their capital plan.

So I know, again like I said, I'm new to this process, but I'm hoping that we can follow the process that is supposed to be laid out and follow it properly. As I go on, I must say I'm disappointed that we haven't seen housing for the smaller communities as in Aging in Place.

I know we're doing the nine-plexes which is really amazing and I'll be doing a Members' statement on that; however, what about the smaller communities where a nine-plex doesn't really meet the needs, and that to me is a concern. Why aren't we looking at that? Why aren't we looking at four-plexes so that these elders can stay in their homes or in their communities as we have with the older people?

So I'm hoping to see that. You know, it won't be in this year's business plan because I mean I've already checked it out and I didn't see it, but I'm hoping that we each one region looked at next business plan anyway through it. So thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are my comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Infrastructure Department, as I said in my statements earlier, is one that won't come into effect until April 1st, and the capital budget and the main estimates that we'll be debating in February and March comes into effect on April 1st.

So we're going through that process. The housing in the smaller communities and the Aging in Place; Housing Corporation spends a lot of money trying to keep in their units, the elders especially, as long as possible. There's a number of programs they have. I believe it was five seniors' homes that they

built in the last couple of years, and I'm not sure what their plan is going forward. I would have to have a discussion with them to see what their long-term plans are, but we fully understand the importance of keeping seniors in their home communities as long as possible.

I mean we understand that, and through these five projects, I will try to take steps to address that. Through some of the investment into seniors' homes, their own homes, we've tried to help them to stay in their homes as long as possible. So it's not something that's new to government and it's not something that's lost on us, and we'll continue to make investment to try to keep our seniors in their home community for as long as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, I just really have one area of concern and that area of concern is very similar to everyone else, and that's really the logistics of how we would handle a Department of Infrastructure in this type of setting. I wonder how we are able to consider a department which we have continued to discuss in the business-planning process which would then come to the Assembly in February.

So whether we agree with it then or disagree with it, if we consider the capital in this format, then we are essentially agreeing with the Infrastructure Department existing, which we haven't done at this point. We have reviewed the business plans and we have made our concerns largely to do with the fact that there's substantial reductions in the amalgamation of these two departments that we need to look at a lot closer.

So I'd ask the government to maybe leave the two departments for the purpose of doing our consideration of the capital on both Public Works and DOT separately in case it is not realized that a Department of Infrastructure becomes a department on April 1, 2017.

So I feel that that would be easier to deal with and maybe more in line with what this group is thinking. We're now feeling like the decision is made regardless of what we said during the business planning process for this amalgamation, and I don't think it would be difficult to reflect this capital estimate on this tabled document as two separate departments, and then eventually if the Department of Infrastructure is established through the regular approved processes of establishing a department, then we then combine the two departments at that point.

It's become a point where we are running into a department that we don't really know how to move forward with as a committee. So I wanted to say that here for the Minister and the staff to hear and let the Minister and his staff know that we do have concerns about the process more than anything, and we need to have full consideration of these departments separately in order for us to establish a capital plan for each department separately. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Members have expressed a concern with the new department which is actually a proposal and a decision has not been made. The decision, I don't think is made until it's approved by the Legislative Assembly. What I can commit to do and I think I've already started that process today is I've provided a letter to committee with the appropriations broken down from both departments, and I notice in the order of appearance they have both departments actually separately.

So if committee wishes, those letters that I've provided to committee I could probably table those and they could be part of the consideration for the capital estimates document that we're reviewing during this session. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. That's something we'll have to give some consideration to at a later time. Seeing no more general comments we can proceed into the detail. Committee has agreed to begin with the Department of Lands.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I'd like to thank the witness. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort her from the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Sebert, the Minister of Lands, is at the witness table since we're going to be discussing the Department of Lands. Minister Sebert, do you have any witnesses you would like to bring into the Chamber?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I do. Willard Hagen, deputy minister of Lands, and Brenda Hilderman, director of finance and administration.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I apologize to everyone at home wondering what's going on, it's a new procedure so we're just sort of getting a handle of things. Minister, would you like to introduce your witnesses?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right is Willard Hagen, deputy minister of Lands, and to my left Brenda Hilderman, director of Finance and Administration.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. So, committee, we will begin on page 59 of the capital estimates. We will defer the departmental total until after we consider the activity summaries. On page 61, Lands, operations, we have infrastructure investments, \$110,000. Comments on this? Seeing none. Continue on to page 62, Lands, operations, project listing, information item. Questions? Comments? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just curious to know who is going to be driving these two trucks? Thanks.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I would expect that competent employees will be driving these two trucks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly, were you looking for something more specific?

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Glad to hear that all of our employees are competent. Can he just be a little more specific? Are these being bought for a specific purpose? Are they going to be used in a specific location by certain staff? What kind of staff are going to use these vehicles? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: These two vehicles, as is noted on page 62, one in Fort Simpson and one in Hay River, are used in the regional offices in support of land management inspection programs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell us do they have a maintenance plan

and has it been implemented? I know it is known over there, but I want the Minister to answer the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We had some difficulty in hearing the question. The question was about whether we have a maintenance plan for these vehicles? I would imagine we do, but I will find out.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson. I apologize. Mr. Hagen.

MR. HAGEN: Yes. Thank you for the question, Mr. Thompson. The trucks we purchased new, so they are full warranty. Whatever is required under warranty inspection, they will be taken to a garage in Fort Simpson and a garage in Hay River. They will follow the normal maintenance program.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is more a human capital, but I only wanted to get the floor to welcome Mr. Hagen to the House. I believe this is his first time in the House as a deputy.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Welcome, Mr. Hagen. I see nothing further on page 62. Committee, turn back to page 59, we can consider the departmental total. Lands, total capital estimate, \$110,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee has agreed. I guess I would like to dismiss the witnesses and thank them for coming for the brief appearance. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The next department we have agreed to consider is the Department of Finance. Minister McLeod, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

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

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right I have Mr. David Stewart, deputy minister of Finance. To my left, I have skip Jamie Koe who is our Comptroller General.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. We have the total capital estimates on

page 25 for Finance, but we will defer that until we consider the detail. The first item for consideration is on page 28, Finance, office of the Comptroller General, infrastructure investments, \$1,325,000. Do I have comments or questions on this? It appears that page 29 is the detail of this section. Comments? Questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am just wondering how much have we actually paid for this PeopleSoft system over the years? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to date, the GNWT has spent \$19.5 million from 1998 to 2015 for the Human Resource Information System and \$22.5 million from 2009 to 2016 for the System for Accountability and Management or SAM. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I didn't quite get all of those numbers, but it sounded like you spent over 30 or \$40 million or something for this system.

Is this something that goes out to tender, or once we are, sort of, locked into a system we are stuck with it? How does this actually work? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. KOE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have invested a lot of money into this management system for both human resources and the financial system. They are both oracle-based systems.

This upgrade project would get us fully supported by the vendor until the year 2024. In a sense, it is a significant upgrade, but it keeps us supported with that vendor until 2024, which is a significant time away. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. I don't think I got an answer, though, to the question about whether this was originally put out to tender or is this something we buy off the shelf.

I guess we've sunk a lot of money into it now. After 2024, we are off the hook, and we can look at some other system if we needed to? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we find that this is a system that works for the government's needs very good. It does have to process a lot of information. One of the benefits, as Mr. Koe pointed out, was that we do get support from the vendor when we purchase their product. After 2024, I am not sure what the plan is going to be. If there is another upgrade to the system that we are quite comfortable with, then we will continue to use it. But we will cross that bridge when we come to it.

Just as an example, in the 2015-16 fiscal year, SAM, or the System for Accountability and Management, processed 60,636 vendor payments, totalling \$1.9 billion; 13,933 employee expense accounts, totalling \$18 million; 75,862 procurement card transactions. So it does process a lot of information. It is a system that has worked very well for us. Then we also get some support. When you are using these types of systems, there is usually a price tag involved. After 2024, we will have to make the determination then where we will go next. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Does that answer your question about procurement? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. It answers, I guess, the future procurement question, but I still don't have an explanation of how we got here. Was this originally put out to tender or was this just something we bought off the shelf or what? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. So how was this system originally procured, Minister?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: It was procured through an RFP. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. O'Reilly? Nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. I see no further comments. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have one question. We have an update that's costing us a certain amount of money. How many more updates are we going to be looking at until 2024? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my understanding, and I think Mr. Koe pointed it out before, was that this latest upgrade will get us to 2024 and then a determination will be made then what the next steps are. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson, nothing further? Seeing nothing further, we can move back to page 25, which is the total capital estimates containing the one item. Finance, total capital estimates, \$1,325,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister, I'd like to thank you and your witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Minister, you can keep your seat if you're next. No? Minister, you have to go back. Next, committee has agreed to consider the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources. Minister McLeod, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

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

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right I have Dr. Erin Kelly who is the acting deputy minister for Environment and Natural Resources, to my left I have Susan Craig who is the director of finance and administration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witnesses. Committee, this department starts on page 14, we will defer the departmental total until after we discuss the details beginning on page 17. Environment, infrastructure and investments, \$125,000. There's detail on page 18 relating to this. Environment and Natural Resources, environment, infrastructure and investments, \$125,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We move on to page 19, forest management with detail on page 20. Questions or comments on pages 19 and 20? Seeing none, Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, infrastructure investments, \$1,830,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Continuing on to page 21. Environment and Natural Resources, water resources with detail on page 22. Committee agrees?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Page 23, wildlife, with detail on page 24. Wildlife, infrastructure investments, \$1,384,000. Do I see Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know it's not on here, but I'm trying to figure out where that lab is in Fort Simpson and what the status of the lab is? Is it still a building or a shell out there without any siding or anything on it? So if we can get the status on that capital project. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my understanding is that there was some issue with the design and the way it was constructed. I think we're currently working with the architect now and seeing if there's a way we can salvage what is there and, if not, it may have to come down and do another one.

But it's a little premature; we have to work with the architect and also the contractor. I had the opportunity to have a look at it while I was in Fort Simpson and I got a little bit of background on it, so we're wanting to ensure that we have a safe operating environment for wildlife officers that are in Fort Simpson so they don't get hurt. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson, do you have further questions?

MR. THOMPSON: No. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. So wildlife, infrastructure investments, \$1,384,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): If we could move back to page 14, Environment and Natural Resources, total capital estimate, \$3,439,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I'd like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Next, we have agreed to discuss the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Would the Minister like to bring any witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the

witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses to committee?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ladies first. On my left is director of Finance, Julie Mujcin and on my right is deputy minister Tom Jensen.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. It's another deputy minister's first appearance in front of committee, so I'd like to welcome Mr. Jensen. The department begins on page 37, we will defer the departmental total until we discuss the detail. Beginning on page 39 with a breakout on pages 40 through 42. So I'll give committee a minute to look at those pages, formulate comments or questions if they have any. I see no comments or questions from committee, I'll give them another moment though. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It will be a similar question that I asked the Lands Minister, but with the parks officer patrol maintenance vehicle, will the maintenance be done regionally, i.e. in the Community of Fort Simpson or will it be done outside the community? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Just to remind everyone, we are on pages 39 through 42. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As previously stated, all warranty work and stuff would be done out of the dealership, but maintenance could be routinely done out of the Fort Simpson community I guess. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. So warranty is done by the dealership. Just to clarify, it cannot be done by the companies in the Community of Fort Simpson? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I couldn't comment on the warranty agreements because depending on when it goes out to tender, if it's a General Motors product, Ford or a Dodge they would have to make arrangements with the dealer in Fort Simpson to carry on warranty work. So it's hard to say how that would roll out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Schumann. I see nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, my question pertains to tourism and it lists, much to my

delight, a lot of improvements to territorial parks in the riding I serve, Deh Cho. I just wanted to understand, particularly for Fort Providence and Kakisa, whether the reporting and relationship is either from the Fort Simpson District Office or the Hay River District Office. If the Minister could maybe clarify that for me? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reporting for the Fort Providence Territorial Park is done through the Hay River Regional Office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, the other question that I have is that, see as an example Fort Providence Territorial Park construction of the 20 additional sites. I'm just trying to understand the work that will be required if that's going to be stuff that of course the department would contemplate in terms of its procurement initiative and whether ultimately those would be going out for RFP. Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We would be following all procurement procedures to probably put this out at tender or RFP for this particular item that the Member's asking on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just making a reference to a recent report that tourism is up and you know I think this government has to be commended in terms of at least improving the baseline infrastructure for a lot of tourist facilities, and especially when people drive up the highways.

So I'm trying to understand whether the schedule for improvements to, you know, the other parks as well, like I know there's Alexander Falls close to Enterprise and, you know, there's some improvements that could be made, and of course in Kakisa as well, at the park there as well. But particularly for Fort Providence, what is the schedule for doing the work and what is the expected completion time for the 20 additional sites that will be established? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the work that we want to commence. On loop A we'd be commencing hopefully in this fiscal year coming up; this is summer-type work, and hopefully we'd have it all done within the summer season. If not, some of that work may have to be carried over to the next year, but hopefully we would have it all completed in one season.

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

MR. NADLI: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's the point that I'm making is that, you know, we have a period where we have a large influx of people that start using the campgrounds, and especially once the campground in Fort Providence opens sometime in mid-May, having a large influx, and I don't know how perhaps the Minister would contemplate just the construction schedule or the work to be completed in terms of the expansion of the 20 sites and whether those things will be considered? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Based on projections of the tourism, that's one of the reasons we're putting in the 20 site additional sites, drive-in and tent sites, but it's one of those things, however, it's going to have to coincide with people using the campground as we move forward, and we'll try to make less impact as possible to the people that are using the campground. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all the questions I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Any further comments, questions related to Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks. I see none. We have tourism and parks, infrastructure and investments, \$3,773,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We can return to the department total on page 37. Industry, Tourism and Investment, total capital estimates, \$3,773,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): That concludes our consideration of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and on everything committee agreed to discuss today. I would like to

thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

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

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

---Carried

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

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates 2017-2018, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, October 19, 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. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates 2017-2018
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until October 19, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

