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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1175
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1175
91-18(2) - New Transportation Corridors (Schumann)	1175
92-18(2) - Federal Infrastructure Programs (Cochrane)	1176
93-18(2) - On-going Implementation of the Economic Opportunities Strategy (Schumann)	1177
94-18(2) - Housing Engagement Survey (Cochrane)	1178
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1179
NWT Housing Corporation Rental Units in Fort Providence (Nadli)	1179
Impacts of Junior Kindergarten on Existing Early Childhood Education Programs (Blake)	1179
Shared Arctic Leadership Model (Nakimayak)	1180
Health System Transformation and Physician Recruitment (Beaulieu)	1181
Recreation, Sport and Physical Literacy Policies (Thompson)	1181
Impacts of International Trade Agreements on the NWT (Vanthuyne)	1182
Regulation of Legalized Marijuana (Testart).....	1182
Norman Wells Regional Long-term Care Facility (McNeely)	1183
Environmental Liabilities and Remediation Plan for Con Mine and Surrounding Area (O'Reilly)	1183
Department of Municipal and Community Affairs Capacity to Support Essential Services for Communities (Green)	1184
Northern Farm Training Institute (Simpson)	1184
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1185
ORAL QUESTIONS	1185
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS	1196
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1196
MOTIONS	1197
26-18(2) – Junior Kindergarten	1197
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1202
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1204
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1204

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, October 26, 2016****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Ministers' statements. Minister of Transportation.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 91-19(2):
NEW TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS**

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to capture opportunities for investment in transportation infrastructure by working to secure funding to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway, make an all-weather road from Highway No. 3 to Whati, and improve access into the Slave Geological Province. Today I would like to provide an update on the progress made by the department on these projects where work continues to steadily advance.

The Department of Transportation believes we have a significant opportunity to move these projects ahead by securing federal funding either through Phase 2 of Canada's long-term infrastructure plan or through P3 partnerships. The recent Canada Transportation Act Review Panel Report also recommends investing in these key strategic corridors. Infrastructure investments help us connect communities to new social and employment opportunities, reduce the cost of living in the territory, improve our resiliency against the impacts of climate change, and increase access to natural resources. Each of the three proposed NWT transportation corridors projects will help us capture these opportunities to the benefit of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation continues to make steady progress in advancing the all-season road to the community of Whati. Our government has been working in close partnership with the Tlicho Government for several years to advance this 97 kilometre road, which will provide year-round access to residents of Whati. This road

will also benefit nearby communities by significantly increasing the length of operation of the winter roads to Wekweeti and Gameti and helping to address a key impact of climate change in this region. Our government is also working with the Government of Nunavut on a proposed route that would extend from Yellowknife through the Slave Geological Province to Gray's Bay in Nunavut, and have set up a joint working group to collaborate in accelerating this project in both jurisdictions.

The road will also support economic development in the region by increasing access to mineral resources and boosting investor confidence. The Tlicho All-Season Road is currently undergoing an environmental assessment by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, and we are also awaiting a final decision from P3 Canada on our funding application for the project. The GNWT is continuing to work with the federal government to provide any additional information they require for their decision-making process.

Another important project for the Government of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, is the next section of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells. The \$700 million business case for this project was submitted to the federal government under the National Infrastructure Fund of the New Building Canada Plan in 2015.

The Government of Canada is currently reviewing its criteria for evaluating how to award funding to various infrastructure projects across Canada. This means a temporary pause for our Mackenzie Valley Highway proposal, but it does not mean the project has been shelved. We expect the review to resume once Canada has made its decision about new federal funding programming. We continue to work with our federal counterparts and the Sahtu Secretariat's Mackenzie Valley Highway Working Group, and, as new information becomes available, we will keep Members updated, as I committed last week.

Mr. Speaker, we have also made significant progress on developing an access road into the Slave Geological Province, with the ultimate goal of linking to all-weather road and port in Nunavut. A route has been identified that will provide the greatest economic benefit to the region and the

NWT. We are currently assessing the economic feasibility and P3 potential for building an all-weather road along this route and will continue to update Members on our progress.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the construction of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway continues to be on time and on budget. The highway has been under construction since 2013 and earlier this year the north and south sides of the project met for the first time, marking a significant milestone in the project. This winter, the contractor will be entering its fourth and final season of construction; the highway is expected to open to traffic in the fall 2017. This is an incredibly exciting time for the communities of Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk and for the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Transportation has already started working with the two communities and Aboriginal governments, other GNWT departments and Infrastructure Canada to plan opening celebrations. Events will start in early 2017, with a ceremony to mark the closure of the last winter road from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk, followed by an official ribbon cutting in November 2017, with a tourism-focused celebration led by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment in June of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, improving the territorial transportation infrastructure will remain one of the priorities of this government as part of our commitment to improve the quality of life and lower the cost of living of our residents, support businesses and employment opportunities, and maximize opportunities to realize our economic potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 92-18(2):
FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to update the Members on how the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories are making investments in our communities that will bring economic opportunities for residents and businesses and revitalize municipal infrastructure.

On September 6, 2016, federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Amarjeet Sohi, and the Northwest Territories Deputy Premier, Robert C. McLeod, signed a bilateral agreement for the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund and Public Transit Fund. This agreement will see the federal government providing over \$50 million through the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund to support 29 projects. Combined with territorial and municipal contributions, more than \$68 million will be going

towards rehabilitation and improvements to community water and wastewater systems across the Northwest Territories.

Approved projects include rehabilitation and replacement of piped infrastructure in Yellowknife, Fort McPherson, Norman Wells, Fort Smith and Inuvik; improvements to water plants in Tullita, Nahanni Butte and Jean Marie River; and upgrades to sewage lagoons in Whati, Fort Resolution, Lutselk'e and Detah. These projects will ensure that our residents have access to clean and reliable drinking water, and have efficient wastewater systems to protect our environment.

The Government of Canada will also be providing Public Transit Funding of \$320,000 to the City of Yellowknife to improve public transit services, and increase passenger safety and accessibility. The City will be contributing \$106,000 of their own revenue to create accessible bus stops and proper sidewalks and wheelchair access, as well as improving public safety by creating bus pull out areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to leverage available funding through the New Building Canada Plan to invest in community public infrastructure. The New Building Canada Fund was introduced by Canada in 2014 and will provide \$185.8 million for infrastructure projects in the Northwest Territories. Thirty-eight million of this will be through the Small Communities Fund to help smaller communities build projects that deliver on local needs.

To date, 16 communities have had projects approved under the Small Communities Fund, including a new arena and recreation centre in Hay River, a fitness centre in Fort Simpson and chip sealing in Norman Wells. With the assistance of Municipal and Community Affairs and Public Works and Services, the communities of Paulatuk, Gameti and Wekweeti are combining their Small Communities funding with Municipal and Community Affairs Community Public Infrastructure funding to construct new water treatment plants. This project will be managed by the Government of the Northwest Territories on behalf of the communities and will result in all Northwest Territories communities having water treatment plants that comply with national guidelines.

Also in 2014, the federal government legislated the Gas Tax Fund as a permanent source of infrastructure funding for municipalities. The Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to pursue new federal funding for the enhancement of community government infrastructure, and implement the asset management framework through the Gas Tax

Agreement to ensure that all community infrastructure lifespan is extended and new infrastructure is delivered in a manner that takes into account new building technologies that assist in climate change adaptation and energy efficiencies.

The Government of the Northwest Territories signed a new administrative agreement which expanded the types of eligible projects and incorporated an annual increase to the funding. In addition to water and wastewater, communities are now allowed to use their Gas Tax funding towards other categories such as public transit, solid waste management and sport and cultural infrastructure. Since this new agreement was signed, Northwest Territories communities have invested approximately \$30 million in over 100 projects.

Consistent with our mandate commitment, Gas Tax funding is being leveraged to implement the Northwest Territories Asset Management Strategy, developed in partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities and other community government representatives. Municipal and Community Affairs has purchased the licence for an asset management program, Web Work Azzier, for Northwest Territories communities and the first group will begin training this winter, with the remaining communities phased in over the next three years.

Communities are faced with increased pressures to deliver better programs and services to their residents and invest in infrastructure. This asset management strategy will help them extend the lifespan and service potential of community assets and maximize their limited financial resources. Communities will also have the tools to take into account new building technologies that assist in climate change adaptation and efficiencies.

These federal infrastructure programs have also reduced some of the infrastructure funding deficit identified in the Municipal and Community Affairs Community Government Funding Review. Investing in community infrastructure is vital to the quality of life for our residents and we are proud of the working relationship we have established with the federal government and municipal governments to achieve this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 93-18(2):
ON-GOING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, as investment and residency in the NWT grow we will be able to expand and diversify our economy outside of its resource sector in areas like tourism,

agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and the traditional economies. While the GNWT is working to create investor confidence in the Northwest Territories, we are always investing to diversify our economy and to grow our communities. This work is being guided by the NWT Economic Opportunity Strategy which we published two years ago. The strategy emphasizes increased support for entrepreneurs and opens the doors to new partnerships and ideas. It highlights growth areas in regional economies and investments and supports needed by NWT residents and their businesses.

The responsibility of guiding this work rests with the Economic Opportunity Strategy's government committee that contributed to its development: The NWT Chamber of Commerce, the Northern Aboriginal Business Association, the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CANNOR and the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Industry, Tourism and Industry. The collaborative approach taken to implementing the Northwest Territories Economic Opportunity Strategy confirms that all government departments and strategy partners have a role to play in developing a new economic environment for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, of the 117 recommendations put forward in the strategy, 92 per cent have been addressed. In fact, many of the actions and investments recommended in the strategy are now part of the government's mandate. Implementing them supports our commitment and highlights the role that this strategy can play in promoting economic growth and diversity in the NWT. Earlier this year, the Economic Opportunities Strategy Governance Committee identified 10 priority areas in which ITI will be advancing initiatives and investments, and I would like to highlight these for Members today.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to expand the agricultural sector by developing and implementing an Agriculture Strategy. Developing this sector is a priority and we look forward to introducing a formal strategy shortly to support and guide its growth based on our public and stakeholder engagements, and the direct input of this Assembly.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has also made a mandate commitment to finalize and implement a Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Strategy. We will be advancing a plan for the Great Slave Lake fishery to promote and revitalize commercial fishing in our territory in response to this commitment.

Mr. Speaker, our work to identify a viable, balanced and made-in-the-Northwest Territories approach to

advancing oil and gas development in the NWT results from our mandate commitment to develop a long-term strategy to attract oil and gas development in our territory. Work is ongoing with the input of Members, Aboriginal governments and organizations, industry representatives and the public.

We have committed to developing a Northern Manufacturing Strategy and look forward to collaborating with industry and the Northwest Territories Manufacturers' Association to develop a formal strategy for the manufacture and sale of made-in-the-Northwest Territories products and to enhance the value-added processing of materials sourced in the NWT like diamonds and biomass fuels.

We will complete and implement Economic Development Plans to diversify and capture community and regional economic opportunities in each of the five regions. We will work to advance economic opportunities made possible by the installation of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Line. Finally, we will continue to invest in the success of our Tourism Plan 2020, the NWT Mineral Development Strategy, and the NWT Film Strategy and Action Plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Economic Opportunities Strategy was created to guide the government's programs and actions to develop the economic potential in all regions of the NWT, to strengthen and diversify the NWT economy, and to advance and enhance the quality of life for all NWT residents. The Government of the Northwest Territories remains committed to this strategy and its vision which continues to be reflected in our mandate activities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 94-18(2):
HOUSING ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, housing costs are a major component of the cost of living, which we all know is very high here in the Northwest Territories. Bringing these costs down is a priority. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be putting out a housing engagement survey that will help us find out how we can design and deliver programs that better meet people's housing needs.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's current strategic plan, Building for the Future, was created based on feedback received from residents. That feedback let us make changes to several of the Housing Corporation's programs and

activities in order to improve housing conditions in the Northwest Territories.

Although changes were made, people still have difficulty obtaining and retaining housing. As well, the Northwest Territories has a core need of 20 per cent compared to a national average of 13 per cent. This prompted a need to complete a thorough review of all policies and programs based on input from those using and providing the programs to ensure that they are meeting the needs of residents in an efficient, effective and appropriate manner.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is conducting a survey entitled "Engagement on Strategic Action Renewal." This new survey will continue to build on previous positive changes by getting further public input. This engagement survey will help the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation deliver on the priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly through a complete review of all policies and programs and a renewal of its strategic actions for the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, there are many families in Yellowknife who struggle to obtain and retain housing. Community visits throughout the North have provided the opportunity to listen to community and Aboriginal governments, as well as community members, regarding housing issues. Members have also raised housing concerns on behalf of their constituents.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs lists food, clothing and shelter as basic critical needs to people's wellbeing. Housing is a critical component in people's ability to thrive. In the Northwest Territories, safe housing is especially important in light of the remoteness of our communities, and our housing programs need to support people as they work towards self-reliance.

A recurring theme throughout the community tours has been people telling me about their housing issues, explaining that their situation is different than others. This reinforces the belief that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing housing issues in the Northwest Territories. Hearing from communities, including community organizations -- Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to finish my Minister's statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hearing from communities including communities organizations and Aboriginal governments through this survey about the solutions to housing as they see in their communities is critical. While housing is complex, be assured that this survey will assist in ensuring

that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation plans coincide with the goals and the strengths of each individual community and work towards stable housing for all residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, this survey will help the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation ensure its policies and programs are meeting the needs of residents and ensure that we're meeting the goal of providing affordable, adequate and suitable housing for all Northwest Territories residents. This survey will ensure that best practice principles are met and that the people who utilize the services will define their own housing needs and define their own solutions to address these needs.

The survey will be distributed to Members this week for their input into the questions and the format. It will then be distributed via Survey Monkey, paper format, and through personal assistance through local housing organizations and Government Service Officers. Please, take part in the survey and help the Housing Corporation focus its short-term activities on creative housing solutions and investments - which is especially important in these challenging fiscal times - and on long-term solutions as we work towards creating strong and sustainable housing for residents and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. We have with us special guests, Honourable Nick Sibbeston, Senator for Northwest Territories, former Member, Minister and Government Leader, known in those days as Premier and his wife Karen. Welcome to the Assembly. Hope you enjoy the proceedings.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARKET RENTAL HOUSING IN FORT PROVIDENCE

MR. NADLI: Through its Market Housing Program, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is mandated to provide housing units at market rent to "critical staff" in non-market communities. This includes the community of Fort Providence. Here in the House, on March 3rd, we heard that the Housing Corporation currently has 133 market rentals across most non-market communities, and that the corporation plans to increase their stock to 205

units within the next year. But I'm hearing from my constituents, and observing in the communities in my riding, that this program is not working in our small communities. In Fort Providence, two modular units were intended for delivery. One was delivered in January 2016, but has sat empty for almost a full year. As for the second unit, it was not delivered after local businesses expressed their concerns that importing units into the community would disrupt the local market. For example, two local businesses already provide rental property.

Mr. Speaker, further, as a few of my colleagues have talked about right here in the House, bringing in modular units may help the housing corporation keep costs down, but it doesn't do much at all for local employment. In contrast, Mr. Speaker, consider recent renovations to the seniors' home. For that project, local people were employed for the duration of construction. Mr. Speaker, there are projects that help both the government and our small communities, and there are projects that don't. I'll have questions for the Minister later today. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACTS OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN ON EXISTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my riding, two young women recently graduated from Aurora College's Early Childhood development Program, along with another of their colleagues who graduated from Yukon College. These women are a northern success story. Gwich'in women who studied and trained in the Northwest Territories and Yukon; then took their skills home to our small community to care for the next generation through the Aboriginal Head Start program. But Mr. Speaker, the government's plans for junior kindergarten has left these Northerners concerned about both the children in their care and their future job prospects.

The administrators of Aboriginal Head Start in Fort McPherson were told that junior kindergarten would resume at Chief Julius School a full year sooner than they had expected. AHS staff members have also been put on three-month contract, in case junior kindergarten results in Aboriginal Head Start layoffs.

The department's study of junior kindergarten found that many long-term providers of early childhood programs, including Aboriginal Head Start, quote, "felt that their programs had been valued or respected." When small-community residents were surveyed, only 23 per cent said they had been

provided with information that helped them understand junior kindergarten. We were told that things are different now, but Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure.

The department has advised Aboriginal Head Start administrators that they, quote, "may need to refocus on younger children if there aren't enough kids for both programs." But, Mr. Speaker, this is not a simple thing. Such a change would alter staff-to-children ratios and require substantial staff re-training and program redesign. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. Mr. Speaker, and in my riding where AHS has helped Aboriginal children learn and grow - to get that essential "head start" - for two decades, we are not assured that immediate entry into the school system through junior kindergarten will serve our children better.

The department says participation in junior kindergarten will be optional, but Mr. Speaker, that choice won't be meaningful if other community-based programs are driven into a different operations model - or out of operations altogether. The government's mandate commits to supporting quality early childhood development in collaboration with existing organizations. Junior kindergarten has a great potential, but collaboration must be meaningful and it must respect that different communities have different needs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SHARED ARCTIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to share my view on the Government of Canada's approach to a new policy vision for a Shared Arctic Leadership Model. A Shared Arctic Leadership Model with reconciliation work on a renewed Inuit to Crown relationship and the ever-increasing impacts of climate change across the Arctic is an important time for Canada and Canadians to show leadership. Mr. Speaker, the empowerment of Indigenous organizations and governance structures in Canada plays an important role within the overall governance structures created by Inuit through local and regional governments the Canadian Inuit voice to the international stage, including the United Nations and the Arctic Council.

Having the full and meaningful capacity to contribute to important dialogues is very different

than simply having a "seat at the table." We must move beyond the "seat at the table" approach to one that truly supports and enhances Inuit capacity to contribute nationally and internationally. In the spring of this year, the Inuit of Canada wrote to Minister Bennett and also submitted a proposal to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada with a request to recognize this inflation when determining the level of funding for circumpolar priorities.

We have yet to receive a response, but remain steadfast in our belief that a fair and reasonable increase to support Inuit in Canada, indexed to inflation, would enhance our collective contributions at important international fora and other requests for engagement, including those from the Shared Arctic Leadership Model. The result of the status quo is that our organizations are forced to invest an inordinate amount of time in proposal development and report writing, simply to "keep the lights on" is not the best use of our collective time and energy when it could be devoted directly to working with the Government of Canada on the opportunities and challenges facing Inuit nationally and internationally.

Mr. Speaker, adequate resourcing of Indigenous organizations will ensure the capacity is present to address the substantial issues before us as we encourage you to include this as a fundamental foundational aspect of the report.

A Shared Arctic Leadership Model has meaningful relations between Inuit and the Crown at its core. We must recognize what we have done to date has not generally served Indigenous people well. All people involved from politicians to the technical and working level need to generally care about the improved social health outcomes for Inuit. Mr. Speaker, at this time I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, as I continue, the current methods used to uphold the duty to consult are different than Inuit interpretation, and this hampers reconciliation and a renewed Crown to Inuit relationship. Real partnership and leadership means that Inuit are a part of the actual decisions being made. It means that our input is valued directly at the decision-making table rather than only through consultation beforehand. This will enhance the quality and outcomes of decisions being made that directly affect the lives and wellbeing of Inuit and Indigenous people across Canada, Mr. Speaker.

A positive example of this would be to build on the structure of the Arctic Council where Inuit are engaged as permanent participants and are at the

same table as member states. This would, however, benefit from enhanced core funding directly from the federal government to Indigenous organizations. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION AND PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to do my Member's Statement on an important part of health transformation; the recruitment of doctors.

Mr. Speaker, at one time I envisioned a health system having a full slate of doctors in all regions and a full complement of specialists in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services continues to improve its infrastructure across the NWT, including the Stanton Territorial Hospital renewal, new health centres in Hay River, Fort Resolution, Fort Providence, to mention a few. These projects are huge investments. It would be even better if we could have these facilities staffed with our own doctors.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the health system is still utilizing doctors from other jurisdictions. I further understand that it is difficult for the system to hire doctors that are prepared to live in our regional centres. I feel like we would have much better success if we were hiring fulltime doctors that could divide their time between Yellowknife and the regional centres.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many full-time doctors we have in the regions, but I'll use Hay River as an example, since many of my constituents access health services there. If Hay River requires five doctors and they're only able to fill three positions, instead of bringing several doctors from outside the NWT, the doctors for Hay River could be filled in Yellowknife. Therefore, the system could potentially hire four doctors who live in Yellowknife and each of them be half-time doctors in the Hay River Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the same concept could apply to Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, and Norman Wells. I believe that the Tli Cho doctors already live in Yellowknife. If they choose, the doctors could live in any one of the communities and work half-time in Yellowknife, that would also work.

Mr. Speaker, offering a doctor that chooses to be in Fort Smith an opportunity to work in their field of

expertise in a hospital setting at Stanton from time to time would also be ideal. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line here is that we are a lot further ahead if we draw on a territorial pool of doctors even if the majority of them were to live in Yellowknife. We cannot continue to rely on locum doctors from other jurisdictions. Having exclusively territorial doctors would be a good thing for the local economy, the housing market, and of course healthcare for the clients they serve. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECREATION, SPORT AND PHYSICAL LITERACY POLICIES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide some feedback on the recreation, sports, physical activity and physical literacy policy that is presently being looked at by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Like everybody in the system, I'm a strong supporter that this policy needs to be developed so that we have a policy that is made for Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage the department to take a more inclusive approach to developing this policy. Policy needs to be drafted by consulting the sport partners, the communities, recreation and sport organizations within the communities and schools. As well, the department has to include GNWT policies such as the poverty action plan and the mandate of the 18th Assembly in this policy.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the importance of linking it to the national policies and framework, but this policy needs to build on the strengths of the sport and recreation sector and the hard work that is being done in the communities and at the regional and territorial associations/organizations. Mr. Speaker, this policy needs to make sure that it includes those outcomes and goals that are linked to our desired outcomes and actions. I firmly believe a good policy will help us prevent the issues we are facing today.

It is my understanding the department is working on a physical activity strategy in isolation of others who work in the field. It has been brought to my attention that various associations in the sport and recreation world are not happy with this development. They are concerned that creating another strategy could and would overlap the current policies and create more confusion on the goals, strategies and rules in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the physical activity strategy needs to be included in one policy that addresses the sport, recreation, physical literacy and physical activity components for the Northwest Territories. It has

been strongly recommended that this process include consultation with all partners who have a vested interest in this policy. I firmly believe that a new policy that includes all of these areas would be responsive and valuable policy that will guide the work of the department and all organizations for years to come. Later on I'll have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs about this policy and the Western Canada lottery program funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE
AGREEMENTS ON THE NWT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, my statement today is about trade agreements. For decades now, Mr. Speaker, trade agreements have been front page news. Back in the 1980s the Canada - U.S. Free Trade Agreement came about, and then evolved to include Mexico, and became NAFTA, North American Free Trade Agreement. Recently, there's passionate talk about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the Canada-European Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. But Canada is involved in more than three or four agreements, Mr. Speaker. Canada has a history as a trading nation. We are a member of the World Trade Organization. Global Affairs Canada's web page lists trade agreements with more than 15 countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, whenever there's a Canadian political leader making the case for freer trade, an equal number of loud voices argue against it. It's true that no agreement will be perfect, each will have its pros and each will have its cons. On the plus side is opportunity, economic growth and jobs for Canadians. Since the signing of NAFTA, North America's GDP has doubled and Canada has over four million more jobs. The European Union represents almost \$18 trillion in economic activity, and CETA will give Canada preferential access to that market. Bigger markets, more trade, job growth and a higher standard of living, all these are benefits of freer trade.

On the downside, you can't get something without giving something up. To have access to other markets, Canada has to give up access to ours. That can mean job losses in some sectors. Others raise the concern that trade agreements can make it harder for Canada to protect the environment, manage our greenhouse gas emissions, improve our public health care system, or improve agreements with Indigenous Canadians.

The question is not whether there will or won't be trade agreements. As my colleague noted earlier, it's important to be heard nationally and internationally. Mr. Speaker, the question is will we in the NWT raise our voices to protect our own interests? We need to be at the table making our voices heard, ensuring our values are protected in trade negotiations. We need to be actively promoting a made-in-the-North approach in areas that will affect our interests, economy, jobs and way of life. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I'll have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REGULATION OF LEGALIZED MARIJUANA

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, the federal government has committed to introduce legislation in the spring of 2017 to effectively legalize marijuana. During the meantime, they are looking at regulations with respect to production, distribution, and retail sale and consumption of marijuana. The market is adapting to pending changes, drawing in national and international investment that is already roughly created a medical marijuana industry valued at \$200 million, and one that may grow 20-fold in the next five years.

To give you a clear example, Mr. Speaker, on October 6th a publicly traded marijuana company, Canopy Growth Corp., jumped to a record high, soaring as much as 17 per cent that day, and overall their shares have climbed 84 per cent this year. Clearly, marijuana is now considered by the business community as a commodity of great potential, and not an illicit drug; nothing exemplifies this more than the announcement by Shoppers Drug Mart, Canada's largest pharmacy trade, just yesterday having formally applied to be a distributor of medical marijuana.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the market is ahead of the game on this, and Canada's governments must now follow suit. The benefits to public safety and the revenue potential are simply enormous. A CIBC report earlier this year estimated the size of the national recreational cannabis market at up to \$10 billion, and if properly regulated they anticipate \$5 billion in new revenue from marijuana taxation.

With regard to regulation, there are three main options; mail order from licensed growers, private sector storefronts based on existing dispensaries, and stores run by provincial/territorial liquor store systems. There are pros and cons to each, and I'm sure they will be discussed in this House further, but when the time comes for implementing a regulatory regime this government, and it will be

this government who will have the responsibility of balancing between maximizing taxation revenues and limiting harm to the public.

In Colorado, legislation has existed since 2014. They faced an initial increase in consumption among teens and adults, then long-term stabilization with no increase from the rates prior to legalization. What's troubling, though, is while other than the initial increase, teen usage has not gone up, nor has it gone down. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this government will need to implement a prevention and public awareness strategy aimed at assuring that we keep marijuana out of the hands of children. This government will also need to consider whether or not it implements an age restriction higher than the restriction currently in place for alcohol. The OHM has recommended the minimum age be set at 25, to not inhibit brain development, and though I'm hesitant to entirely concur at this time, I look forward to the debate on how we provide least harm with the greatest opportunity at creating a growth industry for the Northwest Territories.

Minister, like our federal counterparts, I believe it's time we grow up and admit there are better policies at our disposal in regard to cannabis than prohibition. It's time we take this market out of the hands of criminals and maximize the benefits to both business and government coffers. It's time to regulate, not restrict; to prevent, not punish; and to stimulate growth, not hinder it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORMAN WELLS REGIONAL LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, my statement is in regard to the Sahtu Regional Health Centre, a long-term care facility in Norman Wells, a building very much needed and welcomed by the local community and surrounding communities. Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to tour this facility back in March 2016, and I thank the Minister and the Minister's staff at the regional and territorial level for arranging this tour. The facility is approximately 4,000 square footage, with 18 beds.

Mr. Speaker, the new facility will have approximately 45 positions to deliver services.

Once the facility is in operation, the Town of Norman Wells and the surrounding communities will expand, and demands such as housing will be anticipated. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time on staffing, recruitment, and start-up. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES AND REMEDATION PLAN FOR CON MINE AND SURROUNDING AREA

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The Con headframe has been in the news lately as part of the closure and reclamation plan of that site. I've expressed concerns about the closure plan for the Con Mine for many years as a private citizen living nearby. This was a productive gold mine that made significant contributions to Yellowknife since 1938, but I'm seriously worried about the environmental legacy it will leave behind. Water treatment alone will likely be required for hundreds of years, as will inspections and maintenance of the tailings pond covers and other structures, and a hazardous waste site will be left at the mine.

This is a complex site that will eventually be surrounded by our expanding city. We need to get it right. GNWT has surface leases covering a large part of the mine site that require the area to be returned in a condition that is satisfactory, without spelling out precisely what that means. Will our government accept the land back if there are perpetual care requirements, including monitoring and maintenance? Who will pay these costs that may not happen for decades or hundreds of years into the future? How will we be judged by future generations if we do not take care of our land and water?

There are also some contaminated lands in the area that are not covered by the current surface leases at the Con Mine. The Negus Mine operated from 1939 to 1952 and was then purchased by the adjacent Con Mine. There is an extensive tailings pond that was associated with the Negus Mine that remains largely uncovered. Half of it is under the closure plan for the Con Mine and the remainder is owned by Imperial Oil Limited. Tailings continue to blow around the area and have elevated levels of arsenic.

During the review of the Con Mine closure plan in 2014 and earlier, I raised the issue of who owns this land, what if any remediation requirements there may be, and when it would be remediated? The GNWT Department of Lands undertook to respond but never did. The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board also wrote the Department of

Lands on March 30, 2015, on this same issue, but there is no evidence of any response.

All of this speaks to our lack of policy, standards, regulations, and laws to properly ensure that mine sites are closed and remediated in a satisfactory way, and I have raised this issue many times in this House. Saskatchewan has had an Institutional Control Program since 2005. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, Saskatchewan has had an Institutional Control Program since 2005, where properly remediated sites are accepted back by the government with payments into two funds to cover monitoring and maintenance, and then unforeseen events. More than two and half years after devolution, we still do not have a proper closure and reclamation regime in place to prevent public liabilities for future generations. I will have questions for the Minister of Lands later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS' CAPACITY TO SUPPORT
ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report from the Office of the Auditor General delivered a message about the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs that's both loud and clear: the department is not delivering enough support to communities that provide essential services to their residents. MACA can't simply transfer money to communities for drinking water, waste management, fire protection, and emergency preparedness and hope for the best, especially when the health and well-being of residents is at stake.

But that's more or less what's been happening. The most shocking finding for me is in the lack of support for community fire protection. I'm quoting from the report here: "The department did not know which communities had fire departments and if existing fire departments met the requirements of the Safety Act or could be considered responsive, including which had a sufficient number of trained firefighters." The department has known about this problem since its last assessment in 2010-2011, but has only started to respond to this crisis since this audit began.

Mr. Speaker, MACA has a responsibility set out in law and policy to actively monitor the delivery of all

of these services. Yet time and again, the Auditor General found that MACA had received or was working with incomplete information from communities. The department requires accountability from communities but doesn't follow up if reports aren't provided, or to verify information given and then used for departmental planning. In some cases, the department knew about the gaps but hasn't been diligent in closing them. The consequences are that residents' safety is threatened in NWT communities, with out-dated emergency preparedness plans and stockpiles of hazardous waste.

Mr. Speaker, the department agreed with the 13 recommendations of the Auditor General, but that's obviously not enough. When the issues raised by the Auditor General are combined with those that result from the glacially slow efforts to revise and create legislation, I see a systemic problem. It shouldn't take years to follow up fire protection issues or having to wait until the next Assembly to revise the Cities, Towns and Villages Act. The department either has too few resources or too large a mandate to meet its legally mandated responsibilities. If ever a department was in need of a zero-based budget review, it's MACA. I'll have questions for the Minister.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHERN FARM TRAINING INSTITUTE

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Northern Farm Training Institute, or NFTI as it is known, on successfully completing its first full year of operation, which included planting, growing and selling crops, raising livestock, and training 42 students from across the Northwest Territories.

NFTI began in 2013. Back then, the institute would hold short courses on other people's farms. It quickly became clear that there was an appetite for more in-depth training. Three short years later, NFTI is providing that training in spectacular fashion. NFTI's campus is now the largest farm in the territory and includes a barn, greenhouse, classroom, student accommodations, as well as goats, sheep, cows, pigs, and more.

In total, NFTI has trained 127 people from 28 communities and outside the territory as well. Training now includes short one- or two-day courses, as well as longer internships. In addition, the institute is used for research by southern academics and hosts conferences which draws attendees from outside the territory and the country.

However, Mr. Speaker, the most exciting thing about NFTI is the potential it has to transform our territory. Students don't just learn how to plant seeds and harvest crops, they learn everything they need to know to start farms in the North and turn those farms into sustainable businesses. We're not just talking about community gardens; we're talking about food and economic independence for Northerners. Not only will food security be enhanced in our small communities, where it's desperately needed, but it will create wealth and that wealth will stay in those communities. Where conditions are right for larger-scale farming, like in the South Slave, NFTI will no doubt be one of the leaders in growing the industry and helping diversify our Territorial economy.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say congratulations to NFTI. The territory and the South Slave is lucky to have them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my constituency assistant, Liz Wright. Also, the chair of the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, Joe Tetlich, and the secretary/treasurer of the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, Deana Lemke. As you know, the Porcupine Caribou Management Board is the only wildlife management board that has a management plan for caribou, and I'd just like to thank them for all they do for the Porcupine Caribou on behalf of my constituents. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Yellowknife North resident and executive director of the NWT Seniors' Society, Barb Hood. I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognize the Yellowknife Seniors' Society's executive director, Kim Doyle. Thank you, and welcome to the House.

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

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Nick Sibbeston, senator, lawyer, MLA and former Premier of the GNWT Legislative Assembly, and also a former member of the Sacred Heart Residential School, a survivor from Fort Providence. I would like to welcome him to the House. Mahsi.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Nick Sibbeston, who is a constituent of mine, and his wife, Karen. Welcome to the Assembly. As well, I'd like to recognize Kim Doyle, who is a friend of mine. Welcome to the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Those that we may have missed in the gallery, welcome to the Assembly. It's always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 390-18(2): SPORT AND RECREATION FUNDING

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, looking at some documents given to various partners regarding the Western Canada Lottery Program Funding Framework. I notice the department is looking at a five-year average and not a three-year average on giving their supplement, or their funding. This doesn't seem fair, as the lotteries during the 2012 to 2014 fiscal years were not as successful as the past three years. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister direct her department to go back and do the recalculations based on the past three years' deal that they had with the Sport and Recreation Council? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, at this point we won't consider to go back and look at lowering the average of the years, and that is based on knowledge that we have. The Sport and Recreation Council used to control the funding, and their contributions for 2014 to 2017, so that was the three years, were based on ticket sale projections that were not achieved. This resulted in reduced contributions for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. So using the five-year base for the funding is actually more appropriate; people can more count on what they're getting. So we have promised to every organization that they will actually get the same amount of funding they got last year regardless, and we are projecting that there will be more funding for the organizations based on the tax savings that we will be taking in. So at this point, no. We will look at it after a year or two, but right now we will not do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. I'm a little disappointed that they won't look

at it, because I know the lotteries and they seem to continue to grow. So I'm hoping that at least we can look at it a couple of years down the road anyway. In looking at the proposed allocation of lottery dollars, it seems to be weighted heavily towards the sports sector. This needs to be explained. Can the Minister please explain how the lottery dollars are being invested and the rationale used by the department to make these decisions?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As the Members may know, taking in the lottery funding into the governance of the Northwest Territories is a new endeavour that we're doing. It is basically to save the taxation that may come out if we leave it within an independent organization. So that will result in hopefully about \$1 million in savings that we might have had to pay for taxation.

So like I had said previously, we have promised that the Sport and Rec programming will receive the same amount of funding for this year, and probably more. Given that many of the organizations that we work with actually provide both sport and rec programming, the department will monitor future allocations and make necessary adjustments in the future.

MR. THOMPSON: I would like to, again, thank the Minister for her answer. The funding framework that I have received from various organizations, I've noticed that 80 per cent of the lotteries over \$5.1 million will be allocated towards multi-sport games. In my opinion, this doesn't address needs for more inclusive and substantial sport and recreation physical activity programs. I firmly believe that we need to develop a more inclusive program for women, girls, and older adults. Will the Minister have her department re-look at this decision of putting the money back into new initiatives that look at these areas of concerns, plus maybe some arts and culture programs that can be offered by these organizations?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes. At this point, yes, we will be. We actually have already called a meeting of the five sports organizations, so we're going to sit down, we're going to talk about the overlap that there may be and gaps within services and to try to help them with their long-term planning and also the planning that we need to do within the MACA, Municipal and Community Affairs, itself. So, yes, I can commit to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: I'd like to thank the Minister for her answer. I believe these organizations are going to be very happy to hear that. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke about the consultation process. I firmly believe the consultation process

will improve this important area of our lives, and the residents of the NWT. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister make a commitment to do a thorough consultation process in the developing of a new sport recreation and physical literacy and physical activity policy with the five partners and their members?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated previously, we've already called for the -- or we will be calling for the five partners to come together and work on issues that we're facing. So, yes, I will commit to having the department work with the sports and recreation organizations on the development of a wide sectorial policy in full consultation with the organizations.

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

QUESTION 391-18(2): PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci Cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my Member's statement, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell this House what the status of the recruitment of doctors in regional centers is today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recognizing that it's somewhat fluid, I can give the Member a bit of an update of where we are today on physicians. In Fort Smith, there's 4.5 positions of which one is filled by a local physician. In Yellowknife, there's 29 family practitioners, 26 are filled by local physicians. In the Tlicho, there are two family practitioner positions. Two of them are filled, but those physicians happen to be located in Yellowknife and split their time between the Tlicho and Yellowknife. The Sahtu, there are two family practitioner positions. They're both vacant at this time. In the Beaufort Delta, there's nine family practitioner positions established, three and a half of them are filled on a full-time basis by local practitioners. In the Deh Cho, there's three family practitioner positions. None of them are filled by local practitioners at this time. In Hay River, we have five family practitioner positions, two are filled by local practitioners at this time.

In a number of the cases, Mr. Speaker, we have regularly recurring physicians. For instance, in the Deh Cho we have a physician who isn't permanently residing in the Deh Cho or at Fort Simpson but returns on a regular basis, so it's a repeat locum. We do utilize locums from time to time to address things like shortages, when some of our staff physicians go on holidays, take training

development. So there's always a need for some level of locum physicians. Ultimately it's our goal to hire and fill all these positions, preferably in the regions where the positions happen to be located. But since we've moved to a territorial authority, we have the ability to have our physicians move around to provide backfill.

I think the Member's statement was very clear and the direction he outlined in his statement is the exact direction that we're moving towards as we speak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to thank the Minister for that response and I'd like to ask the Minister if all of the specialist positions at Stanton are filled at this time?

MR. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, to date, or currently, there is 21 established specialty positions located in Stanton, 16 of those are filled by resident physicians. On top of that, we have a number of unfunded physician specialists who come in from time to time. There isn't enough demand to justify a full-time specialty in some areas. So we have some locums who come up on a regular basis, as well as the 21 that we've established.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if, aside from the Tlicho doctors, if there are other doctors that are splitting their time between Yellowknife and the regions.

MR. GLEN ABERNETHY: Not at this time, Mr. Speaker. This is early in the life of the new territorial authority, but this is some work that actually started a number of years ago. I think the Member was actually Minister of Health and Social Services when we started exploring the possibility of territorial physician services.

With the advent of a single authority, we have the ability to actually roll that out in a little bit more thorough manner. In the past we had a situation where we had one authority competing with another authority for physicians creating competition within the territory itself. Now, they're working together, and I can say the Territorial Medical Director has just recently been working with the Medical Director in the Beaufort Delta and together they're participating in a recruitment drive in Vancouver to promote rural physician services and try to gain and garner interest in the Northwest Territories as a place to come and practice. Whether you're in Yellowknife or in one of our more remote locations, Inuvik, Simpson, Norman Wells, examples.

MR. BEAULIEU: Maybe the question will be obvious, but I'd like to just get in on the record. Has the Minister seen an improvement in recruitment as a result of a new direction that the department is taking with health transformation?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we've really only moved to the single authority for the last couple of months. We need a bit more time to assess, but I can say that the work that the Member started when he was a Minister to bring more of a territorial model together in allowing physicians in one region to have credentials in institutions like Stanton did actually help us to recruit some physicians and hire them in remote locations recognizing that they can also have some privileges in locations like Stanton. Working together as a system and having the doctors across the territorial system has helped. By moving to a single authority we believe we have more opportunities to continue to enhance that important work that was begun in the last Assembly.

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

QUESTION 392-18(2):
IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE
AGREEMENTS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about trade agreements and their impact on the Northwest Territories. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister describe what steps his department is taking to convey the NWT's interests to the federal government with regard to international trade negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government is involved in a number of bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements, and with that being said, they involve the Northwest Territories, they communicate with us in the provinces, and we have representatives, ITI has representatives, at the table with the federal government to engage on these processes and we will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: The response is appreciated and it's good to know that we have representatives at the table. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister describe the economic benefits his department believes can come our way through freer trade, and if he could provide specifics it would be appreciated?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: These trades we believe will help benefit the Northwest Territories because we are such a small domestic market, and we are reliant on trade to advance growth opportunities in the Northwest Territories in sectors such as fisheries, forestry, manufacturing, the tourism industry and traditional harvesting in

another big one. We believe that these free trade agreements will give us access to larger markets.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his response. Mr. Speaker, some folks are concerned that trade agreements can limit our ability to protect our local economies by removing protections. How does the Minister believe that would impact our ability to buy northern through programs like the Business Incentive Program?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: It's my understanding that the threshold in most of these agreements is such a high level that it won't affect a business' policy or the manufacturer's policies.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate the Minister's reply, but I'm not sure on some of the agreements that's the certain answer; however, I can work with him afterwards with regards to clarity on that matter.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, there are also concerns that trade agreements can constrain us from environmental protections. They say if a company from a TPP country claims our environmental regulations compromise its profits that company can sue our government. We know in the North at Selwyn Mine, for example, has Asian interests and that could potentially fall under this scenario. I'm interested, Mr. Speaker: how would the Minister respond to such a scenario? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The previous Minister wrote a letter to the federal Minister requesting that Global Affairs Canada hold consultations in the Northwest Territories and we believe that federal Ministers are very willing to come here and do that. They haven't set a time when they want to do that. I believe when the Global Affairs Canada comes here to hold consultation with us that would be a good time to engage in a question in this type of scenario.

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

QUESTION 393-18(2):

REGULATION OF LEGALIZED MARIJUANA

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Health. Does the Minister support a marijuana regulation regime for the Northwest Territories that both allows us to capture more taxation revenues and keep our kids safe from a substance that is very much out of control under the current prohibition regime? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, within the Government of the Northwest Territories the Department of Justice is the lead department on the NWT Working Group, which includes the Department of Health and Social Services, Finance and Transportation. There are a number of departments that are involved in figuring out the GNWT's response to legalization of marijuana. The federal, provincial and territorial governments have actually formed an interdepartmental working group and the GNWT has two members, one from the Department of Justice and one from the Department of Health, on that intergovernmental working group.

Mr. Speaker, we are paying close attention to what the federal government is doing; we're getting briefings from them at every opportunity when they offer to present them. From the Department of Health and Social Services' perspective, we understand that there's a desire to legalize marijuana here in this country.

Moving forward, we're just trying to make sure that the federal government is aware and is working to ensure that residents in Canada, including the Northwest Territories, remain safe; that marijuana stays out of the hands of children; that appropriate resources will be available to educate people on the harms of smoking marijuana; and that individuals who have been authorized by their health practitioners to utilize marijuana still maintain safe access.

Mr. Speaker, when the federal government did their initial call, I sent a letter to Minister Philpott indicating our willingness to work with them obviously but encouraging them to seriously support the provinces and territories, preferably with financial resources, to get out in front and do some public awareness on the harms of smoking marijuana. Smoking a carbon-based product whether it's marijuana or cigarettes isn't good for you; we need to make sure that the public are aware.

MR. TESTART: I appreciate the Minister informing this House or keeping this House up-to-date on our federal engagement of this issue; however, my questions are more precisely about what this government's response will be to this new regime. It's not a question of should we support, it's a question of how do we manage it once the law changes. So I'm wondering what the Minister has launched or what this working group the Minister's department is a part of has launched in terms of looking at research or modelling studies here in the Northwest Territories for how this is going to work after April 2017.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, there is an interdepartmental working group doing this analysis. We are paying close attention to what some of the other jurisdictions are doing. Some of them are already moving forward with some regulations and I've had an opportunity to talk to some of the other Ministers of Health who have the same issues, and they've indicated that although they're moving forward on regulations they understand that that's cursory or initial and we won't really truly have an idea of what those regulations will be or should be until the federal government comes forward with their legislation.

Coming forward and passing the legislation to legalize marijuana is one thing. It will happen on a certain date; it's been suggested April. It doesn't mean it goes live in April. There will be plenty of opportunity to actually work with the provinces and territories and come up with some regulations. In the Northwest Territories, that's going to take a number of different departments.

Some of the regulation similar to regulating alcohol and distributing alcohol will be done by the Department of Finance, and there will certainly likely be some provisions that may need to be adjusted in legislation which will involve all the other departments. So we are working closely together, watching what's happening in other jurisdictions, collecting data, so that we're ready to move once we have a better sense of what the federal legislation looks like.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for that very thorough response. I wonder, though, with all of our legislative priorities and privacy this government in a very large mandate document, do we have the capacity to accommodate a significant shift like this? The Minister just spoke of involving three departments, and if not more, in making all these changes, so is this working group analysing the kind of capacity it's going to take for our government to get up to speed? I would hate for Northerners to be in a legislative lurch while this change takes place and our government to be playing catch-up.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I think this government has demonstrated an ability to get work done on a fairly regular basis, especially when issues that we have not necessarily been the lead on bringing to reality have come forward, things like medical assistance in dying, a federal initiative that resulted in a significant amount of work being done by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Government of the Northwest Territories. When this legislation comes down, we will do our due diligence, we will collect the data, and we will make sure that NWT residents aren't adversely affected by those changes and that they have

access to legal product in this country in a safe and responsible way.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the Minister for that. I look forward to working with this government on that issue. Finally, a more technical point: does the department or the working group currently have any recommendations on the legal age or the minimum legal age is 25 or 19 or something else, or is it too soon to make that determination? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, those ages were recently thrown out by the federal government's working group that's out doing some analysis right now. I don't personally have -- I haven't seen any scientific data to suggest the appropriate age. I would say that some of the suggestions around that age seem to have some value recognizing brain development and ensuring that youth develop safe and effectively. So at this point we have no opinion one way or the other but we will keep ourselves informed and see where it goes.

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

QUESTION 394-18(2):
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPACTS ON
ABORIGINAL HEAD START PROGRAMMING IN
MACKENZIE DELTA

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement; I have a few questions for the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement there's a lot of concerns how junior kindergarten will affect Aboriginal Head Start in the communities of Fort McPherson and Aklavik within my riding. In Tsiigehtchic there's not as much concern there because we do not have the program there. But I would like to ask the Minister: how can the department assure my constituents that junior kindergarten will not affect Aboriginal Head Start? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We have had some concerns from the Aboriginal Head Start program, specifically in Fort McPherson. We received letters addressing some of the concerns that were raised at a meeting with the Aboriginal Head Start staff. Our Director of Early Childhood Programs and the program coordinator went in, we met with the school. The junior kindergarten being offered in McPherson was an option and the school decided

to opt in this year. We didn't ask them to, but it was an option for them, they decided to do that. We've informed Aboriginal Head Start staff throughout the whole Northwest Territories that -- we had a meeting with them on August 24th and with the Public Health Agency of Canada as well and they informed all the staff that program dollars wouldn't be affected with the implementation of junior kindergarten program.

With our early childhood program operating subsidy increases that we announced earlier this year, say, if, let's say Aboriginal Head Start students or programs take in infants then they'll get more money as well that will offset the four-year-olds in that program, so there shouldn't be an impact on the programs operating together. Our junior kindergarten program in Fort McPherson is run a half-day as well as the Aboriginal Head Start Program in Fort McPherson I believe is also running half-days, so it offers the families full programming for a full-day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, since junior kindergarten has been discussed, you know, one of the major concerns I've always had is we are taking on an extra grade, yet without any additional funding. How does the department expect to manage this as we move forward? As you know, the cost of doing business always rises in the territory, and with added teachers and assistants, how will the department manage this as we move forward?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We have had some training courses for people in the junior kindergarten program; we're also doing web seminars to update our staff in that area. In the Member's riding we currently hold junior kindergarten in all three communities and we also have 28 families in Aklavik, McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic that currently have their children enrolled in a program in one of the three communities.

So in terms of the training, we're continually doing the training for the staff to address those issues. As I mentioned, on October 4th we had some of our staff, regional staff, go in and speak with the principal, the teachers, about some of the issues around training, as well as the support for the program itself in the community.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I realize a lot of training has been done, but are there any actually added funds to DEAs to follow through with the junior kindergarten?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Later on we're going to be hearing a motion here in the House, but as we mentioned, one of the recommendations that came

out of the report earlier this year is we're doing surveys, we're seeing what's needed in the communities, what resources are needed, and as we continue to hear those updates and talk to all the schools through that survey we will be coming with a plan, implementation plan and any other needed funds. We're going through our capital business plan and in there we did have some funds that were allocated to the communities for capital expenses, and we'll continue to look at those as we move forward.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has said that the goal of our entire school system is to strive to be as culturally-appropriate as possible. How will junior kindergarten achieve this and how can the department be confident it'll do a better job than the Aboriginal Head Start? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: One of our mandates is to do early childhood programming throughout the NWT in partnership with existing childhood programs. We do support Aboriginal Head Start, we do fund them, I believe the Community of Fort McPherson is going to get around somewhere over \$25,000 this year.

Part of the department is we do promote Aboriginal culture, traditions and values into our programming, right from JK to grade 12; you can see that directly in our Northern Studies programming, and moving forward in Northern Studies 20 and 30 as well. So it's very important for us and we continue to support Aboriginal Head Start through funding and continue to support the work that they do. Junior kindergarten will also incorporate some of the cultural values in learning as we move forward throughout the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 395-18(2) ARCTIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about an Arctic Leadership Model, and I have questions for the Minister responsible for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Mr. Speaker, my first question to the Premier is, will the Premier engage in Arctic Council activities advocating for Indigenous peoples' involvement for the Arctic Leadership Model? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories actively participates as part of the Canadian delegation of the Arctic Council and their continued advocacy for a strengthened capacity of the permanent participants. As a government, we will continue to work with Canada on areas of common interest, however there is not a separate or formal role for territorial governments in this forum, however we do have officials that participate and we attend as there is an identified role for our presence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate that response. My second question is what will define the positive change in the chapter for the Arctic?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I have had the opportunity to discuss with Mary Simon on her work on the Shared Arctic Leadership Model. Ms. Simon is still working on her report and recommendations for Minister Bennett, which I believe will be delivered in December of 2016. We see a great deal of potential in the Arctic, but it requires a broad range of support from Canada, including support for communities and Indigenous organizations.

A key priority to further positive change is to continue to enhance our control over our own destiny as Northerners, including transitioning important legislation like the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act from Canada to the Northwest Territories. I should also point out that the IRC benefitted from the resource revenue sharing component of the devolution agreement. It's our understanding that Arctic Council and Arctic Leadership Models are two separate, and potentially unrelated, activities both led by Canada. As the Member knows, Arctic Council is international, the Arctic leadership model is a domestic process led by Mary Simon for Minister Bennett.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response from the Premier. Mr. Speaker, my final question for the Premier is what are the GNWT's key priorities to address and strengthen the resilience of our communities?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Government of the Northwest Territories' vision for a sustainable Arctic is one of balance. The Government of the Northwest Territories is focused on advancing social, cultural, environmental and economic priorities of the Northwest Territories. It is this balance of priorities and collaborative approach to working with our Aboriginal government partners as well as Canada that will allow the people and communities of the Northwest Territories to become stronger, healthier and, therefore, more prosperous.

The best way to demonstrate Arctic sovereignty is to have healthy sustainable communities in the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories is focused on encouraging prosperity and self-sufficiency of our people and communities. The role of the territorial government in achieving this is authority over land, water and resources and working in partnership with our Aboriginal government partners and Canada to ensure all communities have access to the same high level of programs and services.

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

QUESTION 396-18(2)

MARKET HOUSING IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I made my statement on Market Housing in Small Communities, so my question is to the Minister of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The disruption of existing local markets are a fact to consider when the Housing Corporation is considering bringing new units into a non-market community. Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would like to be able to say, yes, we do consider it. There have been a few mistakes on the department's side. We were asked many years ago to actually bring in market housing to the communities to support professionals, nurses, doctors, social workers, school teachers. The reality is once we did the assessment, and then it took a couple years to actually build the units there, some of the gaps were filled. So we're actually currently looking at the communities that have market rentals we're actually looking at our own rentals and seeing if we can reallocate those.

MR. NADLI: I've heard of potential rental rates of up to \$1,400 per month for a market rental unit in Fort Providence. Can the Minister confirm the rental rate for a market rental unit in this community?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I can't confirm the actual market rental in Fort Providence itself because each community is different, but I can confirm that as part of this survey, and actually even before the survey, we are conducting a total review of all of our rental for accommodations in every single community, so we're in the process of doing that now.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for her reply. The unfortunate reality is we have an empty unit in Fort Providence. Who has been paying for fuel, utilities, and other maintenance in the empty

modular unit in Fort Providence since it was brought into the community in January 2016?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The NWT Housing Corporation is responsible for making sure that any unit that we have, usable or not, is actually maintained. So we provide the cost of the utilities when they aren't occupied.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is to the Minister. The Minister had indicated that mistakes were made in terms of communicating the intentions of the market housing in small communities. Could the Minister commit to embarking upon improving communications, and at same time perhaps reviewing its consultations with small communities on market housing? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I should clarify. When I say mistakes were made, it's not that we made a mistake in asking if we needed them at the time. It's just that it does take a couple of years for us to do the business plan and then get the units constructed, so we did err in that way. But it wasn't a mistake to put the units in.

Can we consult on the small communities? Absolutely. We are just in the process, like I had done in my Minister's statement earlier, that we're in the process of rolling out our engagement survey, which will ask each community what type of housing that they need in their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 397-18(2):
REMEDICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL
LIABILITIES AT CON MINE SITE COMMUNITIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I spoke of the apparent failure of the Department of Lands to respond to questions around contaminated lands adjacent to the Con Mine, namely lot 33C, group 964, plan 553, otherwise known as the Imperial Oil Tank Farm. Can the Minister of Lands tell this House who is responsible for remediation of that property, and when will it happen? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, Lands has really no role in this issue. As these are privately owned lands, they are under private fee simple title, I understand. I would expect that the owners of those lands are responsible for the remediation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Now that we've got that clear, can the Minister of Lands indicate what is the general regime for remediation of contaminated sites that are on privately owned lands in the Northwest Territories?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand, with respect to situations in which there are water licenses, it's ENR's responsibility to inspect. The terms and conditions are set by the various boards and ENR then inspects to ensure compliance.

MR. O'REILLY: Well, I can assure the Minister that this site does not have a water license. There's no land use permit for this site. It's privately owned lands. I'd like to know who is actually responsible for cleaning it up and what our general regime is. But two and a half years after devolution, I'm not aware of any specific changes to policy, regulations, or laws to ensure that we have a proper system in place for preventing and managing contaminated sites. When can we expect to have a proper system in place?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: In the situation described by the Member opposite, I think it would be the responsibility of the private owner to remediate. However, I do understand that this is a very important issue arising out of our mandate, in which we stated to develop an integrated, comprehensive approach to the management of contaminated sites, including prioritizing, sharing of responsibilities in collaboration with other governments, monitoring any sound financial security system to prevent public liability. So this is a live issue with this government and with this Cabinet, and I understand that currently ENR and Lands are working together to develop a policy.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response from the Minister, but I continue to make these Member's statements, raise questions around where is our system, and I just keep hearing these same sorts of answers. So I hope I'm not going to be here two years from now, asking the same questions over and over again. I keep giving the other side of the House some hints about some ways to look at how to improve our current system, but there doesn't seem to be much uptake.

In my Member's statement, I mentioned the Institutional Control Program in Saskatchewan, where mining sites are returned to the Crown with appropriate payments into two funds to cover monitoring and maintenance costs and then unforeseen events. Can the Minister tell this House whether his department has studied this program in Saskatchewan and whether it might be applied to the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I only became aware of this program very recently. I have no idea whether the department has had the opportunity to look into this program, which may be a model that we should follow. As I mentioned in my response to an earlier question, this is a very important issue that is important to this Cabinet and this government, as brought out in the mandate. So certainly we will look at that model, amongst others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 398-18(2):
NORMAN WELLS LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned in my Member's statement here, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. My understanding, the Norman Wells Sahtu Regional Health Facility is going to create in the neighbourhood of 45 positions. Which positions are we expecting outside of what we have there already and the recruitment advertising plan for those extra positions coming into that facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows, with the building of the new health centre in Norman Wells, we are also adding a long-term care facility, an 18-bed long-term care facility. This is the first long-term care facility in the Sahtu and we're very excited about opening it. However, it is going to require a large number of new positions to be established in the Sahtu. To date, we have worked with SSI and the Inuvialuit Aurora College to do some training of some local individuals that did occur in Inuvik on resident care aid training, so that we could start getting some people ready for those positions when they are established.

As the Member knows, and I think all Members are aware, we are in an incredibly tight fiscal situation. We will be coming forward through the business planning process to establish some positions in the Sahtu to fill those needs, but we do have to compete against other priorities and other challenges, and recognizing the tight fiscal situation we as a government, we as Members of the Assembly, are going to be forced to make some difficult decisions about reductions or corrections so that we have money available to invest in new priority areas, new mandate items, as the Government of the Northwest Territories. So we are all going to have to work very hard. In the meantime, as I've indicated, we're working on training some individuals. Some market housing

units have been built in Norman Wells that will hopefully help accommodate people who we will have to hire from outside. But ultimately, with many of these jobs, it would be best to train and hire local employment.

MR. MCNEELY: I think I heard we're going to create 17 positions, so let's use that number.

---Laughter

Dating back to May the 3rd, there was some correspondence going between ourselves with the Minister's office here on the transition plan, and that plan was supposed to be made available or is going to be made available this fall, all these questions are going to be redirected with the contents of the transitional plan for the new facility. Mr. Speaker, my question is: when we can expect the transitional plan? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since we last discussed this topic in the House I have been provided with some additional updated information. It's my understanding that Public Works and Services will be taking possession of that building in the winter as opposed to the fall.

They will be, at that point, commissioning, doing some necessary commissioning, bringing in health-related equipment, and we are looking at moving into that building late summer next year. So it's a little further away that I had originally indicated. I appreciate Public Works and Health for providing me that additional updated information. I apologize for the inaccurate information that I gave the Member previously.

Currently, we are hiring a person in the Sahtu who is going to be our transition planner and is going to work with all the different divisions, sections, Public Works and Services and other organizations to help transition ourselves into that building. Once that person is hired and the transition plan starts to be developed, I'm happy to have a sit down with staff in the region and the Member to walk through how we're going to transition into that facility.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Looking at the logistics of opening the doors for this facility, as the Member knows the whole Sahtu region is approached in two land ways: either by barge or by the winter road. So if we're going to open the doors to this facility next year about this time, we've got actually two options of access for heavy building material, trailer material for accommodations, large pieces of

equipment over the winter road, and the secondary final option is during the next coming barging season. So I urge the Minister to see if we can get the transitional document made available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: More of a comment, but I'll allow the Minister to respond if he wishes.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated we're currently hiring an individual to do our transition planning. We're trying to get somebody local; somebody from Norman Wells. Once that individual is hired, we hope to begin the development of a plan moving forward. It does involve multiple bodies, many departments, but I'm happy to have a sit down with the Member to go through how we plan to move into that building over the next number of months.

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

QUESTION 399-18(2)
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS CAPACITY

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I know the Minister is new to this department but I have this general question: does the Minister believe the department is adequately staffed to fulfil its mandate especially when it comes to supporting communities and providing essential services? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As the Member has stated I am fairly new to the portfolio. My assumption is yes, we are adequately staffed. I have had no indication from my management team that there are any issues; however, we will be looking into it to ensure that we're using our services based on the audit appropriately.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. If staffing is not the issue, can the Minister tell us what stands in the way of the department fulfilling its mandate?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: There's a number of factors that actually stand in the way of -- it's not that we don't fulfil our mandate it's maybe we're not progressing and maybe not doing as much paperwork as we need to, so there are some issues. Municipal and Community Affairs is based on -- years ago we changed it into what's called a "New Deal" and that is really about community development. It's about empowering the

communities to acknowledge what their strengths are and their needs are; which is something I really support. So we do try to provide training and support to them.

One of the other challenges that we have is that out of the 33 communities, nine of those communities are actually designated authorities, which means that we can provide the funding to them; we can be there to assist them as they want, but being designated authorities they do not fall within our jurisdiction and so they actually are federal and it's only if they ask for help that we can actually engage services with them.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Auditor General identified the problem within MACA itself, not within the communities. I'm aware of the New Deal program but it seems to me that it is, in fact, a paperwork problem; it's providing oversight and looking at reports and validating them and so on. So what kind of resources does the Minister need to bring the department up-to-speed on implementing the New Deal?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has actually come a long way in a short time. The department has really focused on water quality which is important to our residents as well. So we actually did really well in our audit around water quality so I am quite proud of that. We do have issues in other areas, but until we've actually sat down -- we were just presented the report yesterday, so until we've actually sat down and done a thorough analysis of all of the recommendations, we won't be able to look at any restructuring until we have looked at it thoroughly and see where we need to go next.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my last question for the Minister is whether a zero-based review might help the department to better understand how its current resources are allocated and where the gaps are. Can the Minister commit to undertaking zero-based review of her department? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Our first step actually is to do a thorough analysis of the audit and look at the recommendations that are in that. The other thing that we are doing actually, and just implementing currently, again is we are asking all of our staff within the Municipal and Community Affairs for suggestions on ways to improve, and that includes the recommendations within the audit. So until that work is done then I can't commit to doing a zero-based review.

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

QUESTION 400-18(2):
SINGLE PERSONS' HOUSING STRATEGY

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. I'd like to ask the Minister if there is any singles housing strategy that has been developed by the NWT Housing Corporation? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, actually we just put out this year a pilot project for single/bachelor fourplexes in the communities of Fort Simpson, Behchoko and Aklavik, and we will be doing an evaluation of those fourplexes to see how they work, and if favourable, we will be moving forward with that.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if those units are restricted to single people and how do you prevent couples from moving into those units, because there would be more people they'd have more points? I'd like to know how the Housing Corporation was able to sort out that issue.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Those units are only for single people within the Northwest Territories. In the same manner that we have units that are designated only for seniors we will have units that are designated only for singles.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, it's a huge issue in the NWT, especially in the small communities, many singles do not have housing. So if we're now building units that are specific to single people is that program going to be expanded into all communities in the NWT.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: That is a really tough question to answer directly and say yes or no. The reality is that we are in the process of doing the engagement survey, we have committed to doing community plans, individual community plans, for each community. If a community states to us that singles in their community is their number one priority, then that's where we'd be focusing our efforts. So it does depend on what the community surveys come back with.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, are those units a part of the public housing inventory managed by local housing organization, or are they going to be managed by some other organization in the community?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The units that I've talked about, the pilot project, are actually managed

by communities themselves. They are not managed by the housing corporation. As stated before, this is a pilot project, and so we're going to do an analysis to see how they work. After a year and at that point we'll determine whether we continue with that model or if we have to change our model to more accommodate the needs.

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

QUESTION 401-18(2):
SLAVE GEOLOGICAL PROVINCE
TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Minister of Transportation give a statement earlier today about new transportation corridors, and in there he mentions that a route has been identified for the Slave Geological Province. Can the Minister tell this House, is there actually a business case that's been prepared for this road route? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is no, I do not believe there's a business case developed for this quarter yet.

MR. O'REILLY: In his statement, he says that a route has been identified that will provide the greatest economic benefit to the region in the Northwest Territories. So I'm just wondering can the Minister tell us how were environmental effects considered in the route identification?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: That would be determined through an environmental assessment and we aren't at that stage yet. The early work to determine a route was through the Geological Survey of Canada and input from the Chamber of Mines and others in the area how we would proceed with this road through different routing.

MR. O'REILLY: Well, it's interesting that we can locate a road based on economic benefits but we can't perhaps change the routing in terms of environmental effects, but we have to wait for environmental assessment, so I'm wondering can the Minister then commit to table a map of this route in the House, and on that map could he also show key caribou habitat?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I can table a map on the various routes that were proposed for this. As far as the caribou habitat, that would have to be something that would be considered to the Minister of ENR.

MR. O'REILLY: Glad to hear that we're going to get a map of the route that he mentions in his

statement today, but can he then commit to work with his colleague that sits next to him in terms of getting us a map of key caribou habitat, and the reason why I'm saying this, Mr. Speaker, is the Bathurst caribou herd is a desperate situation, and we know where the post-calving, calving grounds of the herd are. I'm concerned about this road and it's routing, whether it's going to disrupt the caribou herd. So can the Minister commit to work with his colleague to table a map in this House that shows the route of the road in relation to key caribou habitat for the Bathurst caribou herd?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Department of Transportation works with all the key stakeholders on any proposed roading or highway in the Northwest Territories, and I can commit to the Member we will be working closely with ENR in any such a proposal and any other department that this takes into account including Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Time for questions period has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committee on the review of bills. Member for Nahendeh.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 6:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

BILL 8:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHILDREN'S LAW ACT

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Development has reviewed Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, and Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act and wishes to report that Bill 6 and Bill 8 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Bill 6 and Bill 8 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 75(5) to have Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, and Bill 8: An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 75(5) and have Bill 6: Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, and Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 6 and Bill 8 are moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Masi. Reports of committee on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 174-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 37-18(2), MACKENZIE VALLEY FIBRE LINK PROJECT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 37-18(2), Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 175-18(2):
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RETIRING ALLOWANCE FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to Section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowance Act, I wish to table the Legislative Assembly Retirement Allowance Fund Financial Statements for the Year Ended March 31, 2016.

TABLED DOCUMENT 176-18(2):
NWT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION BUDGET FOR 2016-2017

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to Section 28 of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table the "NWT Human Rights Commission Budget for 2016-2017."

TABLED DOCUMENT 177-18(2):
SUMMARIES OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR THE PERIOD MAY 31, 2016 - OCTOBER 12, 2016

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to Section 5 of the "Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Summaries of Members' Absences for the Period May 31, 2016 to October 12, 2016." Masi.

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Motions

MOTION 26-18(2):
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS the Department of Education, Culture and Employment confirmed plans to introduce junior kindergarten in all 49 NWT schools in the fall of 2017;

AND WHEREAS the goal of junior kindergarten is to promote the development and school readiness of four year olds with free programming;

AND WHEREAS, the importance of early childhood development is a value shared by professional and licensed programs across the territory;

AND WHEREAS, early development instrument testing reveals the greatest need for readiness exists in our smallest communities and these communities often have the fewest resources for preschoolers;

AND WHEREAS, the GNWT tabled report in February that reviewed the first stage of implementation of junior kindergarten in 19 NWT schools;

AND WHEREAS this report recommended that expanded implementation of junior kindergarten must take into account community context, strengths, needs and the existence of quality early childhood learning programs in communities;

AND WHEREAS this report also recommends the government develop a strategy in consultation with each community to address its unique early childhood learning needs;

AND WHEREAS implementation of Junior Kindergarten will jeopardize existing programs by removing four-year-olds from their programs;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment produce a plan to implement junior kindergarten in 2017/2018 along with a fully-costed budget for presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Development;

AND FURTHER that the department implement all the recommendations of the junior kindergarten review tabled in February;

AND FURTHERMORE that in developing an implementation plan the department acknowledge that a one-size-fits-all approach to junior kindergarten is contrary to the report's recommendations;

AND FURTHERMORE that the department tailor the introduction of junior kindergarten to each community with a focus on providing the greatest need to improve school readiness;

AND FURTHERMORE that the department accommodate existing community programs for four-year-olds without jeopardizing their viability;

AND FURTHERMORE that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is in order. To the Motion. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MOTION TO AMEND MOTION 26-18(2),
CARRIED

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to amend Motion 26-18(2).

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre that Motion 26-18(2), Junior Kindergarten, be amended by deleting the words:

"AND WHEREAS implementation of Junior Kindergarten will jeopardize existing programs by removing four-year-olds from their programs."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. With that in mind, amendment is in order. To the amendment. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The amendment is carried.

---Carried

Masi. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion is not about the value of providing early childhood education to four-year-olds in the Northwest Territories, that is value that we all agree on. Research has shown time and again that investing in the development of preschoolers yields good results for them, not only in terms of school readiness, but in school achievement and in fact in life-long learning.

This motion is about rollout of the program. The rollout of the program, Phase 1, was reviewed independently, and that report was tabled in this House in February. The report included a number of recommendations, and they are not numerous, there are about five of them. The one that I wanted to speak to is accommodating existing programs. Some communities have no choice for early childhood development other than junior

kindergarten, and it also turns out that many of those communities that have no choice have the greatest need for it. So it makes sense to have junior kindergarten in those communities.

Some communities, like Yellowknife, have many choices and the implementation of junior kindergarten shouldn't fetter those choices. So I'm talking here about Aboriginal Head Start in Ndilo, about the Montessori School, and about daycares, all very different kinds of programs and all with different educational goals and attainments. It's worth noting of course that Aboriginal Head Start both, here and in Yellowknife and in the other seven communities where it's offered as a free program. Other programs cost money. I recognize that some parents struggle to pay that money, but they make the choice because they are committed to the philosophy of the program that's being offered.

So what I'm trying to point to here, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a different context in each community for the education and development of four-year-olds, different needs for oversight, staffing, costs and curriculum. So for that reason, I really believe that there needs to be a nuanced approach to the introduction of junior kindergarten that takes into account the different contexts in different communities, whether they have Aboriginal Head Start which, as I say, exists in eight communities, or whether they have Montessori, which is unique to Yellowknife.

I know that the department has introduced some new rates for daycares, and certainly that is a very welcome development. It's important to note that it doesn't cover the differences between programs that are currently geared to zero to three-year-olds and programs that are geared for three to five-year-olds. So these are two different kinds of programs with different requirements for staffing, for equipment, for curriculum and so on.

It's also worth noting, and this is important in the context of junior kindergarten, that these rates are only paid when children attend. It's not like school where the schools are funded whether the children attend or not. Daycare and early childhood development programs, the subsidies are only paid when the children attend.

So in the case of Aboriginal Head Start, for example, if the children stop attending Aboriginal Head Start, which is a free program, and they start attending junior kindergarten, which is a free program, then certainly junior kindergarten will be disadvantaged because they will not receive the subsidy because the children aren't attending.

There are issues as well which my colleague, Mr. Blake, has spoken about very eloquently about how

junior kindergarten is provided by teachers and other programs such as Aboriginal Head Start and daycare are provided by early childhood education workers, and they generally tend to be workers from the community who have achieved their degree or diploma in this area and are qualified to work with children at this age on their development issues, but it's important to know they're not teachers. So, as a result, what I can foresee, is what my colleague has spoken about is that early childhood workers will be out of work because their programs will be taken over by teachers. This removes the program from the community from its cultural context, from its parental oversight and so on.

School is definitely a completely different proposition in terms of the way it's delivered than early childhood development is.

I want to talk a little bit about implementation. The government told us: first, that the program would go into all 49 schools; and, second, that it would be introduced in September of 2017, but they haven't yet produced the implementation plan and a budget for what it will cost. So I feel that the government has put the cart before the horse, they have limited the options for tailoring the implementation of this program by saying already where and when it will be introduced.

So coming up with a plan that is nuanced to the individual needs of the communities and the needs of children who need improvement on the early development instrument, those need to be taken into account, and there should be a real focus on assessing the need for school readiness and meeting that where it is demonstrated to exist.

The greatest fear, I guess, is that what this junior kindergarten program will do is that while opening options to some parents, it will limit options for others. I don't see that as a good trade-off. I think that there should be a way to accommodate both kinds of programs in our communities. Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Now I'll turn it over to the seconder of the amended motion, Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too of course am in support of this motion, as I second it. Mr. Speaker, there's growing concerns in the community of Fort McPherson; it has been for the last couple of years with the roll out of junior kindergarten. One thing for sure is the effect it will have on the Aboriginal Head Start program. As I mentioned earlier, we have three young ladies that recently received their certificates in early childhood development, and, Mr. Speaker, now as they start their career here they've been put

in a three-month contract, whereas before it's never been like this. So already there's some implications as we move forward.

I could see the importance of junior kindergarten, but, as I've always said from the beginning we have to fund it adequately; right now there's no added funds. We're taking on a whole new grade here and yet no funding to go with it.

Mr. Speaker, last year was the first year in Fort McPherson, for example, I've received concerns from the spouse of one of the teachers that was looking after junior kindergarten and they basically said: look, my wife did not sign up to be changing Pampers. That's the case, Mr. Speaker. We have up to three-year-olds that do qualify for junior kindergarten because they turn four within the first couple of months, and that was one of the big concerns we had last year.

Another thing too is we've had 20 years of Aboriginal Head Start in Fort McPherson; a program that was -- you, yourself, Mr. Speaker, when you were in your role as Education Minister, I recall the praise that they've received in Fort McPherson for the programming that they offered in the community, Mr. Speaker, and here we are. I realize the previous federal government was looking to possibly cut Aboriginal Head Start, but we do now have a new government in order here and we are yet to see if they will still provide funding for Aboriginal Head Start, which we are hopeful.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward it's very important that we provide the necessary tools to move forward for the sake of our four-year-olds, Mr. Speaker. I know it is a huge challenge in our communities, for example, Tsiigehtchic where we have no daycare; you know, that's our junior kindergarten. We have many other communities like this. Yet in Fort McPherson and Aklavik they both have Aboriginal Head Start that is successful. So why are we going to interfere with something that's already working? Mr. Speaker, that is why I am in support of this motion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this motion as amended. In December of last year on the first day that I spoke in this Chamber I spoke about junior kindergarten, emphasizing that our entire education system from JK to grade 12 must be adequately funded. We know that the availability of early childhood programs like junior kindergarten is free of charge, is essential to Northern families, and we know too that developing options for free play-

based care for four-year-olds is part of the government's mandate.

We know that the work of junior kindergarten implementation must be done to best serve future generations of Northerners. However, like many of my colleagues, I do not believe that this programming should come at the expense of choices for families or that diverse array of options currently available in various communities should be flattened to make way for a single program.

Regular Members have considered the matter of junior kindergarten carefully over the past several months, but these concerns have not necessarily been alleviated. On top of my own reservations, some residents of the Yellowknife North riding have also reached out to me to express their concerns. They are worried that if junior kindergarten proceeds as planned other day homes, daycares and preschool programs and the children who use them may suffer. They are not convinced that ECE has undertaken sufficient consultation or that the potential impacts on other care providers have been fully considered and accounted for.

As we have heard here today, I know too that my colleagues have heard similar concerns in their own communities; concerns that this one-size-fits-all approach may be a detriment not a service to the children it is meant to serve. With this in mind, I thank my colleagues for bringing this motion forward and I look forward to seeing it passed today as amended. Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the hard work that's gone into developing this motion and I certainly appreciate that our colleagues across the way are in support of it as amended as am I.

I've heard from many residents in Kam Lake, as my colleague has said in his own circumstance, expressing similar concerns. My own son has been in two day homes since I was a single parent many years ago, and the care provided to him was topnotch, so I certainly understand the value of these programs and the value of early education, but we have to make sure it's done right.

The department commissioned a very lengthy, thorough report that spoke to many stakeholders, and my concerns with this recent announcement of the roll out of junior kindergarten that that report was not being considered in full, and that causes me concerns when we did all this work and we're moving ahead without considering implications that that report made full. So I'm very pleased to see

that this motion seeks to correct that and provide guidance to our government moving forward.

Even as recently as today, Mr. Speaker, a school in my own riding, Ecole St. Joseph School, is concerned about the expansion of junior kindergarten and the consequences it will have on their capital costs and ability to provide space for the program, and they're looking for resources from the YK1 education district. I'm deeply concerned that if school boards are competing with each other and looking to take resources away from each other to facilitate this then we really need to think about how this plan is rolling out and if it's properly resourced and adequately resourced to make sure that we can give kids the quality early education that they deserve for healthy productive lives. Many of us have had the opportunity of means to provide that for our kids and we need to think about everyone else who can't.

So I do support this program. I think everyone in the Northwest Territories supports this program, but again, we need to make sure it's done right and we can't jeopardize existing programs and we need to make sure that our schools have the resources they need to make space and provide this service to Northerners. So with that I stand in support of this motion and I'm happy to see that this House is fully in support. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this motion as well. In August 2016 I was honoured to be present to see students graduate from Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary High School and the Minister was there too and witnessed three students that began their lifelong education quests at the start of the Aboriginal Head Start program, and I wanted to emphasize that.

The Aboriginal Head Start program has been in existence for a long time; it is community-based and it involves the community, parents and elders who incorporate the knowledge, at the same time prepare kids that are four years old into grade school, and so it's been very successful in the communities that I serve in my riding and at the same time on the K'atloodeeche Reserve and also the whole of the NWT.

It's important to note that this motion recognizes the need for community strategy. There has been, for some time, an adversarial approach in terms of JK versus Aboriginal Head Start program. We need to get beyond that. We need to see how this whole vision of JK is going to work for the benefit of the children that we have in our communities, and to ensure that, you know, we put our best efforts

forward to ensure that we have consensus to making this successful.

I'm very encouraged that there were recommendations that were brought forth at community level and that the department is going to work on it and develop an implementation plan associated with the budget in terms of costs and how much could be provided to communities that will make a decision to be involved with JK.

At the same time, I believe that JK and the Aboriginal Head Start Program could coexist and work in parallel. At the same time, I understand that, indeed, we could make it work and this motion sets that seed and that process forward so that we could work at the community level to ensure that we reach a point of success. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting this motion as well. Earlier in this session we reviewed a capital budget for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment that included some funds for improving schools to make sure we can deliver on JK starting in September of next year.

I will also be looking for the same sort of commitment in our O and M budget coming forward, in 2017-2018. We have to make sure that our school boards and district education authorities have the resources to deliver on JK. I don't think it's sufficient to say that they can deliver this with their existing resources, so I, Mr. Speaker, will be looking for additional resources for our school board, district education authorities, to deliver on JK in 2017-2018. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, support the motion. I feel that anytime we start to spend money on early childhood development, there are huge returns. I know that it is a known fact that there are no better returns for the money that we spend than there is spending in early childhood development.

I have a good Aboriginal Head Start Program in Ndilo, as mentioned by my colleague earlier. I wish for that program to continue, the viability of that program. We have many students there, children in that program, and I've witnessed it. I've seen the curriculum for the four-year-olds that are in Aboriginal Head Start Program. I believe it's very, very similar to the curriculum that is being used with junior kindergarten across the street, for example, from that program. I think also throughout most of the junior kindergarten programs in the

communities where there are Aboriginal Head Start and then in communities where they've had no daycare, no Aboriginal Head Start, no programs, I think we will see huge benefits from junior kindergarten and I know that teachers are looking forward to seeing all of the spending in early childhood development resulting in higher graduation rates a few years down the road. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Members for bringing this motion forward as amended. I appreciate all the Members who spoke to the motion and all the comments, concerns from the small communities, communities that have Aboriginal Head Start, and the regional centres here in Yellowknife as well.

Mr. Speaker, the government believes that we owe it to the children of the Northwest Territories to give them the best start in life. To achieve this, it's going to take some changes from all of us. The early development instrument shows that the status quo isn't working, and junior kindergarten is one of the ways to fix the status quo. We need to bring it to all kids and all families in the Northwest Territories.

The government is on the record as having accepted all the recommendations of the Junior Kindergarten Review released earlier this year and have incorporated them into our planning. We have been meeting actively with stakeholders, including teachers, principals, the NWT Teachers' Association, board chairs, superintendents, the Tlicho government, the Tlicho Community Services Agency, many licensed child care centres and family day home operators, Aboriginal Head Start managers, the NWT Montessori Society, and the Children First Society. We continue to engage with stakeholders to make sure that we know what each community needs, and the best way to implement junior kindergarten across the Northwest Territories.

We have significantly increased rates for entrance to the Early Childhood Program Operating Subsidy to help minimize the impact of junior kindergarten on licensed daycare providers.

Mr. Speaker, 19 communities have already benefitted from free, play-based junior kindergarten and the government wants to make sure kids and families in the rest of the NWT get that same opportunity. We've made a commitment in the mandate to work with the stakeholders and the communities to ensure that the Territory has free, play-based care for four-year-olds, and to develop an action plan for universal child daycare.

Full implementation of junior kindergarten is one of the ways we are fulfilling those commitments. Mr. Speaker, Cabinet will be supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion as amended. I'll allow the mover to provide closing remarks. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no question among the people on this side of the House that money invested in early childhood development yields fantastic returns. We want people to have good school readiness, to graduate from high school, to attain the skills they need to realize their full potential, whatever that looks like for them. We want them to have as many opportunities as possible.

Mr. Speaker, junior kindergarten is not the only way to achieve this goal. There are other ways, and I've mentioned some of them. Aboriginal Head Start is one that has a proven track record and is offered free of charge, so it makes no sense whatever to replace it. I think it's worth reminding the Minister that consultation means that not only are you listening, but you're willing to change the outcome, and so I recommend that the Minister consider whether, in fact, all 49 schools need the same thing, or whether only some of them need the program that he's offering.

I'd like to draw the attention of the Minister to the comments on this side about the need for adequate funding for school boards and district education authorities who are taking on a whole new year of education programming. I've already heard stories about a lack of resources in the schools that are limiting extra-curricular activities, and I think it would be a crying shame to do that at the expense, to have the older children pay for JK, so to speak, to have it at their expense.

I would like to echo my colleague Mr. Nadli's recommendation that we find a way for cooperation and coexistence. That is what I would like to see. I would like to thank all my colleagues who have spoken in support of this motion and request a recorded vote. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion as amended, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Ms. Green, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Moses, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod - Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod - Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Blake, Mr.

McNeely, Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Testart, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. Masi. The results of the recorded vote are 18 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstained. The motion is carried. The motion as amended has been carried.

---Carried

Masi. 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), Tabled Document 163-18(2) and Bills 6 and 8 with Member for Hay River North in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, and Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Childrens' Law Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We'll take a brief recess and consider the bills. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): I now call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016. I'll ask the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Just have a seat there. He can sit there, right?

All right. Committee, as I stated we've agreed to consider Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016. I will ask the Minister responsible to introduce the bill. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I am pleased to be here today to present Bill 6 --

---Laughter

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Minister Sebert, continue.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: -- the Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016. The purpose of Bill 6 is to amend various statutes of the Northwest Territories for which minor changes are proposed or errors or inconsistencies have been identified. Each amendment included in the bill had to meet the following criteria:

- it must not be controversial;
- it must not involve the spending of public funds;
- it must not prejudicially affect rights;
- it must not create a new offence or subject a new class of persons to an existing offence.

The departments responsible for the various statutes being amended have reviewed and approved the changes.

The amendments proposed in Bill 6 are minor, uncontroversial or non-substantive and many consist of technical corrections to a statute. The amendments are of such a nature that the preparation and legislative consideration of individual bills to correct each statute would be time consuming for the government and the Legislative Assembly. I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Social Development for its review of Bill 6 and would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have regarding the bill.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Social Development concluded its review of Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, on October 25, 2016 with a public hearing held here in the Legislative building.

The Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016 is an efficient, effective and fiscal-sensible mechanism to address minor non-substantial errors and inconsistencies in territorial legislation. Committee members are pleased to support this practical use of the government resources in an open and transparent manner to improve the quality, clarity and consistency of the territorial legislation. Individual Members may have additional comments or questions as we proceed with this consideration of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I would.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Minister, please introduce your witness to the Chamber.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My witness is Kelly McLaughlin, the director of legislation.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Thank you, Minister, and welcome. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 6. I see no general comments. Does committee agree that we concluded general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Does committee agree that we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. SIMPSON): Thank you, committee. We will defer the bill number and title until after the consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. I will call out the clause and if committee agrees please just respond "agree." Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Clause 1-14 inclusive

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee to the bill as a whole. Does committee agree that Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Bill 6 is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and thank you to your witness. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness from the Chamber. Committee, we have also agreed to consider Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act. I will ask the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. I am pleased to be here today to present Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act. Bill 8 amends the Children's Law Act to allow for the establishment of a child support recalculation service. This service will allow child support payment amounts to be automatically recalculated using parents' updated income information on an annual basis. This will reduce the need for parents to go to court when there are changes in their income.

It will be a free, simple, and transparent process for both parents and can help to reduce the conflict associated with variations of child support amounts. The recalculation service will also help to ensure that children receive adequate financial support.

There are currently nine jurisdictions in Canada with some form of recalculation service. It is important to ensure that NWT residents are provided with the type of family law supports that promote access to justice and are available to most Canadians. Additional amendments unrelated to the establishment of the service are also included in the bill. These changes are editorial in nature and are focused largely on modernizing language in the act. I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Social Development for its review of Bill 8. I would be pleased to answer any questions that the committee may have regarding the bill.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now turn to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Standing Committee on Social Development concluded its review of Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act, on October 25, 2016, with a public hearing held here in the Legislative Assembly building. Throughout the review of this bill, committee members were particularly interested in the future delivery of the in-house recalculation services by the Department of Justice.

These long-awaited amendments will bring positive, meaningful change to the lives of many of our constituents and their families and to Northerners at large, and the committee is pleased to support them. Individual Members may have additional comments or questions as we proceed with consideration of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, to my left, Emily Ingarfield, manager, policy and planning, and to my right, Thomas Drouin, legislative council.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and welcome to our witnesses. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 8. I see no general comments on Bill 8. Does committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): As there are 35 clauses, does committee agree that we group the clauses in groups of five?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1. Clauses 1 through 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clauses 6 through 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clauses 11 through 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clauses 16 to 20.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clauses 21 to 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clauses 26 to 30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clauses 31 to 35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Committee, to the bill as a whole. Does committee agree that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Bill 8 is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that

this concludes our consideration of Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Now, what is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There's a motion to report progress. The motion is on the floor and non-debatable. I will now rise and report progress. Does committee agree that we report progress?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bills 6 and 8. I would like to report that Bills 6 and 8 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do we have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Social Development Committee at 6:00 this evening. Orders of the day for Thursday, October 27, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 143-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2017-2018
 - Tabled Document 163-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2017-2018 for the Department of Public Works and Services and Department of Transportation
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourns until Thursday, October 27, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

