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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

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Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	2011
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	2011
145-18(2) – Progress in Negotiating Land, Resources and Self-Government Agreements (B. McLeod)	2011
146-18(2) – Western Canada Lottery and Sutcliffe Report (Cochrane)	2012
147-18(2) – Department of Justice Progress Report on Governance – Access and Privacy (Sebert)	2013
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	2014
New Behchoko Sports and Recreation Complex (O'Reilly)	2014
Fortieth Anniversary of Northern United Place (Green)	2015
Unified Vision and Strategy for the Northern Territories (Vanhuynne)	2015
Small Business Incentives (Testart).....	2016
Hockey Tournaments in Nahendeh (Thompson)	2016
Supports for Priority Hiring Candidates under the Affirmative Action Policy (Beaulieu)	2017
Benefits of Sport and Traditional Games for Indigenous Athletes (McNeely)	2018
Aklavik Road Repairs (Blake)	2018
Federal Review of Laws and Policies Related to Indigenous Peoples (Nakimayak).....	2019
Strategy for Revitalization of the Great Slave Lake Fishery (Simpson).....	2019
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	2020
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	2028
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	2028
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	2037
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	2038
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	2073
ORDERS OF THE DAY	2073

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 145-18(2): PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATING LAND, RESOURCES AND SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, national interest in a new relationship with Indigenous people is at an all-time high across Canada. We welcome that interest, and we invite Canadians to look north for a successful model of how to do that. The Government of the Northwest Territories has decades of experience working in partnership with Aboriginal governments to promote the best interests of Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents. We already know how to share jurisdiction, while respecting each other's rights and responsibilities. Canada does not need to reinvent the wheel; we are happy to share our wheel with them.

For 42 years, the Government of the Northwest Territories has worked to establish government-to-government relations with Aboriginal governments. Our government is a party to all six settled agreements and continues to participate actively in ongoing negotiations. We are committed to the full implementation of settled agreements and we continue to strengthen our relationship with Aboriginal governments through formal mechanisms like the intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to work to resolve outstanding land, resources, and self-government agreements during the term of our government. I would like to update Members and the public on the work our government is doing to fulfill that commitment. Concluding these

agreements and bringing increased certainty to land and resource management in the Northwest Territories is one of the most important challenges facing the 18th Legislative Assembly. Over the last year, all parties have made renewed efforts to tackle the remaining challenges and finalize agreements. As a result, I am confident that the 18th Legislative Assembly will see unprecedented success in this area.

Last fall, negotiators completed a full draft of a self-government agreement-in-principle for the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Tulita. The parties are now in the final stages of reviewing and considering the approval of the draft agreement. I am hopeful that negotiators will be in a position to initial the draft agreement-in-principle in the coming months, leading to the signing of the agreement this summer.

Similarly, negotiators for the parties have also completed an initial full draft of a Gwich'in self-government agreement-in-principle. Consultations with other potentially affected Aboriginal parties are complete, and negotiators will be arranging to meet to address any final issues and complete a final draft of the agreement-in-principle. The parties will then be in a position to consider approving the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, negotiators for the parties have also completed a full draft of a self-government agreement-in-principle for the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Norman Wells. Each party is currently reviewing the draft agreement, and consultations with other potentially affected Aboriginal parties are expected to commence soon.

I am also pleased to report that, having only just signed the agreement-in-principle in July of 2015, negotiators for the parties are working on the last few remaining issues to complete a full draft of an Inuvialuit self-government final agreement.

Self-government negotiations with the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Colville Lake have also begun and are looking at innovative approaches to expedite the completion of an agreement-in-principle. Similarly, self-government negotiations have had a promising start with the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Fort Good Hope.

Final agreement negotiations with the Acho Dene Koe First Nation of Fort Liard and the Northwest Territories Metis Nation have reached the point where key decisions on the central aspects involving settlement lands and land quantum and the approach to governance are before them. We hope the flexible and innovative approaches developed by the Government of the Northwest Territories will help parties quickly move to completed final agreements.

Over the coming months, the GNWT will continue to work hard to ensure that the momentum at these negotiating tables, along with all others that have been progressing well, are maintained so that final agreements are concluded as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, while the Government of the Northwest Territories has seen success in several negotiations, other processes have not moved as quickly as we would like. To address some of the challenges, the Government of the Northwest Territories has been implementing a more flexible and adaptive approach to advancing outstanding land claims in the Northwest Territories. Recognizing that not all negotiation processes face the same issues or challenges, approaches have been identified for each of the Government of the Northwest Territories' ongoing negotiations. Where appropriate, new direction has been provided in an effort to reinvent and reinforce relationships.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to establish a joint committee between Cabinet Ministers and Regular Members to share information and discuss approaches on the advancement of land, resources, and self-government agreements, as well as initiatives to enhance relationships with Aboriginal governments.

As Members are aware, the Joint Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Relations and Aboriginal Rights Agreements has been established and held its inaugural meeting this past October. We expect to meet again shortly, and I look forward to continuing to work with Members through this committee on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, an important aspect of our new approach was the joint appointment of ministerial special representatives for the Dehcho and the South Slave by myself and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the honourable Carolyn Bennett. The two ministerial special representatives have been tasked to talk to all of the parties involved in negotiations in these two areas, including the Dehcho First Nations, the Akaitcho, and the Northwest Territory Metis Nation, and provide advice to myself and Minister Bennett on any issues or roadblocks that continue to stand in the way of settling claims in these regions. I am

hopeful that the advice of the ministerial special representatives will highlight opportunities that will lead to breakthroughs and ultimately result in agreements. We are awaiting the final reports from both ministerial special representatives and expect they will guide us in both developing new flexible approaches and allow us to tackle new proposals that will put us back on the path towards agreements for these negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, our territory is built on partnerships and collaboration. A prime example of this occurred on September 1, 2016, with the Deline final self-government agreement coming into force and the creation of the Deline Got'ine Government. This significant milestone was achieved by governments working together and resulted in a made-in-the-North model for implementing the inherent right of self-government that follows the vision that the elders and leaders of Deline have held onto for many years. This model of governance is unique in Canada and reflects our commitment to develop new and innovative ways to implement Aboriginal rights.

Decisions about how the land and resources of the Northwest Territories are used and managed are central to the health of our communities, our economy, and our environment. Concluding these agreements is an essential step towards providing certainty on how land in the Northwest Territories can be used for economic development, conservation, recreation, and traditional activities. The Government of the Northwest Territories remains committed to doing its part to finalize land, resources, and self-government agreements as quickly as possible, in a manner that is fair, balanced, and continues to promote workable and affordable agreements that respect Aboriginal rights. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 146-18(2):
WESTERN CANADA LOTTERY AND SUTCLIFFE
REPORT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide an update on plans to move the operations of the Western Canada Lottery Program within government and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' response to the Sutcliffe Report.

In April 2015, the department commissioned the Government of the Northwest Territories: Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Review Report, also known as the Sutcliffe Report, to review the sector and provide advice on potential improvements. The Sutcliffe Report was tabled in November 2016.

The report included 18 recommendations for improvements. Of these, 12 were accepted, four were accepted with modifications, and two were not adopted. As part of the department's priority to strengthen relationships and improve communications with organizations and groups, we will be reviewing all of these recommendations with the appropriate partners. In addition, the department is actively working with our partners to respond to several of the recommendations through the development of a Northwest Territories Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Policy.

This new policy describes how Municipal and Community Affairs can most effectively fund its partner organizations in sport and recreation with Western Canada Lottery funding beginning in 2017-18. We will also proactively support the objectives and priorities set territorially by the Legislative Assembly and nationally by the Canadian Sport Policy, the Framework for Recreation in Canada, and Active Canada 20/20.

In response to feedback received from our partners on the draft policy, Municipal and Community Affairs has agreed to support the development of an additional sector-wide policy which will describe in more detail the activity which will take place among the partner organizations to support the mandate goals and objectives of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Work to develop this sector-wide policy will begin in April 2017 and will support the development of the Northwest Territories Physical Activity Strategy, which is currently under development.

One of the other key areas of focus for the department has been moving the Western Canada Lottery Program into Municipal and Community Affairs. It is important to note that the department has committed to ensuring that all proceeds from the lotteries will continue to be directed towards sport and recreation programming. The department is close to the completion of a legislative proposal that will set in motion the legislative amendments required to enact this change.

Municipal and Community Affairs is working hard to ensure that the recommendations included in the Sutcliffe Report are incorporated into the business of the department and the way we support our partners in sport and recreation to the benefit of all residents of the Northwest Territories. To this end, the department intends to present a comprehensive update on the implementation of the recommendations and the Western Canada Lottery Program funding framework to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 147-18(2):
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PROGRESS
REPORT ON GOVERNANCE ACCESS AND
PRIVACY

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, our government has committed in its mandate to improve access to information and the protection of privacy, which includes taking a number of steps. Today, I would like to provide an update on this work, starting with information on the comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The main purpose of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act is to make government departments and other public bodies more accountable to the public and to protect personal privacy. The act gives all members of the public the legal right to request information held by public bodies and to request a correction of their personal information. The legislation sets out when a public body may collect, use, and disclose personal information and when refusals to disclose records can occur. Finally, under the act, the NWT Information and Privacy Commissioner has the independent authority to review decisions that are made, including how a public body has collected, used, or disclosed personal information.

Since the act came into effect in 1996, there have been a number of changes in Canadian policies, practices, and legislation related to access to information or protection of privacy. Changes were made to the act in 2004 and again in 2005 to respond to issues that had been raised either in our Assembly, by the Privacy Commissioner, or by those who use this legislation in their day-to-day activities. However, the environment in which our access and privacy regime operates continues to evolve, and it is clear that further changes are required to the act to respond to changes in technology and a variety of other issues.

In the initial phase of the comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Department of Justice conducted extensive research into access and privacy legislation in other provinces and territories and undertook a detailed examination of our current legislation. Based on this research and considering the issues previously raised, the department reached out to other government departments, public bodies, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the public to get their views. The results were consolidated in the What We Heard report, which was released last November. These results, along with our research, are informing the development of a proposal for amendments to the act. This proposal will be completed this spring.

Our mandate commitment to improve access and privacy rights includes the creation of a GNWT privacy framework. The purpose of this framework is to provide government departments with the tools and structure that they need to administer the privacy protections in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act consistently and fairly. The framework builds on existing work, bringing together tools, practices, and policies that we already have.

This spring, in collaboration with other GNWT departments, the Department of Justice will complete the development of the framework. Once the framework and management programs are completed, they will be rolled out to all staff. Staff will receive training so they are aware of privacy requirements in the legislation and understand their role in protecting personal information.

The GNWT has also made a mandate commitment to create online access to information and protection of privacy training. This training is aimed at employees in GNWT departments as well as other public bodies. Upon completion of this short online course, staff will have a better understanding of the act, their obligations in relation to protection of privacy, the rights of residents to make an access request, and a number of simple steps that employees can take to protect the records and personal information they handle.

The Department of Justice currently provides this level of training face-to-face. The online course will not replace that training entirely, but it will make the information more accessible. It will also build awareness of privacy requirements in anticipation of more detailed training during the implementation of the privacy framework. The Department of Justice is currently testing this training, and plans to launch it on the justice website in March.

Before I complete my remarks today, I want to mention the GNWT Activity Report on the Administration of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This annual report provides statistical information on the volume of access requests received by the GNWT departments, the timeliness of the responses, and other matters related to administration of the act. For those who are interested, the 2016 version of this report is currently available on the Department of Justice website.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I just want to say that progress on these initiatives is a strong indication of this government's commitment to improving access to information and protection of privacy. I look forward to providing further information as these projects advance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEW BEHCHOKO SPORTS AND RECREATION COMPLEX

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. This past weekend I had the pleasure of playing hockey on the ice surface at the new Ko Gocho Complex in Behchoko. The WIMPs, or Weekly Improvement for Mediocre Players league, was invited to play a game on the new ice surface on Saturday evening with a team of young players from Behchoko. Special thanks to Dolphus Nitsiza and Chris Hunt for organizing the game. The WIMPS have been around since the early 1980s, and I am proud to say that I have been playing with them for 30 years. Yes, after 30 years I can still occasionally push the puck into the net, but more seriously, I say to young people, if you are still playing hockey at my age, that is a success story.

How about that Ko Gocho Complex in Behchoko? MLAs had a tour when we held a meeting in the community in January, but having tested the ice now, I can truly attest to its excellence. The original sports plex closed in 2007. Unfortunately, plans to renovate the building fell through. In 2013, the community voted in favour of borrowing \$9 million for a new complex. With contributions from the Tlicho and federal governments and the diamond mines, construction on the new complex started in August 2014. The \$15 million facility officially opened in November 2016. It is 50,000 square feet and includes a fitness centre, a youth centre, a kitchen, full gymnasium, ice surface, and offices. It employs 20 people. It hosts judo classes, movie nights, cooking lessons, and traditional sewing classes. The community is now positioned to host tournaments and events of territorial significance.

I cannot say enough good things about this facility and, quite frankly, it is the best all-in-one facility in the NWT. Congratulations to the chief and community of Behchoko for this fantastic facility, and I look forward to more opportunities to visit and play hockey.

I am pleased to say that I have no questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs today, but congratulate the department's efforts on supporting with this tremendous asset for the community of Behchoko and the whole NWT. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTHERN
UNITED PLACE

MS. GREEN: Mahsi. Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am going to talk about Northern United Place. Every day, hundreds of people walk its halls -- tenants in affordable housing, students in student housing and Aurora College classrooms, the staff of Yellowknife United Church, and residents from across the city who attend workshops, film screenings, meetings, and social events in the auditorium. Northern United Place is the heart of my riding, and in November the community came together to celebrate its 40th anniversary as a Yellowknife landmark.

Mr. Speaker, Reverend Jim Ormiston of Yellowknife United Church had a vision of creating a building that would serve the religious, housing, educational, and recreational needs of the growing community. He gathered support from the federal and territorial governments, and Northern United Place was built at a cost of just over \$5 million and officially opened in November 1976.

The block of units that faces toward downtown provides 84 affordable housing apartments for people or families who earn less than \$33,000 a year. Tenants pay 30 per cent of their gross household income on rent. Seniors are priority renters, along with people with disabilities. The people at Northern United often stay for years, even decades, because they are offered safety and community. The GNWT rented the commercial space that faces 54th Street, and that is now home to Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, on the other side of the building, the YWCA of Yellowknife occupied the floors of the tower that face the main street. For 20 years they provided transitional housing and a shelter for women fleeing violence, along with their offices. When the Y moved out, 42 housing units were allocated to Aurora College for their students. The main floor on this side includes the United and Lutheran churches, church offices, and the public gathering spaces that Yellowknifers know well. Northern United Place auditorium is the go-to, affordable gathering place for the community. If those walls could talk, the stories of community service, volunteerism, citizen engagement, and democratic opportunity our ears would hear.

Mr. Speaker, Northern United Place has been well served by its board, especially long-time chair Larry Elkin. It maintains the balancing act among tenants that keeps Northern United economically viable. The revenue from the commercial tenant makes affordable housing possible for low-income individuals and families, as well as low-cost rental

rates for the public spaces. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the board that operates Northern United Place, and best wishes for many more years of serving the community. Yellowknife would not be the same without you. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
UNIFIED VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE
NORTHERN TERRITORIES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, historically speaking, Canada doesn't put a lot of thought into what the three northern territories want. Over time, there have been a lot of decisions made for us, as Northerners, by the Government of Canada. Often we are not asked and are not even included in the conversation. The recent moratorium on exploration in the Beaufort is an example of a decision made about our own backyard, in Ottawa, with no consultation with us.

Mr. Speaker, we have three things that attract the nation's attention:

- Resources; our economic base and often seen as our contribution to the federation;
- Governance; strong systems and capacity to self-govern in our First Nations communities and as a territory with new powers under our devolution agreement; and
- Sovereignty; the "North." Its pristine land, fresh water, and crisp, clean air is iconic to the rest of the country and our national identity as "the true North strong and free,"

Mr. Speaker, I think in our relationship with the national government, we need to do better. We owe it to Northern residents to have a unified vision, our own priorities, and to articulate them clearly and strongly to Ottawa. We need to fight to have our vision respected and appreciated when the federal government makes plans affecting our region.

We need a northern vision that represents a clear, coherent approach to our vision as Northerners. We need to commit to the relationships, conversations, and decisions that support it. This is work that will take commitment and energy and people power from all five NWT regions, along with our sister territories and the federal government, to make happen.

From that vision, we can advance a comprehensive Northern strategy that will recognize the national need for sovereignty. It will reflect the needs of our people for expanding economic opportunity and promoting good governance. It will respect our treaties and the First Nation governments, language, and culture. It will prioritize health and our systems for caring for our children and our elders. It will provide opportunity to our young people to get a solid education and become contributors themselves to the vision and values we have created as a society. It will enshrine our respect for the earth.

Mr. Speaker the North we want will be a healthier, more secure, and prosperous land that will benefit all Northerners, but to get there our government has to be the lead on a unified vision for a new, sovereign, independent North. We have to take action to ensure that vision comes to life -- for the benefit of all Northerners and Canada as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SMALL BUSINESS INCENTIVES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, small business is the life blood of our community. My riding of Kam Lake is home to many entrepreneurs and is as diverse as it can be when it comes to Northern-owned and operated businesses. Even while much of our economy struggles, Yellowknifers are seizing their own opportunities to open new businesses with nothing but a dream and I imagine a good credit score.

Even though Kam Lakers and Northerners will grind and grit through difficult times with perseverance and resolve, it cannot be stated enough that that this government must give greater priority to building confidence in our economy through tangible support to our industries and real investment in Northwest Territories' small businesses. Many of my constituents are the owners of these small businesses and they need real reassurance that this government's focus is not based solely on the big corporations who run the mines, but equally on the local suppliers who keep the mines running.

In the recent budget address, the Minister of Finance spoke of the need to create an environment that supports innovation and risk-taking for Northwest Territories residents and businesses to build a lasting economy, as well as the need to support the expansion and diversification of the economy.

I agree almost entirely with these aspirations, but I would also like to inform my honourable friend across the aisle that innovation, risk-taking, and diversity already exist in our economy, but will deplete over time unless we invest immediately in the Northerners, who already exemplify these qualities.

Mr. Speaker, we can start now by implementing my continued suggestion of lowering the small business tax and fulfilling our mandate commitment to lower the taxes on small business. Why stop there by merely lowering it 1 per cent, Mr. Speaker? We could follow the suggestions of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, lower it by an additional 2 per cent, or what our neighbours to the Yukon have pledged to do and eliminate it entirely.

Mr. Speaker, our businesses are looking for that tangible symbol of support, and I say now is the time to deliver on that commitment and lower the taxes once and for all. It's imperative to the economic health of the Northwest Territories that we do not lose pace with competitiveness and ensure that we continue to be the best place in Canada's North to invest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOCKEY TOURNAMENTS IN NAHENDEH

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past two months, the community of Fort Simpson held three hockey tournaments. Starting January 20, three teams from Fort Simpson faced off against teams from Hay River, Fort Providence, and Deline during the 30th annual senior men's hockey tournament.

The fans got to see some amazing hockey, with an ultimate win for the Hay River Huskies over the team from Deline in the final. The Huskies played Fort Providence in the semi-finals. After 60 minutes the game was tied; overtime didn't solve anything, so both teams went to a shootout.

Mr. Speaker, the Deline Braves had a slow start to the tournament because of travel delays. Due to the delays, they had to forfeit their first round robin game, but made up for it over the rest of the weekend by winning all their games except the final game.

The third and fourth games saw two rivals playing against each other. It was a great game that saw the play go back and forth. In the end, the Nahanni Inn Flyers won the game 2-0 against the Fort Providence Bulls.

The next weekend, January 27-29, saw some of the finest women's hockey players come together to battle for the annual Moosehide Mammias hockey tournament. The tournament saw teams from Yellowknife, Fort Nelson, and Fort Smith duke it out with the Mammias. As the weekend before, the fans were entertained with some of the best women's hockey. After the round robin, the Mammias were in fifth place. The semi-finals saw Fort Nelson win against Yellowknife Blue, and Yellowknife White won against Fort Smith. The final game saw YK White beat the Fort Nelson Icehawks to win the tournament, with YK Blue winning the third place consolation game.

Mr. Speaker, with these two tournaments completed, you would think that the community, fans, and organizers would be happy with all the hockey they witnessed these two weekends. No, this past weekend the community and the two hockey associations decided that they should host the first Dehcho Old-Timers Tournament.

The tournament saw two local teams and a team from Hay River play a double round robin starting February 24, and the playoffs on Sunday. After the round robin was completed, Fort Simpson Nogh's team ended up in first place, leaving Hay River and the Fort Simpson Flyers to battle it out for the right to play in the finals. After all the smoke cleared, Hay River ended up winning the tournament.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that each hockey group, including Minor Hockey, worked together to organize and run these tournaments. It was great to see the groups come together to offer three great events. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues. I would like to say the fans were entertained with some great hockey, especially the Old-Timers Tournament, where they got to witness those young gentlemen skate their hearts out.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the sponsors, community and regional businesses, for their support. I would like to say a big thanks to the referees from Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Simpson, who did a great job at all three weekends. As well, to the rec staff and the groups that ran the canteen. A+ job. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTS FOR PRIORITY HIRING CANDIDATES UNDER THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'll do a follow-up to questions that I had asked the Minister of Human Resources about Affirmative Action some time ago.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget, the government is planning to incorporate the Department of Human Resource into the Department of Finance. The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning has expressed its concern that the newly amalgamated department will not ensure that proper attention is paid to human resources.

Mr. Speaker, the government must look at different, more innovative ways to deliver on the Affirmative Action Policy. I believe that all GNWT departments need to complete a human resources development plan to accurately plan for and track the hiring of Aboriginal people into the public service. The purpose should be to produce concrete, measurable improvements to get more Indigenous Aboriginal people into the public service and advance those who are already employed.

Mr. Speaker, we should be doing all we can to hire and advance these Priority 1 candidates. We should be giving them support and encouragement to get them on board and give them the opportunities for growth. Unfortunately, all too many Priority 1 candidates feel like they're applying for jobs for a foreign government.

For the implementation of the Affirmative Action Policy to be successful, the government should know, on a department-by-department basis, how many Priority 1 and Priority 2 candidates each department has, and the potential for those individuals to move into senior-level positions with the GNWT.

The government should know where each of its priority candidates lives, and design its Human Resource Development Plan with targets appropriate for each community.

Let's take Yellowknife, for example. We know that the Aboriginal people with Priority 1 status make up 18.5 per cent of the total workforce in the capital, yet the number of Indigenous Aboriginal people employed in Yellowknife is only 16 per cent. In order for the GNWT to be representative of the people it serves, it needs to increase priority hires in Yellowknife by 50 or 55 people.

Knowing this, the GNWT should be working to identify those in the public service who can be supported to take on jobs with greater experience, opening up more entry-level positions for new hires.

This kind of analysis and planning should be happening on a community-by-community basis. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal people represent 50 per cent of the population in the Northwest Territories, yet only 31 per cent of the GNWT's workforce is made of Indigenous Aboriginal people.

The bottom line is that the GNWT must know its human resource numbers. It must know the potential for each and every Aboriginal employee currently in the workforce in order to maximize their talents, and it must take steps to welcome new Aboriginal people into the public service. Only then can we resolve the issue of Aboriginal people feeling like they do not belong in the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BENEFITS OF SPORT AND TRADITIONAL GAMES FOR INDIGENOUS ATHLETES

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past weekend, Yellowknife hosted the Indigenous Volleyball and Traditional Games for members who participated. In the Sahtu, we saw three or four teams. This is an example of the many programs offered by this government to the rural and smaller communities, and in reality you really see the smiling faces when the children are playing ball or Indigenous games down by the bay, and one realizes that there is true value to the programs offered by this government.

I also want to thank the chaperones from Tulita, Don Witle and Lawrence Meneco, for taking the preparation efforts and fundraising for this event, which comes annually, and to the discount fares of Air North. Colville Lake has seen a team, and you also should have seen the children's faces when they did come to this large centre here.

The many offerings that this large centre has to offer is another example of the smaller communities enjoying the freedom of some of these reduced efforts and programming to visit the pretty lights of Yellowknife and come to enjoy the many diners offered to the children and youth.

Having said that, I have come to realize the many programs that this government has to offer and come to realize that we continue to try to better run efficient programs, even though we are going through our budget deliberations on reducing our

fiscal position. I look forward to deliverance of the programs offered within this year's budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the public in the gallery. We have Mr. Jim Antoine. He is a former Premier, former Minister, former Member for the Nahendeh riding. Masi for joining us. Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AKLAVIK ROAD REPAIRS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, repairs are required to maintain one of the main roads in Aklavik. The biggest road is falling apart due to riverbank erosion. Funding is the main thing needed. Some work has been done in the past, but more is needed.

Mr. Speaker, this community road is important not just to residents, but to the Northwest Territories. In 1912, the Pokiak and Greenland families founded the small community around a remote Hudson's Bay trading post on a bend in the Mackenzie River.

With the increase in the price of furs around the turn of the last century, small Hudson's Bay Company posts were springing up across our vast region, establishing many of the communities that many of our residents call home today.

Mr. Speaker, within 10 years of being established, Aklavik had an Anglican church, an Anglican mission, and became the Western Arctic headquarters for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Air mail service arrived in 1929, when the famous Punch Dickins landed an airplane in Aklavik for the first time. In the early 1930s, the Mad Trapper, Albert Johnson, put Aklavik on the map in one of the most famous manhunts in Canadian history. The Mad Trapper's grave is prominently marked in the Aklavik cemetery and continues to attract significant interest to this day.

Mr. Speaker, at one time this busy little community had two hospitals, a Roman Catholic mission, a Royal Canadian Signal Corp station, and a small experimental farm that produced wheat, barley, and vegetables. It even had a small dairy herd.

Mr. Speaker, Aklavik has always had trouble with flooding and erosion. In 1953, the Government of Canada recommended moving the entire population of 1,600 people east to Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. By 1960, most of the people had gone, but some remained true to the community's motto: "Never say die." Mr. Speaker, once again, repairs are needed to build up areas of shoreline erosion that is threatening one of the main roads in Aklavik.

Mr. Speaker, we may ask: Is it worth it? When we consider all the things Aklavik has done for the NWT and for the Delta and all the things Aklavik is today, it makes sense to repair Bickish Road in the community.

Is it worth it, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of MACA later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL REVIEW OF LAWS AND POLICIES RELATED TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of Canada's commitment to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently announced a review of laws and policies related to Indigenous peoples.

A working group made up of six Ministers who have significant responsibilities for the relevant statutes and policies to be reviewed will examine federal laws, policies, and operational practices to help ensure the Crown is meeting its constitutional obligations with respect to Indigenous and treaty rights, adhering to international human rights standards, and supporting implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

The Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada will chair the working group. The Ministers will work with Indigenous leaders, youth, and experts on various legal and policy questions relating to Indigenous peoples.

The group will develop a rigorous work plan and principles, which will reflect a whole-of-government approach to address all Indigenous peoples.

Mr. Speaker, this policy is important work to the Northwest Territories, where the majority of the Aboriginal population is Indigenous. We are negotiating and implementing land claim and self-government agreements and consulting with Indigenous governments as a first order of business when developing policy and legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories can contribute significantly to the working group's goal of a complete renewal of Canada's nation-to-nation

relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STRATEGY FOR REVITALIZATION OF THE GREAT SLAVE LAKE FISHERY

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I usually stand up here and talk about what the government is doing wrong. The way I see it, that is my job. It is the job of the Ministers to stand up and talk about everything they are doing right. Mr. Speaker, today I thought I would give the government a break and actually celebrate the good work they are doing.

Yesterday, the GNWT released its strategy for revitalizing the Great Slave Lake commercial fishery in Hay River. It was unveiled by the Minister of ITI and the president of the NWT Fisherman's Federation. The unveiling was attended by local fishermen, both of Hay River's MLAs, and Town of Hay River councillors and representatives, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Hay River, the media, and local residents. The development of the strategy, which has been years in the making, has been a collaborative effort between the government and the Fisherman's Federation. The strategy forecasts sales to increase from about \$1 million to \$6 million over the five-year rollout, but that is just the beginning. If we consider the possibilities for secondary products, we could be looking at an industry worth tens of millions of dollars in the future.

I am usually not a fan of strategies or action plans, because I see them as an excuse to plan rather than to do. I am happy to say that I have seen the work that ITI officials are doing in the South Slave in conjunction with local fishermen, and although the strategy was just unveiled, the work is well under way. There is still much to be done, but I see sunny days ahead for the commercial fishing industry in Hay River and the NWT.

That is it, Mr. Speaker. No cheeky comments, just a bit of good news and a kudos to the department and my fellow MLA from Hay River. Thank you.

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

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2): YOU ARE STANDING FOR YOUR PEOPLE: REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' CONDUCT GUIDELINES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its report on the review of Members' conduct guidelines entitled "You Are Standing for Your People."

Introduction

It is a priority of the 18th Legislative Assembly to promote and ensure, to the greatest extent possible, a high standard of personal and public conduct for current and future Members. To that end, Motion 6-18(1) was passed on December 17, 2015:

Whereas the Members of the 18th Legislative Assembly are mindful that it is an honour and a privilege to serve the people of the Northwest Territories as legislators;

And whereas the trust and confidence the people have placed in conferring this office upon us demands the highest standard of conduct, integrity and honour;

And whereas Members are resolved to do our utmost to hear the voices of all our people; preserve our traditions and bridge them with new ways to build our future; provide legislation, policies and services for the good of the people as individuals, families and communities; promote the equality of all our people; distribute resources fairly and justly; and respect and honour our land and all its inhabitants;

And whereas Members recognize that we owe to this legislature respect as well as dedication to ensuring the integrity of our government and to earning the confidence of the people;

And whereas Members recognize that we owe to our constituents our best efforts at effective representation as well as accountability, honesty, fairness and courtesy;

And whereas Members recognize that we owe to the public a responsibility to work for the well-being of all residents of the Northwest Territories;

And whereas Members recognize that we owe to our colleagues fairness and respect for differences,

and the duty to work together with goodwill for the common good;

And whereas, Members are resolved not to act, nor condone others to act, in ways which are dishonest or which exploit, slander or discriminate against others;

And whereas Members acknowledge a vision and a responsibility to improve the lives of our people and to act in creative ways to overcome the hardships which destroy life and hope and the human frailties which fall upon us;

And whereas Members are resolved to respect and abide by the laws of Canada and the Northwest Territories and will not act in ways which will violate these laws;

And whereas paragraph 75(a) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act provides that each Member shall perform his or her duties of office and arrange his or her private affairs in such a manner as to maintain public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the Member;

And whereas past Assemblies have seen fit to adopt principles to guide Members' conduct;

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that this 18th Legislative Assembly formally adopts the Members' Conduct Guidelines as appended and which forms part of this resolution;

And further that each Member of the Legislative Assembly shall sign a copy of the Members' Conduct Guidelines before the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who shall make all signed copies available to the public through the Legislative Library and by posting signed copies on the Assembly website;

And furthermore, that this Assembly refer the Members' Conduct Guidelines to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for a comprehensive and public review, including a thorough examination of conduct guidelines from other jurisdictions, both parliamentary and non-parliamentary organizations, all relevant legislation, and the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, and that the Standing Committee report back to this Assembly during the fall sitting of 2016.

The committee notes that the referral motion directs a review of Members' Conduct Guidelines as part of a broader framework governing Members'

behaviour. The purpose of this report is to recommend ways to strengthen that matrix, and through it, public confidence in the Legislative Assembly. The committee held public hearings in Inuvik on November 29, 2016; Hay River on December 1st, and Yellowknife on December 6th, preceded by an interim report presented on October 25, 2016. The committee also solicited written submissions. Eight were received and posted on the committee's webpage. The committee heard repeatedly that Members of the Legislative Assembly must set and live up to the highest standards of conduct, and be accountable and available to their constituents.

Members' conduct and eligibility for office are regulated by a matrix of laws and the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. These include Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Northwest Territories Elections and Plebiscites Act, as well as the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Assembly's Oath of Office, Members' Conduct Guidelines, Rules of the Legislative Assembly, standards set by the Assembly's Board of Management, and authorities established through parliamentary privilege. While this sounds complicated, the various rules apply through the linear course of candidacy, membership in the Assembly, and after a Member's term ends. This report generally follows that chronology.

Eligibility for Office in the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides that every citizen has the right to vote in elections for members of the House of Commons or Legislative Assembly and to "be qualified for membership therein." The right to run for office may only be limited in ways justifiable in a free and democratic society. Court decisions to date show that such restrictions, when challenged, are carefully scrutinized to determine if they are absolutely necessary to ensuring confidence in the electoral process.

Within those parameters, provinces and territories set qualifications for candidates running for election. In the Northwest Territories (NWT), the Elections and Plebiscites Act, and the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act define who is an eligible candidate for election and who may serve in the Legislative Assembly.

Generally, a person is eligible to be a candidate if he/she is a Canadian citizen, is at least 18 years old, and has been a resident of the Northwest Territories for at least 12 months.

Current legislation disqualifies candidates or Members convicted and imprisoned as a result of a criminal offence; the disqualification ends when the term of incarceration ends. The disqualification does not include offences that do not result in jail sentences. Such matters fall to the Legislative Assembly's rules, conduct guidelines, and use of parliamentary privilege to discipline or expel its Members.

The Elections and Plebiscites Act also includes a five-year prohibition of anyone convicted of a major election offence from being elected or sitting as a Member, voting, or holding office appointed by the Commissioner or Legislative Assembly. These offences include such conduct as voting more than once, intentional miscounts, knowingly making false statements about a candidate's character, attempting to intimidate or compel a person not to run for election, and others. This prohibition is consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions, including elections for Parliament. It is a very significant prohibition, as it is a mechanism to ensure both the integrity of elections and public confidence in them. The five-year prohibition takes into account the typical four-year election cycle and the seriousness of violations of the public trust in elections.

The majority of public submissions to the committee argued that these restrictions set too low a bar for candidates for the Legislative Assembly, too low a bar for leadership of our territory. People accurately pointed out that in our system of consensus government there is almost no screening of candidates as is carried out by parties in other jurisdictions. In the Northwest Territories, anyone who meets the basic qualifications for candidacy must also present a nomination paper signed by 15 elector residents of the district. Our minimal requirements for candidacy make our elections very open compared to other jurisdictions, but can also result in candidates who would likely be screened out as unsuitable by parties in other jurisdictions.

For example, the Liberal Party's national rules for the selection of candidates require them to sign and comply with a code of conduct, to answer a lengthy questionnaire, provide a credit check, documentation of criminal record (if any), and consent to extensive background checks. All candidates are subject to party approval.

A potential solution for this deficit in the NWT was offered at the committee's hearing in Hay River, where a recommendation was made for an independent special committee to screen candidates, using set guidelines. A complementary option is for Elections NWT to require potential

candidates to file information similar to what Canadian political parties require for candidates.

Another practice used by political parties is to require candidates to endorse a code of conduct covering the election period to the day a successful candidate takes his or her oath of office. This gap was identified as problematic in submissions to the committee, and Members agree. Implementation of these ideas would require amendments to the Elections and Plebiscites Act.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to provide that, during the election period, candidates declare compliance with a code of conduct including the duties to abide by the laws of the Northwest Territories and Canada; to conduct his or herself with honesty, integrity, and respect for others; and to refrain from actions that would upon election create or be perceived to create a conflict of interest as set out in section 74 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Mr. Speaker, the next part of the committee's report will be read by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, some presenters to the committee pointed to jobs with higher standards, including requirements for criminal record checks, than those for candidates for our legislature. Others argued that anyone with a criminal record and who had not been pardoned should be denied the right to run for office for two to five years. Some suggested that only persons who had committed very serious criminal offenses should be subject to such a restriction, particularly those guilty of violent crimes. It was also recommended that persons convicted of criminal offenses involving violence or threats of violence against a person over whom the offender was in a position of "trust, authority, or intimacy" should be ineligible for office five years after completing their period of incarceration.

This advice was given with reference to epidemic levels of family violence in the NWT and its northern neighbours and high rates of crime in general. Some of this violence is the sad, long-term by-product of the last 200 years of our history, a history of colonization, and devastating outbreaks of influenza and tuberculosis, sickness, and alcohol addiction, suppression of culture and language, and residential schools rife with physical, sexual, and mental abuse. Healing has been held back by rapid

changes in northern cultures, the historically transient nature of much of the non-Aboriginal population, lack of jobs in many communities, poor housing, and low educational achievement.

Our territory's history is also one of transcendence, of harmony with the land and its lessons, and of determination to reassert Indigenous peoples' rights and cultures. Visionary leaders have emerged and made remarkable contributions to a stronger, healthier NWT. For the past 40 years, a strong movement has grown to overcome addictions and mental health conditions born of a turbulent past and today's social challenges. Today's statistics show that this healing remains a work in progress across our society.

In a typical year, police in the NWT report more than 19,000 alleged Criminal Code violations, excluding traffic. While there are multiple violations alleged of some individuals, this is a large number for a population of 44,000. This figure includes approximately 2,500 reported assaults, about 200 of them sexual assaults. The rate of reported family violence is almost eight times the national average, exceeded in Canada only by Nunavut's numbers. Notably, the numbers of official reported sexual assault allegations in the NWT is artificially low due to 30 per cent of complaints being judged as "unfounded" by RCMP, according to a recent investigation by The Globe and Mail covering the period from 2010 through 2016. The national average is 19 per cent. The rate in Terrace, BC, a northern community comparable in size and demography to Yellowknife, is 12 per cent.

Given the rates of violent crime in the NWT, what is the probability of being a victim at some point in one's life? A five-year research project led by the YWCA found that intimate-partner violence "is pervasive and normalized" in the NWT. A map showing numbers of incidents reveals that intimate-partner violence is common in most of our communities and municipalities. In a 2007 survey by the NWT Bureau of Statistics, 88 per cent of respondents across the NWT were either very worried or somewhat worried about family violence in their community. The YWCA's 2016 report, Hush Hush No More, documents the devastating impacts of this violence and the consequences of silence, and provides practical recommendations for change.

The NWT's Chief Coroner has repeatedly called attention to the number of homicides involving domestic violence. Most recently in December 2016, Cathy Menard informed CBC News that four of five homicides in 2015 involved family or intimate-partner violence. "Whether I'm talking about homicides or suicides, family and domestic

violence is part of a lot of our cases," Ms. Menard told the CBC.

In Canada, seven of 10 victims of family violence in 2014 were women and girls according to Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, which also found that approximately three-quarters of all incidents of domestic violence are not reported. These are grave indicators of crisis in our society.

The YWCA and others suggest that the Legislative Assembly should lead "a departure from silence and a strong normative statement about leadership. We want family violence to become socially unacceptable. We want extended families to step in to stop violence and support their family members toward change, not silence or denial." This is a clear call for help, a call for healing, a call for a healthier society in which families can prosper.

Committee members agree that violence, particularly family violence, is far too common in the NWT. Domestic violence causes family breakdowns and undermines communities; it is a tremendous burden on the victims and offenders. Family- and intimate-partner violence is a fundamental violation of trust -- the trust between people who most depend on each other. The damage to children who are direct victims or witness this violence is well-known and cyclical. Children from violent homes have higher risks of alcohol and drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and adult criminality. The damage often spans multiple generations, becoming a "fact of life" for far too many people.

On another level, family violence perpetuates and compounds historical wrongs, deepens societal inequities, and taxes our health and justice systems. Every Member elected to the Legislative Assembly hears a great deal about these issues from constituents and in carrying out their duties as Regular Members and Ministers, and must make decisions for the common good.

During the committee's hearings, members of the public reminded us that there have been Members of the Legislative Assembly who had committed crimes. There is currently no impediment in law to anyone who has served his or her sentence to becoming a candidate, and this is generally the case across Canada. Some presenters to the committee also noted that a truly rehabilitated offender might be capable of exemplary leadership, and, if they became a candidate, their transformation should be assessed by the voters.

Once in office, an elected Member is subject to the Members' Conduct Guidelines which require him/her, in part, to:

Hear the voices of all our people...promote the equality of all our people...respect our land and all its inhabitants...To the Legislature, I owe respect as well as dedication to my role in ensuring the integrity of our government and in earning, through my actions, the confidence of the people...To the public, I owe a responsibility to work for the public well-being of all residents of the Northwest Territories...I will respect and abide by the laws of Canada and the Northwest Territories, and I will not act in ways which violate these laws.

These guidelines clearly cover Criminal Code offenses, which include family violence and threats of violence. All Members of the 18th Assembly signed these guidelines upon taking office and unanimously agree that these standards must be met.

The committee heard that candidates for the Assembly should be held to similar standards. Such a proposal must pass legal muster as a justifiable limit on an individual's Charter right to "be qualified for membership" in the Legislative Assembly. The committee proposes to meet this threshold by adding a reasonable and narrow qualification for candidacy for a five-year period, consistent with the length of current restrictions on those convicted of major offenses under the Elections and Plebiscites Act.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to include a five-year limit on eligibility for candidacy for anyone convicted of an offence of violence or threats of violence under the Criminal Code of Canada and who has not received a pardon or record suspension; and,

Where the offence was committed against a person over whom the accused was determined by the presiding judge to be in a position of trust, authority, or intimacy; and,

If applicable, that the limitation not apply to offences committed before the coming-into-force date of this amendment; and,

That a consequential amendment of section 6 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act ensure consistency of qualification of sitting Members and candidates.

The committee does not propose to retroactively apply the recommended limitation. While the limit may not deter any criminal offences, committee members feel strongly that no limit should be

placed on the candidacy of a person as a result of offences committed before such a provision becomes law. Our report is focused on improving accountability into the future.

It was suggested during the committee's hearings that a restriction of the type proposed may be discriminatory to Indigenous peoples due to their over-representation in the justice system. There is no doubt that a disproportionate number of offenders in the NWT are of Indigenous descent; it is another tragic consequence of northern history, outlined above. There are also allegations of racial bias in the justice system. However, no presenter at the committee's hearings provided evidence showing that rates of domestic violence convictions are disproportionately higher among individuals of any ethnicity. No such statistics are readily available in the NWT or Canada. Domestic violence is an issue in our society as a whole and particularly in the NWT. It is the committee's opinion that its proposed qualification for candidacy does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of ethnicity.

It is well-known that crimes involving domestic violence are heavily gender-weighted; those charged are predominantly male. According to RCMP G Division statistics provided to the Coalition on Family Violence men were charged in 1,897 of 2,316 or 82 per cent of cases involving domestic violence from 2008 through 2012. Note that these are the number of charges, not the number of individuals charged. However, this rate suggests that men are more likely to be affected by the committee's proposed qualification for candidacy than women.

This is by no means evidence that the proposal is discriminatory; it is simply a fact that the offences in question are most often committed by men. Similarly, it is a fact that far fewer women than men run for territorial office; that only 10 of 60 candidates in the 2015 election were women; that the typical elected Legislative Assembly is comprised of two women among the 19 members. From these facts, one cannot conclude that the electoral process is discriminatory against women, although it may be, for various reasons. The committee is confident that its recommended qualification on candidacy would not result in an under-representation of men in the NWT electoral process.

Mr. Speaker, I will now ask the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh to continue reading the committee's report.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker.

Oath of Office

Sworn oaths of office obligate Members to a standard of conduct. The Legislative Assembly's oaths of office for Members and Ministers are set out in Schedule B of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. For example:

"I, (Member's name), do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will duly and faithfully and to the best of my skill and knowledge execute the powers and trust reposed in me as a Member of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. So help me God."

Members' and Ministers' oaths are sworn before the Commissioner with due ceremony and gravity, generally with close family present, in a televised proceeding in the Chamber. This is an excellent practice that attracts considerable public attention; it can be better used to promote a high standard of conduct.

The committee recommends that a more substantial oath of office be adopted to increase Members' focus and public attention to matters of conduct by linking the oath to additional duties, standards, and statutory requirements set out elsewhere. Newfoundland and Labrador's Oath of Office is a good example, featuring specific links to the province's Elections Act and the Assembly's Code of Conduct. It is easily adapted for use in our system.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Legislative Assembly's Oath of Office be revised in Schedule B of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act as follows:

I, (Member's name) do swear (or affirm) that:

- a) I am fully qualified to hold the office of Member for the district of _____ to which I have been elected;
- b) I have not knowingly contravened the Elections and Plebiscites Act respecting any matter in relation to my election;
- c) I will faithfully, to the best of my ability, perform the duties and responsibilities of my office and will not allow any direct or indirect monetary or other personal or private interest to influence my conduct or affect my duties in public matters;
- d) I hereby affirm, subscribe to, and agree to follow the Members' Conduct Guidelines (or Members' Code of Conduct, if applicable) adopted by the Legislative Assembly. (In the case where the oath is sworn, add "So help me god.")

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will now hand this over to the honourable Member for Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Thebacha.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker.

Members' Conduct Guidelines

The Legislative Assembly established the Members' Conduct Guidelines during the 12th Assembly. Subsequent Assemblies have each formally adopted them (except the 15th). The Members' Conduct Guidelines were amended in the first days of the 18th Assembly for greater emphasis on effective representation, to reaffirm Members' duty to arrange their private matters so as to maintain the trust and confidence of the public, and to include a pledge to abide by the laws of the land.

For the first time, Members of the 18th Assembly formally signed copies of the Members' Conduct Guidelines before the Clerk. These signed copies are publicly available and posted on the Assembly's website. (See Appendix A)

Despite the high standards set out for Members' conduct, most are broadly described and aspirational in nature. Some standards could be improved. For example, few would object to the intent of the requirement that:

"I will not act nor condone others to act in ways which exploit, slander, or discriminate against others. I will not act nor condone others to act in ways which are dishonest or which exploit positions of privilege for personal gain."

However, it is unclear what action this provision requires of a Member with respect to misconduct by others. If this aspect of the provision is to remain, it should provide more specific guidance to Members. The committee sees no inherent conflict in a code of conduct containing both aspirational and prescriptive conduct.

Several people at the committee's public hearings advised that attendance should be specifically addressed in the Members' Conduct Guidelines or code of conduct; it was suggested that Members should be accountable for their attendance during their terms. Certainly, chronic absence is undesirable and represents an impediment to fully effective consensus government. The current guidelines state:

"To my constituents, I owe my best efforts at effective representation as well as accountability, honesty, fairness, and courtesy. To the legislature, I owe respect as well as dedication to my role in ensuring the integrity of our government."

This standard leaves attendance to each Member's judgment with respect to its relationship to his/her "best efforts at effective representation" and "dedication". If the Members' Conduct Guidelines are revised, amendment of this section could be considered, but with the understanding that specific rules are set out in legislation. The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act regulations require Members' attendance to be recorded and regularly tabled in the Assembly by the Speaker for the information of constituents and the general public. These records are posted on the Assembly's website under both Tabled Documents and Members' Accountability -- Absences. However, there is currently no penalty for absences of any type. The rules respecting Members' absences are included in the Members' Handbook, adopted by the Assembly's Board of Management as its record of official policy. If it is the collective will of Members to change these rules, the matter is best addressed through the Board of Management.

The term Members' Conduct "Guidelines" implies that the conduct described may be optional. Guidelines also imply a lack of enforceability, which is misleading. The Legislative Assembly has full authority to regulate its internal affairs and discipline Members for misconduct or other inappropriate behaviour. Implementation of Recommendation 3 would also improve the enforceability of the Members' Conduct Guidelines (or the more appropriately titled Code of Conduct) by adding the duty to follow them to the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Members' Conduct Guidelines serve as the basis for a new Members' Code of Conduct including more specific and enforceable provisions; and that the new code be presented to the Assembly for consideration and adoption.

In the event of breaches of the current guidelines, a wide range of sanctions and penalties are available, right up to imprisonment and loss of seat in the Assembly. However, it is difficult to enforce a code of conduct without an established system to deal with complaints or a designated body to investigate them. The committee outlined several options in its interim report. Three models of enforcement were considered:

- Internal regulation by the Assembly;
- External regulation by a judicial body; and,
- Creation of an independent commissioner who reports to a parliamentary committee.

The committee considered the likely efficiency, expense, and consequences of these methods in service of our small legislature, where complaints, we trust, will be few in number. It is nevertheless essential that any and all complaints be addressed promptly, fairly, and with integrity. The system of handling complaints must not itself be a barrier to making a complaint, for a Member or a member of the public.

Our current accountability system features an independent Conflict of Interest Commissioner who is a statutory officer of the Legislative Assembly. His/her authority, set out in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, is weighted toward financial matters, contracts, and private interests, though it also covers gifts and favours, nepotism, and outside activities. In addition, the Act establishes an overarching requirement for a Member to “perform his or her duties of office and arrange his or her private affairs in such a manner as to maintain public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the member.” Thus the Conflict of Interest Commissioner already has authority related to some provisions of the current Members’ Conduct Guidelines.

The qualifications and skills required of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner are very much akin to those of an ethics commissioner, who could be tasked with oversight of a Members’ Code of Conduct or even our current Members’ Conduct Guidelines. Notably, investigation of alleged conflict-of-interest by Members is currently triggered by complaints, which may be made by a Member or any other person. The committee notes that other provincial assemblies have statutory officers whose duties include oversight of both conflict-of-interest matters and their code of conduct. Newfoundland and Labrador’s Commissioner of Legislative Standards is one such example.

The committee was urged to recommend broad new powers for a combined Ethics and Conflict of Interest Commissioner, including the ability to conduct “regular, unannounced audits of the activities of the people under his/her jurisdiction. This would include audits of bank accounts including during post-office-holding cooling-off periods, to track suspicious transactions.” This degree of Commissioner-as-police-investigator is not necessary, represents a serious challenge to his/her neutrality, and is not what the committee envisions.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act be amended to expand the duties of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to

include oversight of the Members’ Conduct Guidelines or Code of Conduct; that the Commissioner be empowered to receive and investigate complaints from a Member or any other person respecting breaches of prescribed conduct, and to recommend sanctions or penalties, as appropriate, to the Speaker; and, that the newly-constituted commissioner be known as the Ethics Commissioner.

Fostering a Culture of Ethical Conduct

An effective system of regulating Members’ conduct encourages integrity at all levels. If another Member knows of an alleged breach of conduct, he/she has a duty to raise the matter, in an official complaint if necessary. Similarly, members of the public with reason to suspect misconduct have a civic duty to register an official complaint that could trigger investigation.

The committee believes that adoption of its recommendations would represent positive steps toward fostering a culture of ethical conduct. Committee members plan to promote understanding of the contents of this report through conventional and social media, and in the Assembly itself. Discussion of this report is a valuable first step.

These will be recurring opportunities if the committee’s recommendations are adopted, as changes to both the Elections and Plebiscites Act and the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act would be necessary. The Assembly’s public review of a proposed new and improved Code of Conduct is also likely to attract wide interest.

If and when the changes outlined in this report are adopted, the committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly promote them in the media and ensure that information is easily located on its website, with useful links under the “Members’ Accountability” section. These should include a link to the description of Conflict of Interest Commissioner’s (or the recommended Ethics Commissioner’s) duties, now under “Statutory Officers.” Clear instructions should be provided on how to register a complaint about a conflict of interest or a breach of the Members’ Code of Conduct, or Conduct Guidelines, as the case may be.

Members now review their circumstances and statutory declarations annually with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. These meetings also serve as an annual reminder of each Member’s obligations. If the proposed Ethics Commissioner is created, annual meetings will afford an opportunity to reinforce understanding of the Members’ Code of

Conduct, and to discuss any questions a Member might have.

It is vital that all Members set high standards for themselves, act in accordance with the high standards we adopt, and act as role models for both our colleagues and successors. A culture is built on strong practice and repetition; we must lead by example. Our words must be consistent with our deeds. As the title of our report states, "you are standing for your people."

Mr. Speaker, I will now hand this over to the honourable Member for Nahendeh. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Other Matters Raised by the Public

Conflict of Interest

A number of public submissions were received about conflict of interest, including extensive recommendations for amending provisions pertaining to Cabinet Ministers, Cabinet staff, and senior government officials. The latter three categories lie well beyond Members' conduct as referred to this committee, and would require changes to the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act as well as other legislation and policy.

It was also suggested that the wording should be strengthened in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (and the Members' Conduct Guidelines) respecting Members' duty to "arrange (emphasis added) his or her private affairs in such a manner as to maintain public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the Member."

The committee is persuaded that there is merit in a public review of current conflict-of-interest provisions, particularly given new powers vested in our government as a result of devolution.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that conflict-of-interest provisions of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and other relevant legislation and policy be the subject of a public review before the end of the 18th Assembly.

Recall Legislation

Several people urged the committee to recommend recall legislation that would provide for on-going accountability to the electorate during a Member's entire term. Typically, such legislation requires a very strongly-endorsed petition that a sitting Member has lost support of his/her constituents, at

which time the seat would be declared vacant and subject to a by-election.

Since it was adopted in British Columbia in 1995, no other province or territory has passed recall legislation. The hurdle to unseat an elected Member is necessarily high, and no recall petition can be submitted in the first 18 months of a BC Member's term. Since 1995, 26 recall petitions have been approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, but none succeeded. In one instance, the Member resigned.

A private Member's bill providing for a system of recall was attempted in our Legislative Assembly in 1995, prior to division of the territory. The bill was defeated on second reading.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures believes that recall legislation may increase accountability of Members, but it is a significant undertaking outside the scope of Members' conduct as outlined in the referral motion to the committee. Members thank all those who raised this issue, which underscored their messages that standards of conduct for candidates and Members' must be very high.

Members' Residency

The committee heard multiple suggestions that candidates for MLA should be residents of their ridings, and/or that they should live in their riding once elected. As noted earlier, restrictions on candidacy must be consistent with rights guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The committee believes that residency is a matter for the electorate to consider before casting their ballots; however, this question is outside the scope of the committee's mandate to review the Members' Conduct Guidelines and associated legislation.

Lobbyist Registry

The committee appreciates the comments we received about an improved record of lobbying of Cabinet members. This is timely as Cabinet is consulting with communities on accountability and transparency. Committee members note this recommendation for an informative lobbyist registry to put it firmly on the public record, but this topic is again outside the committee's mandate with respect to Members' conduct.

Mr. Speaker, I will hand this back to the honourable Member for Frame Lake to read the conclusion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President.

Conclusion

The committee thanks everyone who contributed their time and effort to our review of the Members' Conduct Guidelines and associated legislation. Your feedback was of great help in our deliberations. Your specific advice as well as the spirit and intent behind it is much appreciated. Members thank Mr. Lawrence Norbert for suggesting the title of this report, which is derived from his original in Gwich'in.

Members of the committee carefully studied all submissions and the relevant experience of other jurisdictions before making the recommendations in this report. These were not easy deliberations, but all members conducted them with open minds and the best interests of the NWT at heart.

The committee believes that the Assembly's consideration of the recommendations in this report will be a very important moment in the history of our consensus government. We recognize that many of the issues in this report are challenging, a fact that should not frighten us as legislators. This is what we were elected to do.

The work the committee has done responds to the very first motion of referral to a Standing Committee by the 18th Legislative Assembly. These issues were top-of-mind following our election. The thoughtful and constructive advice we received from the public helps to illustrate why this was the case. The committee thus felt some urgency to complete its task in sufficient time for the Assembly to implement any necessary changes during our term in office, in time for the election of the 19th Assembly. At the same time, there was a real need to enable meaningful discussion of some very complex issues. In response, the committee presented its interim report before public hearings were held and released a discussion paper featuring some key questions.

With this report, the committee has fulfilled the duty it was assigned and turns to the full Assembly to take the next steps we believe are necessary. We are asking all Members to support changes that will strengthen our consensus system of governance. We are asking all Members to break new ground in Canadian legislation to meet the needs of our northern society and legislature.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Frame Lake.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I do have a motion following the committee report.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 7-18(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of Members' Conduct Guidelines, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further discussion. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Motion carried. Review of the Members' report has been moved into Committee of the Whole. Masi. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Jim Antoine, the youngest old-timer of this last weekend, for standing here today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.] I just wanted to acknowledge the presence of Jim Antoine, former chief, MLA, Minister, and Premier of the GNWT. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, acknowledgements. Colleagues, before we proceed with item number 8, oral questions, the chair is going to call for a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Members, we left off from item 7. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 646-18(2):
FEDERAL REVIEW OF LAWS AND POLICIES
RELATED TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about federal's Cabinet-appointed Ministers working with Indigenous peoples, and my first question to the Minister is: how does a federal review of laws and policies relate to Indigenous peoples? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member noted, the Prime Minister has announced a review of laws and policies related to Indigenous peoples by a working group of federal Ministers. My understanding is that this working group of Ministers will be responsible for the review and will examine relevant federal laws, policies, and operational practices to help ensure the federal Crown is meeting its constitutional obligations with respect to Aboriginal and treaty rights; adhering to the International Human Rights standards, including UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and also supporting the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner's Calls to Action. It is also likely that there will be a focus on the Indian Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response. My second question is: how is the department monitoring the working group's progress?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Our government has reached out to the Privy Council Office to ask if the Northwest Territories could play a role in this ministerial working group. Although it is very important for Canada to get its own house in order, we feel we have many best practices that we could share with Canada around reconciliation and working with Indigenous people.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response; that answered my third question. My final question for the Premier is: the Northwest Territories has successfully implemented a collaborative process for developing policy on legislation that involves input from our Aboriginal governments early on; how has this model been shared with Canada and Canadian jurisdictions?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have certainly identified for Canada and our provincial and territorial colleagues on many innovative approaches in working collaboratively with Indigenous people in our Northwest Territories. I was recently the chair of the Aboriginal Affairs working group for two years, which involved the five national Aboriginal governments and also every province and territory, the Aboriginal Affairs ministers, which included at least eight premiers, and we certainly took advantage of that opportunity to highlight many of the leading practices that we have here in the Northwest Territories and also to speak about the positive outcomes. Because as a government I'd say, in every instant, we are way ahead of the game when providing for Aboriginal and treaty rights and certainly in legislation, when you look at the Species at Risk and the Wildlife Act, for examples, when Aboriginal governments held the pen in doing these types of legislation.

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

QUESTION 647-18(2):
UNIFIED VISION AND STRATEGY FOR THE
NORTHERN TERRITORIES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke about a vision for the North and, in particular, a strategy for the North and the importance of that, and it seems that since the change in federal government a northern strategy or a vision isn't as apparent. I'd like to ask the Premier what our territorial government has done or is doing to promote a northern vision that's inclusive of the three territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was certainly a concern of ours with the new government, the fact that there was little emphasis on a northern strategy. In a lot of cases we felt we were being treated as a stakeholder rather than as a government in our right. So the three northern territories got together, the three Premiers. We wrote a letter to the Prime Minister inviting him to meet with the three northern Premiers and to indicate that we were the true representatives of Canada's territories and that we wanted to develop a vision for the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Premier for his reply. I guess the next natural question would be then: what kind of response have we received from Ottawa or the Prime Minister with regard to meeting on this initiative and developing this vision and strategy?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We were very pleased with the Prime Minister's positive response. He was very eager to meet with us and we are looking to meet in the early part of 2017. Each of our three Premiers who have been to Ottawa quite a few times have reinforced that message. When the Prime Minister was here a couple of weeks ago, he reconfirmed his availability, and we're very much looking forward to working with him in this area.

MR. VANTHUYNE: That's all positive news, so thank you to the Premier for that. I guess if we are going to go forward as a territory and be a part of this pan-territorial discussion, can the Premier advise what initiatives will be taken or what steps we will be taking to make sure that the five regions of our territory are inclusive of our NWT vision, that the piece of what we're going to put into the call it pan-territorial vision that we'll be bringing to Ottawa?

Can the Premier maybe explain a little bit about what we're doing to make sure that the five regions are inclusive in that discussion or in that vision?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We are still developing our framework of engagement with the federal government, and certainly we will reach out to our Aboriginal partners and also to the Members of this Assembly.

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

QUESTION 648-18(2):
CRITICAL INCIDENT INVESTIGATION
RECOMMENDATIONS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Yesterday, the Minister released a set of recommendations aimed at a critical incident that took place last year in which the family alleged there had been a cultural bias toward the treatment. So my first question is: to what extent are the recommendations unique to Aklavik and to what extent will the rest of them be applied to the NWT? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the critical incident investigation, 16 recommendations were provided to me. Of those recommendations, two of them are specific to Aklavik; the remainder are more systemic or system-based. The two recommendations that do reference Aklavik specifically in my mind also are for the whole territory, not just for Aklavik, but clearly we have some work to do in the Northwest Territories to improve care for all residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. How soon will the community's specific recommendations be implemented?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are two recommendations that were specific to the community, and, as I said, I feel that those recommendations, although they reference the community, are still a territorial recommendation. The first one, recommendation number 3, was to review first responder training in Aklavik. Mr. Speaker, we have provided training around the Northwest Territories. Now, we are just reviewing. The last round was delivered in Aklavik so that we could deliver it. We are looking at enhancing and ensuring that training gets out to all communities in the Northwest Territories. We are currently looking

at a pilot study in Tsiigehtchic to provide this type of services on a more fulsome basis.

The second recommendation was the medical and transport and ambulance recommendation. Mr. Speaker, we are not moving forward with a territorial ambulance services. We aren't going to be putting an ambulance in Aklavik. I did make a commitment when I met with leadership in the community, as well as the residents, that we would work with the community to find some solutions that work for the community. In the interim, we are looking at the stretchers and other equipment that we have in our health centre to make sure that it is the best equipment and the most suitable equipment for the community. We are doing that work right now.

MS. GREEN: I wonder if the Minister can assure us that an incident like this is unlikely once these recommendations are implemented to be avoided elsewhere in the NWT, and how soon is full implementation likely to occur?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: A critical incident investigation of this sort is intended to do just that, provide us with recommendations and thoughts on how we can improve our system for all people of the Northwest Territories. There are 16 recommendations. Some of them, I think, are easier than others, and we are moving on all of the recommendations with the exception of two. Those two recommendations that we are not doing, as outlined, we are doing portions of. Specifically, like I say, we are not going to move forward with the territorial ambulance service. The other recommendation we are not moving forward is the creation of a stroke centre here in Yellowknife. There is work we are doing on those, just not as outlined in the recommendations. Mr. Speaker, these are important recommendations. Some of them, I think, are foundational. We have made commitments to move on all of them, but I don't have timelines.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my recollection that this case came to public notice because it was reported by the media. My question is whether the method of taking and responding to complaints of this kind has been improved so that there is a more direct mechanism for the department to respond to complaints. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, both prior to going to a single authority and after going to a single authority, we have implemented and put in place quality assurance mechanisms within the Health and

Social Services system. This is an office of individuals that can be engaged by residents of the Northwest Territories who have concerns of the healthcare or the social services provided. What has become clear, both with my meeting with the family on Friday and my meeting with leadership in the community, is that, although these positions exist, people don't know that they exist. People do not know that this mechanism is available to them. I made a commitment to the leadership, to the family, and I am making a commitment here to the Members to do more to get that information out to the public.

Early in the life of this Assembly I provided all of that information to the MLAs. The problem is we have to go beyond notifying the MLAs of this information. We have to get it into the health centres. We have to get the nurses and doctors and other healthcare providers talking about the quality assurance mechanism. We need to encourage people to use it, because it is input from our residents who are having difficulty or concerns that will actually help us improve this system. I have made a commitment to finding better ways, more effective ways to get this information out to all residents of the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 649-18(2):

PROCESS FOR FILLING UNFUNDED POSITIONS

MR. THOMPSON: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we are going through this budgeting process, I have noticed a number of people coming to me and saying there are unfunded positions within the government. It is fitting that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is coming up today here. Will the Minister tell us: how many unfunded positions does the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs have? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has nine unfunded positions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. Can the Minister tell us how the department comes up with a job description and a pay range for these positions?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Unfunded positions are treated the same way as funded positions in that we look at the job duties that are needed for the position. We then do a job

description that we submit to human resources for a job evaluation, and they do a pay grade.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. As we are developing these job descriptions and that, can the Minister tell us: how does the department fill these positions and does the affirmative action policy apply?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The filling of the positions actually is done dependent on the situation. It can be an open competition. It can be a transfer assignment. It could be filling a spot with an affected employee. Yes, the affirmative action does apply on unfunded positions the same as it would on any other position.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to hear that the affirmative action does apply in there. I am a little concerned about how the positions are filled. Sometimes, it is direct appointment, and that concerns me. However, will the Minister make a commitment to classify these positions and put them on the org chart so they are not unfunded positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The positions that we have, the current nine positions, they already have gone through the job classification process, and they are in our organizational chart. I will commit to actually reviewing them at the end of this fiscal year again to ensure that they can still maintain as unfunded versus moving them into a funded position.

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

QUESTION 650-18(2):

SUPPORTS FOR PRIORITY HIRING
CANDIDATES UNDER THE AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION POLICY

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke of the Department of Human Resources and the upcoming amalgamation with Finance. I have some questions on trying to maintain as much of the human resources aspects into this new department as possible. I would like to ask the current Minister of Human Resources if he is able to advise the House: how many departments have human resource development plans? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Human Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we expect all departments to have the HR plans. I will confirm for the Member how many

of them actually have the plans, and I will report back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: In the breakdown of affirmative action candidates in the GNWT, we notice that most regions are well within or very close to representing our population, except for if you are looking at representation of the territories overall. As I indicated in my Member's statement, Yellowknife is just slightly low, but there are other communities as well in the same way, some communities lower, actually. I would like to know if there are any affirmative action plans that departments by department follow?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I have a response to the Member's earlier questions. We actually have seven departments with completed plans. However, as I said before, we do expect all departments to have them. We will follow up on that and ensure that our departments are putting together their completed HR plans.

To the Member's second question, the affirmative action, we expect that to be incorporated into the HR plan for each department.

MR. BEAULIEU: I would like to thank the Minister for that response. I just wasn't anticipating that. I was going to ask the Minister what actions he will take to increase Priority 1 hires? I guess I will ask a different question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the Minister would actually look at the affirmative action plans community by community as well as department by department?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I recall, some time ago we did have a list that I think we shared in Committee of the Whole, not this particular government, the past government, that actually had it broken down to the regions and to the different departments, the number of P1 candidates or P1 employees they had in their system. I can tell the Member that, of the 5,187 employees we have, 1,601, I believe, are affirmative action employees. I will look at the breakdown of numbers by community, and I will share the findings with committee.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good memory; I have the numbers in front of me. Mr. Speaker, inside the human resource plans, I would like to know if the Minister would insist on having some development plans for affirmative action so they can move up the ladder to more senior positions if their education and skills warrant it. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for those who are

working within the government system, some who work in the system, you know fairly quickly that they have the ability to move through the system based on what they bring to the job. We continue to promote that. There are a number of initiatives that we use, the regional recruitment, direct appointments, the Aboriginal Management Development Program.

I can assure the Members that I want to see the folks from the Northwest Territories move through the system, but I want them to move through the system based on their ability and what they bring to the job. Our commitment to them is to give them an opportunity, because I think that is what a lot of them are looking for, is the actual opportunity to move through the system based on what they bring to the job. We will make that commitment that we will work with all Aboriginal employees to find places for them to move.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 651-18(2):
ARSENIC LEVELS IN KAM LAKE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the sitting I asked questions about the environmental integrity of Kam Lake, the namesake of my riding. I am wondering if today the Minister of Health could answer some questions I have around a 2016 public health advisory around arsenic. That study recommended that Northerners not eat fish or drink the water in Frame Lake or Jackfish Lake, and cleared Yellowknife River, Great Slave Lake, Long Lake, a variety of bodies of waters. Unfortunately, Kam Lake was not included there, so I am wondering if the Minister today can advise on the relative levels of arsenic and safety concerns around Kam Lake, if there are any? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Chief Public Health Officer put out the health advisory, it was based on a number of reports that were prepared by different organizations, including universities, that had done some environmental assessment on those lakes. It is my understanding that Kam Lake was not one of the lakes that was included in that study, so it was not included on the health advisory.

I don't personally know the arsenic levels in that lake, but given the history of that lake and where it is located, you might want to be cautious about drinking the water out of Kam Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I am sure people are. There are a number of houses that open up onto that lake, so I am wondering if the Minister is in a position to study arsenic levels in Kam Lake and report back to the House and to the public on the findings.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The water that the Department of Health and Social Services will look at through its environmental health officers tends to be water that is drinking water. That is our mandate. To review or do an assessment on other lakes, the Member might want to make reference or ask the Minister responsible for ENR, who would be responsible for lakes that are not drinking water.

MR. TESTART: All right. One more, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. If there was data that showed that the arsenic levels in Kam Lake were over 52 parts per billion, would a public health advisory be issued by the department and would people know in Kam Lake immediately that there was a concern and that they should avoid it?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes.

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

QUESTION 652-18(2):
EARNSCLIFFE STRATEGY GROUP CONTRACT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. On January 31st of this year, I submitted a written question on the costs of the November 2016 Cabinet trip to Ottawa. As part of that question, I asked for costs of lobbyist support, including contracted services. The Minister responded by stating, "No lobbyists or consultants were engaged in the planning or coordination of this trip."

The third quarter report on GNWT sole-source contracting shows that, between April 1st and December 31, 2016, we retained Earnscliffe Strategy Group, with an office in Ottawa, to lobby on our behalf at a cost \$126,800. Can the Minister confirm that we retained Earnscliffe Strategy Group and what was it that they were doing for us during that period? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, I can confirm that the Government of the Northwest Territories has a contract with Earnscliffe Strategy Group of Ottawa, and they provide government relations and media relations services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I thank the Premier for his response. The Earnscliffe Strategy Group is a registered lobbyist under federal legislation, and they fully disclose that GNWT is one of its clients,

as shown in a filing that I will table later today. The period of its service to the GNWT includes a period where our entire Cabinet went to Ottawa. Did the Earnscliffe Strategy Group provide any advice or support for the planning or execution of the November trip by all of Cabinet?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Earnscliffe was not directly involved in preparing any materials or strategies for Cabinet's November 2016 mission to Ottawa and did not have a role in setting up any meetings with federal government officials.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Premier for that response, as well. So, if they weren't providing advice or support, can the Minister provide a little bit more detail about what we paid \$126,800 for, exactly what kind of services? Maybe a few examples would be helpful.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We use Earnscliffe to provide strategic information, and they do provide briefings. They did provide briefings to our government on the government environment in Ottawa. They do provide information on federal legislation, the work that is being done there, and also policy priorities.

Between the period that the Member refers to, they provided ongoing advice on our federal engagement strategy development on federal infrastructure engagement. They also supported us by providing communication support at Government of the Northwest Territories-hosted events related to the Aboriginal Affairs working group meetings that we held in Ottawa, including organizing and hosting news conferences. They have provided ad hoc meetings with our deputy minister, as well, in Ottawa, including deputy ministers attending the infrastructure roundtable, and also worked with Minister Sebert's appearance in September on federal electoral reform panels.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for providing those details. As I understood, the trip to Ottawa that all of Cabinet went on was precisely as part of this federal engagement strategy and the three pitches that they made when they were down there. In any event, I will move on.

One of the commitments that we made in our mandate was increasing transparency and accountability and strengthening consensus government, so a knowledge of the lobbying activities of the executive would help make us more transparent and accountable. Does the Minister believe we should have lobbyist registration

regulation legislation for the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. I'm not aware of any lobbyists in the Northwest Territories, but we do provide information. We put it on the website, government website, of all the meetings that we have. Certainly, in our trip to Ottawa, we set up the meetings ourselves. We do not need to hire people to set up meetings for us.

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

QUESTION 653-18(2):
WESTERN CANADA LOTTERY AND THE
SUTCLIFFE REPORT

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs talked about Western Canadian Lottery in the Sutcliffe Report. In there, she goes on to give us a bit of information about recommendations, and recommendations that weren't followed. Can the Minister please provide us: what two recommendations from the Sutcliffe Report were not adopted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two recommendations that at this point the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs are not implementing are the second recommendation. The report recommended that the department include all of its programs in the Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Policy, including youth and volunteers. The second recommendation that we, to date, have not implemented is recommendation number 15. The report recommended that the department establish a separate lottery commission to oversee the Western Canada Lottery program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: The Minister kind of answered the second question I had, so the rationale on why these two recommendations were not followed. I thank her for that. I will move on to my third question: with respect to the proceeds of all the lotteries going into the sport and recreation programming, can the Minister confirm that proceeds will cover the new staff who are moving into the government?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Presently, the funding for lottery staff come from the lottery dollars. The department, though, is going to work with the Department of Finance to describe in our main estimate process beginning in 2018-19. The funding of these positions will need to align with the

legislation which will be developed in 2017-18 with an intended implementation of April 1, 2018, and the management of the lottery revolving fund. The details around the legislation and the management of the revolving fund have not been developed at this time.

MR. THOMPSON: I understand that the policy has not been developed yet, but is the government looking at actually using lottery dollars to pay for the staffing? Is that one of the recommendations or idea that they are looking forward to?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At this point, yes, the lottery funding will be used to pay for lottery staffing; however, this will be reviewed with the Department of Finance to ensure that it is the best action moving forward.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for her answer. That gives a clearer picture in this. In this Minister's statement, she talked about how all the proceeds from lotteries will continue to be directed towards sport and recreation programming. Does that include multi-sport games? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The multi-sport games, actually, we still have it in our mains, and the budget is \$500,000 that we have in our mains, separate from the lottery funding.

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

QUESTION 654-18(2):
AKLAVIK ROAD REPAIRS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement. I have a couple of questions for the Minister of MACA. I would like to ask the Minister: how are we applying modern research and technology to some of the longstanding flooding and erosion problems that challenge the community of Aklavik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the maintenance, the repair, and the replacement of roads actually is the responsibility of the Hamlet of Aklavik. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs supports the community government to prepare capital plans, and within those capital plans, we identify climate change as an area of concern, and

then the community actually decides what they're going to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Will the Minister look into these much-needed repairs with the department and the community to see if we can come up with the solution for this erosion?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Like I said, the Hamlet of Aklavik is responsible for their maintenance and their repair of their roads. The hamlet has spent the last three to five years focusing on the road upgrades and drainage work. They have also hired a contractor within their community to look at the effects of climate change.

MR. BLAKE: The community has done a lot of great work with the drainage in the community through the capital plan, but to put more material along the riverbanks which is stopping erosion, there are a couple of areas where there is no repair along the bank to slow down the process of erosion. To put this material down, there is more funding needed to put this in place. Will the department ensure that the community has enough funding to do this work, hopefully before the spring?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In April 2015, the federal government established a National Disaster Mitigation Program with small communities; communities can apply to deal with the effects of climate change or other natural disasters. In the fall of 2016, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, actually on behalf of Aklavik, we submitted a funding request for \$255,000 to create a mitigation plan that will identify the measures designed to reduce or eliminate the impact of shoreline erosion. This funding is expected to be confirmed in the next couple of weeks, and once the approval is in, we will start work early in 2017-18.

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

QUESTION 655-18(2):
HOUSING ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Housing here this afternoon. As we move forward for the housing survey that is under way, there is one conducted in the fiscal year of 2009, my question to the Minister is: is that old material, or some of that recommendations or surveys that came out going to be utilized for this survey? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am making the assumption that the 2009 survey that the MLA is referring to is the Federal Needs Assessment Survey that was done. They do it every five years, so there was one done in 2009. I believe there was one done in 2014 as well. Some of that information will be taken into consideration; however, this survey is different than the Federal Housing Engagement Survey. This survey is to identify from the residents of the Northwest Territories, what they see for their own specific communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: My next question is: once this information is compiled, or this survey is compiled with the head office, will it be finalized in concert with the regional office to make sure that it is a regional survey plan as identified by the prior needs and suggestions?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As part of doing this survey we have committed that we would provide the findings of this survey to all municipal governments and all Aboriginal governments. They will have a What We Heard report identifying exactly what was said within their own communities.

MR. MCNEELY: If the regional offices are going to have a forum or have a gathering on the final draft of a regional review, would some of the community leaders such as the mayors or the presidents of land corporations or the chiefs of the bands be invited to have some input on the final regional draft?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, our commitment is that we would provide the findings of the survey to the Aboriginal and municipal governments. If they wanted to provide some feedback to us, we would be open to receiving it. However, we have asked each municipal government and each Aboriginal government to fill in the survey, not only independently but as a group, individual groups. We have them identified within the survey, so we will be taking the feedback from the municipalities and the Aboriginal governments and we will be considering that impact as well within our survey. Will I be doing another open house on this? No, Mr. Speaker. We need to get to work. It is time. The survey is finished. We need to get down and do the work now.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question here is: compiled information is very valuable on the preplanning of the objectives needed for the region. Would the Minister consider sharing this information with some of the regional organizations to develop a bilateral approach for

the needs on a possible federal submission? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once all of the results in the survey are compiled, which we are in the process of doing right at this moment, we will be tabling the document. At that point, it can be used for whatever people would like to use it for.

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

QUESTION 656-18(2):
LOBBYIST REGISTRY PROPOSAL

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the Member for Frame Lake, had some questions about a lobbyist registry and lobbyists in the Northwest Territories. I am wondering if the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency can indicate if this government continues to hold the position that a lobbyist registry is not required in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. This government does maintain that position. We simply don't feel that is necessary as a small jurisdiction, and also there is, of course, a considerable amount of information regarding our contacts with those outside of the government that is provided. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Can the Minister elaborate on why the size of our jurisdiction does not require to know who is influencing government decision-making? Apart from a list of meetings that is published by choice, there is nothing in legislation that requires an increased level of scrutiny on who the government is talking to. We have industry here. We have the involvement of large corporations involved in the resource sector. Is this not a priority, that our citizens be informed of who our decision makers are meeting with when they are outside of this building? I would like to hear an answer from the Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Information regarding Cabinet's meetings with those in the industry, of course, can be known. We simply do not feel it is necessary, at this time, to have a public registry that would doubtless involve some costs, and may actually involve hiring someone to run or take care of the registry. We simply don't feel that it is necessary. We think we are providing the type of information that is required to the public.

MR. TESTART: I know the Minister likes to be fiscally prudent along with his Cabinet colleagues. The Minister said that he believes that is sufficient to maintain public confidence. How is he coming to that conclusion? Has he consulted with the people of the Northwest Territories on the subject of a lobbyist registry? How do we know this for sure? Has any consultation been performed on behalf of his portfolio to gauge what the public is looking for, for increased public accountability from this government?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I haven't had any formal engagement with the public at large. I can advise, however, that around this table, the Cabinet is extremely experienced in this matter. We are very experienced and competent Ministers. We have discussed this. Our position simply is, as you have heard earlier, that the present manner of dealing with contact between Cabinet Ministers and industry is sufficient.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly not questioning the competency of our Cabinet Ministers. That is not what is at stake here. What is at stake here is maintaining the confidence that decision-making is publicly recorded. The many lobbyists of jurisdictions have lobbyist registries that provide a certificate that says what a lobbyist is going to be doing, who they are speaking to, and reports of communications between government and their clients. I guess I continue to fail to understand why this isn't required for our jurisdiction. We have a rather large budget at our disposal. How we spend that money, how we make decisions about changing regulations and supporting those industries is important, but equally important is that people have confidence that their decision-makers are making decisions on behalf of Northerners, for Northerners and not on behalf of special interest groups. Again, if the Minister could educate me on why he is so certain that Northerners do not want this information to be publicly available to them, I would be happy to know. Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This information is publicly available. We simply feel that a formal registry would be overly cumbersome.

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

QUESTION 657-18(2):
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN FUNDING AND
IMPLEMENTATION

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am going to try to keep this quick. We had a briefing from the Minister of Education last week on junior kindergarten. There were still some unresolved issues around this full funding of junior kindergarten. Can the Minister tell this House and the public whether the inclusive schooling formula includes students who will be in junior kindergarten? Yes or no? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, it doesn't. The inclusive schooling is a different part of funding that focuses on the needs of the children. With the implementation and rollout of junior kindergarten in the 2017-18 academic year, we feel that four-year-olds coming into the education system have the sufficient supports of all staff who will be in the school setting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for his short answer. Can the Minister tell this House and the public whether junior kindergarten students are included in the formula for Aboriginal language and culture funding for schools? Yes or no.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Once again, that is another part of funding that we provide through our programs. It is based on enrolment, so the ALCB funding will go up when enrolment in the schools go up. The majority of that funding actually goes to fund instructors who run cultural programs throughout the whole school and is available for all students. Our curriculum within junior kindergarten does have a cultural component, but the junior kindergarten program will also have access to all cultural programming and activity there. So that ALCB program is not directly linked to the funding with junior kindergarten.

MR. O'REILLY: I thank the Minister for his response. I think that was a no, but let's go on to busing. So can the Minister tell this House and the public: if the issue of increased costs for busing cannot be resolved, is he prepared to come forward to this House with a supplementary appropriation to make sure the school boards are not out? Yes or a no, Mr. Speaker, would be very helpful.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Currently, with the rollouts and the numbers that we're getting in with students who might be entering junior kindergarten, our funding formula for the schools will reflect what we have in contributions with the education authorities.

Currently, our staff is working with the education boards and authorities to see how that funding is going to roll out. Busing is a topic in those discussions, and once we have a resolution and resolve how we're going to address that, we'll come back and we'll let the Member know.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I think that was a maybe.

---Laughter

We may have to pursue that further. So one last question: can the Minister confirm then that, when his department and he himself talks about full funding for junior kindergarten, that's really in reference to the current formulas which do not include junior kindergarten students? So full funding does not really include junior kindergarten students? Can the Minister say yes or no? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did fully commit to fully funding junior kindergarten in the 2017-18 year, which does include junior kindergarten students, four-year-olds.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 303-18(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE
REPORT 3-18(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2014-2015 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL
REPORT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Government of the Northwest Territories' Response to Committee Report 3-18(2): Report on the Review of the 2014-2015 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 304-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
477-18(2): HOUSING ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 477-18(2): Housing Engagement Strategy." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 305-18(2):
FEDERAL LOBBYIST REGISTRATION FOR
EARNSCLIFFE STRATEGY GROUP

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document; it is a registration form for Earnscliffe Strategy Group from the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 306-18(2):
WHITE PAPER ON THE INDEPENDENCE AND
ACCOUNTABILITY OF ELECTION
ADMINISTRATION IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. I wish to table a document entitled "White Paper on the Independence and Accountability of Election Administration in the Northwest Territories."

Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, 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: Bill 7, Bill 13, Committee Report 6-18(2), Tabled Document 261-18(2) with Member Hay River North in the chair.

By the authority given to me as the Speaker under Motion 18-18(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018, and continue with the Department of Justice and Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Seeing as how we took a break earlier, we'll take another one, but a very short recess, and resume with consideration of the document. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Recognizing a quorum, I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. We will now continue our consideration of Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018, with the Department of Justice. Minister Sebert, do you have any witnesses you would like to bring into the Chamber?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I do.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right is Martin Goldney, deputy minister, and to my left, Mandi Bolstad, director of corporate services, Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Committee, we will now proceed to the next activity from last week, policing services. The activity description can be found on page 273 and the activity detail on page 274. Does committee have any questions or comments? Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions here on First Nations policing. You know, I recall in the past there's been a lot of emphasis on having First Nations policing, but lately I really haven't seen very much in the communities to encourage people to take part. You know, I believe it was around 2005 or something, we actually had some people take on this and actually go to Saskatchewan for training, but lately it doesn't seem that there's really much in the line of recruitment. I have seen them in the communities a couple of times, but you know, there's a lot more that needs to be done, especially going into the schools and speaking to the children and trying to get them interested while they're in high school so they know what grades they have to maintain. Will the department ensure that this is continued? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair. We're hopeful that the federal government's renewal of the First Nations Policing Program will result in additional resources being added to the detachments serving smaller communities. I believe there are four positions that are currently funded. Perhaps Mr. Goldney could expand a bit on this.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Deputy Minister Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In addition to the work under the First Nations Policing Program, we can advise committee that we are well aware that having Aboriginal officers is a priority for the RCMP, and they do undertake initiatives for recruitment. We will certainly encourage them to continue those efforts, so that we can see officers in communities from communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Deputy Minister Goldney. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Also under territorial policing services agreement, I see the funds have gone down almost a couple of million, or 1.9. I hope that does not affect the services that we have in the communities. As I mentioned last week, services have improved in Tsiigehtchic with working closely with the detachment in Fort McPherson. We have seen an increased presence in the community, more stops along the highway, which is good to see. People really appreciate that. Will that affect the services? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, the services in the communities, whether small or large, will not be affected. I understand that the decline in the amount is largely as a result of the construction of the new police detachment in Inuvik, so we are not anticipating cutting service in any way. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have brought this issue up in the past, but it still hasn't been addressed. In order to have a good presence in the communities -- I will use Aklavik as an example. They are isolated a good majority of the year, all through the summer, and yet they have no boat, outboard motor, whether it is jet boat or whatever. In our communities, we have a number of activities, whether it is canoe races or search and rescue efforts, especially in Aklavik, because people sometimes get lost between travelling between Aklavik and Inuvik, yet the RCMP there have no outfit to go and look for these people or to help in these activities. Will the Minister ensure that

this is addressed? They have a number of boats, whether it is in Inuvik or other communities, that could be transferred there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. That is kind of a managerial or operational issue for the RCMP. All I can say is I will bring it to their attention. I am trying to remember when I was asked this question before. I am not certain, but I believe there is a boat in Inuvik; perhaps I could get back to the Member with respect to the situation in Aklavik. I do recall the question was asked before, and I thought there was coverage out of Inuvik, but I do appreciate that obviously there is some distance between the communities. I think the best I can offer is to provide the Member with that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, just going to Tsiigehtchic, it really hasn't been identified how long the lease on the unit there would be. Just as I mentioned, it just started in the fall with the trailer that was brought in. It is really being used well. I would just like to know: what is the long-term plan for that unit? Will that continue for, say, five years? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, I know that the Housing Corporation installed a two-bedroom portable unit they allow the police to use for overnight accommodation for the members on patrol. This has made police coverage in Tsiigehtchic better, from what I have heard from the Member. I assume that this would be a long-term lease, but as to the exact term, I am not sure. We are not aware of any plans to discontinue this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is about it. I could get the exact time from the Minister later on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask the Minister on the cost-sharing arrangements with the territorial police services agreement and the First Nations policing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding for the territorial police services agreement is 70:30, with us paying 70 per cent of the cost, the federal government the other 30. With respect to the First Nations Policing, we provide 54 per cent of the funding while the federal government provides the other 46. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, is there any way that, if there was more money put into the First Nations Policing, of our share, that there would be more money available from the federal government? I suppose it is on the First Nations Policing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We are hopeful that the renewal of the First Nations Policing Program will result in additional resources being added to detachments serving smaller communities, so we are hopeful and optimistic that the federal government will be coming up with more. I suppose conceivably that would mean we might be coming up with more. I don't think we have really reached that stage in our deliberations with respect to this matter. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, assuming that there is a separate agreement or an agreement within the overall services agreement for First Nations Policing, I am wondering when the agreement expires? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: First, Ms. Bolstad could attempt to answer this. I am not sure the answer to that question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We actually have a legacy agreement. It is not actually the First Nations Policing Policy that it is under. It's a legacy agreement, so it does not terminate. It is ongoing until a new policy is established. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is all I have, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to community policing, I am looking at the business plan, and I am trying to understand how the department responds to issues in the smaller communities that do not have detachments. Can the Minister explain how many trips are supposed to occur in the communities, starting with Jean Marie? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course, there are no communities that do not have policing supplied to them. It is just a question of whether they have an actual detachment located in the community. I understand there are 12 communities that don't have an actual detachment. That does not mean they are not policed. The police will often have patrols in those communities. I also know that all the communities in the Northwest Territories do have agreements, policing agreements, with the RCMP. The RCMP will know the concerns of those small communities and enter into agreements to assist. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that we have an agreement with them, and they are supposed to patrol. With Gameti and Whati, presently, they have detachments, and my understanding is there are part-time detachments where the members are supposed to be three out of eight days. Is this being followed by the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am not certain as to the exact number of days the police are there. The very nature of their patrols probably makes it better if the attendance is somewhat irregular, the point being that all communities do have police coverage. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Does the Minister or does the department know how many times the RCMP are going into the communities

that do not have RCMP, including the part-time detachment of Gameti and Whati, or Gameti and Wrigley, more specifically Wrigley? Are you able to tell us how many times the patrols are in these communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert, to the question of routine checks as per the agreement?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do not think we have that information in front of us. We can ask the RCMP. I do not think they will give us the dates or anything, because that might indicate a pattern which probably would not be the best thing to have. I can undertake to request that information of the RCMP. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for the answer. I am not asking for dates. I am asking how many times they have been in these communities. I am looking at your business plans and using the numbers for 2016. Wrigley had 76 calls for services and only two patrols. I am really trying to understand what this part-time detachment means to this community. Can the Minister explain what this part-time detachment means, and how regular are these services to the people so they get better service? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The police attendance in the 12 communities without detachment, of course, is based on the number of complaints or concerns that are directed to the RCMP. Again, I can ask the RCMP for that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just looking at numbers in the communities, and I see 13. Maybe that is, the lowest is a concerning one. I am not too sure. Looking at these numbers, Wrigley's has the fourth highest call for services, and we only have two patrols. I'm looking at Jean Marie, and they have had 32 calls for services and 19 patrols. Jean Marie is actually on a road system. Wrigley's has to wait on ferries and that. My concern is: how is Wrigley being serviced with only two patrols there, if that is what the numbers are correct according to the business plan? Can the Minister confirm that he will work with the RCMP to get better service, or increased service? I shouldn't say "better service," but increased service for that community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, we are always working with the RCMP to provide better service. It may be that the nature of the complaints is different. Perhaps the complaints in one community were very serious, and the ones in the other community were less serious. I do know that the number of patrols to the smaller communities is determined not necessarily by the size of the community but probably the number and nature of the complaints. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. I am looking at a community that is in my region, called for service seven times, six patrols. I have another community in another riding; they had five calls and had 23 patrols that were outside there. Again, my big concern, to get the presence in the community so that the people understand the service and have better service. Will the Minister work with the detachment to get better service into the smaller communities, specifically the ones that have part-time detachments? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned earlier, the police, of course, do work with every community to assess their needs for policing. Certainly, I am willing to work with the RCMP and discuss the facts and figures that have been presented today. However, it may be, where there are few complaints and many patrols, that they were complaints of the most serious type. It does not mean that one place is over-policed and another place is under-policed. I am pretty confident in saying, the nature of the complaint is a partial determining factor in whether the RCMP will make a patrol or not. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for his answer. Will the Minister make a commitment, or check with the detachments, that the budgets are being allocated, or actually fully utilized? In other words, going into Wrigley, they have \$100,000; are they actually utilizing this funding to provide service? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, I am not certain that we drill down to that level of numbers in dealing

with the RCMP. To a large extent, we rely on their good sense in allocating funds. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for his answer. Unfortunately, if we are not utilizing the services and utilizing the funding, that means the community is not getting the services required. My biggest concern is that the detachment in Fort Simpson, where these people are located and positioned, their relief for these people who are on holidays and training, that has an impact on the smaller communities. If we are not spending the money in there, it says something. When I say public service, it is not about just working there and dealing with complaints, but the most important part is to educate people about the importance of the RCMP, working together, so it becomes a friendly environment and people become better citizens as we move forward.

Again, can the Minister make a commitment -- and this will be my last question, I guess, because I only have 15 seconds. Can the Minister make a commitment to work with the detachments to see what the budgets are, and share with us as committee, to see what is happening in these communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert, the last question.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, we do not generally deal with the operations on the detachment-by-detachment level. There has to be a fair amount of operational flexibility with the RCMP because events may occur that require a lot of resources. I do not think any of the money is being wasted. I could ask the commanding officer to attend before committee, if I receive that request. Of course, it would be up to him. Again, we do not have that sort of breakdown by detachment-by-detachment. I do believe that the operational flexibility I spoke of is required so that the police can carry out their duties, and I would like to think that money is not being wasted in any way. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this point, just to get some further clarification on on-calls versus patrols, the Minister referred earlier that it seemed like the way in which the RCMP was making coverage of certain communities was on an on-call basis. Can the department distinguish for us what the difference is for calls for service versus

patrols, just so we have some understanding of that first? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I have to say that all of the police activity, Mr. Chair, is not driven by the number of calls. I think the police do a certain number of patrols in the community, just somewhat irregularly for reasons that are pretty obvious, but not necessarily in response to a call. It is a mixture, really. Obviously, they will respond to calls, have to determine the seriousness and how to respond, but my understanding is they make patrols to the communities, even if there is not a specific event or complaint. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think this is the point that the previous speaker was alluding to, is that we have communities where we will see the callouts be significantly lower than the patrols. If we are to use a community like Detah as an example, it is about a 1:4 difference, it seems like, the callouts versus the patrols, and the patrols are significantly higher than the callouts.

Then, when you look at a community like that of Wrigley, that is supposed to have what is called part-time detachment coverage, you will see calls for service are significantly higher than that of the patrols. There just seems to be this inconsistent approach that the RCMP takes in whether they respond to something reactively or whether they are doing patrols for crime prevention. Would this be mostly because of a community's policing plan? I can't foresee any community not asking for regular types of patrols.

How one community got two patrols in an entire year is difficult to understand, yet they have a number of callouts. That means there is something going on in terms of the crime activity, but they don't seem to be getting the preventative measure type of patrols. Is there some comment maybe that the department could provide us with how that works, or is that because of community policing plans that have said they don't prefer patrols or what have you? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, I am not aware of the policing agreements with every community. I imagine they have a certain amount of similarity to them. Again, there may be a bit of a disconnect between the number of calls and the number of patrols, but that may be the nature of the calls. Again, the police always have to make a

determination of whether a call merits a patrol apart from their regular patrols. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The comment the Minister made is interesting to me. Are there actually policing agreements with communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: They are actually called community policing plans between the RCMP and the individual communities.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the informative pieces of information that I received on a regular basis as a former Yellowknife city councillor was a monthly report from the RCMP detachment. Is this something that takes place in the other communities throughout the territory as well? Do they receive monthly policing reports? Do they know what the actual callouts are for, other than just the number of callouts? Do they know if they are for break and entry, etc., or what different crimes they might be for? That would be good information to know. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can advise from my own experience being on town council in Fort Smith that we did receive monthly reports from the RCMP, which involved, I believe, the number of people in custody, the general nature of the charges, whether they were traffic-related or crime-related. I can't speak for every community, but certainly in the larger communities I am quite sure there is that information provided to council. I would like to think that it would be provided to all of the communities, but I am not absolutely certain of that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is that something that the Minister can find out for us to share with us? Secondly, if it isn't something that is going on, would it be a responsibility that the GNWT could ask of the RCMP, or does community by community have to ask for such a report? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Again, Mr. Chair, I can't speak to the individual arrangements between the communities and the RCMP, but I can certainly find out whether the police do supply those statistics to the town councils or governments in those communities. One would hope they would. All I can say is that they certainly do in the community I used to live in. I would assume that would be the template for other communities also. We can check on that and get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, indeed, that information would be welcome. For a moment, let's switch over to community justice committees. Can the department give us an update on the status of community justice committees? Are there or have there been any that are established? Maybe a bit of a brief update on what the success, if any, has been of these panels as it relates to a means to reduce the amount of pressure put on the court system and to promote the restorative model of justice. Can we get an update from the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, in 2016-17, 29 communities have accessed funding for restorative justice programs. There are a few communities that have not. Certainly, I can speak for my former community that the community justice group or panel was very active in the community. Sometimes it is hard to find members who are willing to put in the time that is required. Again, of course, our department wants to develop community-based solutions for minor criminal offences. As I mentioned earlier, a good number of matters are diverted, and this is the ideal type of organization to assist in that method of dealing with minor criminal matters without the necessity of taking them to court. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: I agree with the Minister that it is certainly a good means to divert a lot from the formal court system and alleviate pressure on the court system. I am still not hearing from the Minister as to what the success might be. Is the structure of the community justice committees in place? Is there information that the department can share with us to let us know which ones are in place and are actually having an effect on a restorative model of justice? Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is all I have.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned earlier, 29 communities do have restorative justice programs. I would like to feel that they are all successful. I suppose it depends somewhat on the commitment of those who are sitting on these committees. I mean, success, I suppose, is somewhat hard to judge. I do know, speaking from the community that I represent, that a great number of matters were diverted from the court system. It does, however, take dedicated members to sit on the restorative justice committee. So, overall, I would say the program is a success. I suppose it works better in some communities than others. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Further questions? Seeing no further questions or comments from committee, please turn to page 274, Justice, policing services, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$42,804,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, committee. We will now proceed to the next activity, services to government. The activity description is found on page 275. The activity detail is on page 276, and related information items are found on pages 277 and 278. I remind committee to specify the page on which the items you are referring to can be found. Does committee have any questions or comments? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering, under the line legislation division, there is a decrease from the revised estimates to this year's. Could the Minister explain what accounts for that variance? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that the decline is related to the reduced amount of work required for devolution-related issues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would those devolution-related issues be related to legislative drafting? I am wondering if the Minister can provide details. Thank you.

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

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there are two positions identified that are being sunsetted that were initially put in place to help implement devolution, with the expectation at the time that

there would be devolution-related drafting carrying on for the immediate term after devolution. I think our experience has shown that that was perhaps a little ambitious, but we do recognize that, as legislative needs related to those projects come forward, we are confident that we have the retained capacity to address them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, just to be clear, this variance is: we are losing legislative capacity that the department now considers unnecessary to complete our current legislative agenda. Is that correct? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand, really, we are talking about one legislative counsel and one administrative assistant, and so I suppose that there is some loss of capacity, but there is less work. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to confirm the other part of my question, it is in the Minister's opinion that this will not impact this Assembly's ability to deliver on its legislative agenda? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand that the position, Mr. Chair, was vacant in any case, but, no, we think we have sufficient resources. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the legislation division working at full capacity currently? There have been comments made previously in this review and in the House on the slow pace of legislation, so I am wondering if we are using this division to the fullest of its ability, as the Minister says it is sufficient at current numbers. Are all of our drafters currently being utilized to the fullness of their capacity? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This issue has come up before in speaking to people in the department about this very issue, whether we had the legislative capacity. Of course, legislation has to be in official languages, and so on. I asked: do we have enough people so that the lack of

legislative drafters will be a problem? I am told no. So it is really a question of us getting the work to them. We believe they have the capacity to complete their tasks in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. In the future, if there are any legislative delays, we know where to place our concerns: on the shoulders of the Ministers responsible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I could perhaps add to that, just to say that, should we be in that position, if there is such an overwhelming amount of legislation that is being produced by this House, there is also the possibility of contracting additional people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I believe this is where the rental office is located, in the Department of Justice. There has been some discussion in this House about the backlog of cases there, and it does not look like there is any additional funding for the rental office in next year's budget. In fact, it has actually been declining over time, if you go back to 2015-16. What is the plan to deal with this backlog, if we are not actually going to increase the funding for this function? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is actually in the section services to the public. I wonder if we could hold off the question until we reach that section. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I am happy to wait. Thanks, Mr. Chair. Sorry about that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Do you have an additional question? Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Further questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder, through our mandate, we indicated we are going to develop the legislation to establish an independent Office of the Ombudsman. Can the department provide us an update as to what other departments we are working with, what the status

of the work is, exactly what kind of work is going on, and when we can expect to see the proposed legislation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Last year at this point, Mr. Chair, of course, we were working on our mandate, and we made a commitment to develop legislation within two years to establish the independent Office of the Ombudsman. The Department of the Executive actually is developing a legislative proposal for spring, late spring, perhaps early summer 2017. Again, there was a series of issues that had to be determined, the scope of it, whether the Ombudsman could initiate investigations on his own, so those issues are being examined. A legislative proposal will come forward by the early summer. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, further to what might be being looked at for consideration, what work is the department doing in considering other jurisdictions, in particular, the Yukon model that is seemingly fairly successful?

One of the key aspects of the Yukon model is its ability to conduct its own investigations, but also to be able to work on behalf of other bodies at their request. Is this something that we are going to be considering in our model? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: These issues were examined at our retreat last August, and one of the important issues is to determine whether the Ombudsman has the power to initiate investigations. I understand, in the jurisdictions that do have an Ombudsman, the answer to that question is yes. I'm not sure that the Yukon Ombudsman has that power yet; I think they are seeking it. So it would seem that the trend, if I can put it that way, is towards the Ombudsman having that type of power. So when the legislative proposal comes forward, committee -- in fact, this Caucus -- will have to determine whether that's the route we wish to go, but it does seem to be the way things are in all the other jurisdictions that have Ombudsmen, which I think is everywhere except Nunavut and Prince Edward Island, and the Yukon is heading that way, too.

So you will have to wait for the legislative proposal, but it's certainly something that's being very seriously considered, and that will come to the appropriate committee to determine whether that's the route we want to follow. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Further to what else is being considered, is the legislation being considered going to be inclusive of any other -- are we giving consideration to rolling in or rolling up other statutory offices within the Northwest Territories into the ombudsman's office? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, that's something that is really going to be determined by us. Clearly, that is a model that is more complex and expensive, I imagine, but it certainly is a possibility. I believe it was mentioned at the Caucus retreat in August. I'm not certain whether there was a consensus in the room as to where to go with that; certainly, that is being examined. The question is how complicated might that be. Cost is always an issue also. So, ultimately, that will be a determination that is made by the House. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: No further questions, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Any further questions? I see no further questions or comments from committee. Please turn to page 276, Justice, services to government, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$12,966,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Committee. We will now proceed on to the next activity, services to the public. Before we proceed on, I will recognize Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: No, I have questions for the next activity. Do you mind if I just continue on with that?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): I'll just read out the comments here. We will now proceed on to the next activity, services to the public. Activity description is found on page 279. The activity detail is on page 280 and the activity position information item is found on page 281. I will remind committee to specify the page their questions are addressed to. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I apologize for jumping the gun. I apologize to Mr. O'Reilly for usurping his question, but I did my

statement on the rental office the other day and so I just want to follow up on that.

The Minister agreed to do a business case to see the possible benefits of adding another body to the rental office. I was wondering when we can expect to see that business case? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We are always looking at ways to improve the service. I think that we will be looking at wait times. The current wait time, if I can put it that way, for the hearing date is between two and three months, which is consistent with other jurisdictions. However, if it appears that wait times are becoming too lengthy, and they may be, clearly we can look at the appointment of a second rental officer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't go over my entire Member's statement, but I'll read from Hansard. I said, "Will the department formally assess the business case for adding another rental officer to the rental office?" The Minister replied, "Yes." So I'd like to know: when can we expect that business case? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Can I have a different chair?

---Laughter

The business case will be worked on and be produced for the fall, and we will be examining that issue, as I indicated.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seeing as how it's only February, that's quite a ways away. Is this done yearly? Why the long delay, I guess? Why the long delay to take care of this issue that has been identified as an issue, as an impediment to creating small businesses, to attracting people to the territory, by taking away people's incentive to rent out and restricting the market? So why is this going to take so long? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I'm sure committee would not want us to make any rash decisions on this. I do appreciate that this is an ongoing problem, but I

don't think there's been a sudden spike in the issues that the Member quite properly raised in the House. So, I mean, I don't think that amount of time is unusual or unexpected. The point is that we do realize there may be an issue here, and if it is determined that we should hire a second rental officer, we can certainly look at that in the business plan.

Again, I don't see this as a crisis or anything that has happened recently. Maybe it's more of a long-term issue, and we certainly have to look at the numbers again. As I mentioned previously, we seem to be in the same range as other jurisdictions. Now, that may still be not terribly acceptable, and that's what we'll be looking at; whether we do need to hire someone else to ameliorate the issues raised by the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this is not a crisis that happened recently; it's an ongoing crisis, so we're aware of that. We've learned that much. It's going to take one person -- because we are a small jurisdiction, so we're on par with the rest of Canada, I mean, I don't know. Maybe I'm just unhappy with the status quo. Maybe I want to be at the top of the country at something, and if we can double our staff by hiring one person and have the best rental office in the country, that seems like something we can boast about, but I can tell I'm not going to get much movement on this and it's going to be a long day, so I will yield the floor and perhaps Mr. O'Reilly wants to continue with this. That's all for now, and this is something that I'll be discussing with the Minister over and over again until the fall, I'm sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Any further comments? Seeing no further questions or comments from committee, please turn to page 280, Justice, services to the public, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$4,328,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Committee, before we turn to the department total, we will consider the information item on pages 282 and 283, work performed on behalf of others. Does committee have any questions or comments to the information item? Recognizing Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wonder if the Minister could tell us about the difference between the estates clerk who is listed on this page and the office of the public trustee who was listed on page 280? On the face of it, it looks

like they do the same thing, which is manage the estates of the deceased. Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly, it is essentially the same job, but I understand that the estates clerk position identified on page 282 is work done on behalf of Canada. The public trustee would be doing that kind of work, and other work in addition, as I understand it. Thank you.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I didn't understand that answer. Could the Minister please elaborate?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert, to the question.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, the estate clerk position is funded from money from Canada and, as it says in the notes, the Government of the Northwest Territories administers the estates of Aboriginal persons. I think that goes back to, perhaps, the Indian Act and the requirements of the federal government, the fiduciary duty they have. So it is part of what the public trustee's office does, but not all. Thank you.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That maybe is a little bit clearer, but I thought that the public trustee's office was available to anyone, that it was not defined by ethnicity. Am I right about that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Deputy Minister Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is indeed correct. The public trustee does serve the public and residents of the Northwest Territories. This budget item, though, simply reflects that, as part of the public trustee's work, that office does enjoy some federal funding under a program directed specifically to Aboriginal people to help manage their estates, so that is why it is reflected the way it is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Deputy Minister Goldney. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, what I understand is that this is all one office, but there are two streams of funding. Is that correct?

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: That is correct. This funding identified on page 82 is additional funding to the money that we put into the public trustee's office. Thank you.

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

MS. GREEN: I have no further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Further questions? Seeing no further questions or comments on the information items, we will now turn to the departmental total on page 253. There are two information items related to the department total, found on pages 254 and 255. These include the revenue summary and the activity position summary. Any questions or comments to these information items? Recognizing Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Last time, one of my colleagues brought up the issue of Affirmative Action hiring by the department. I was wondering: how many lawyers does the Department of Justice employ, and how many of those are P1? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The department of Justice currently has three P1 lawyers. They also have three southern Aboriginal lawyers. Of note, there have been two P1 lawyers who have left the department in the recent past for other opportunities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So how many total lawyers are employed by the Department of Justice? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand the number, including legal division, legal aid, the rest of the government, and land legislation division, is about 40. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So three P1 lawyers out of 40 is the complement. What steps is the department taking to increase this number, if any? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you. I know we are encouraging Aboriginal lawyers, but perhaps Mr. Goldney can fill us in. Perhaps some of his personal experience might assist. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Deputy Minister Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department does take the Affirmative Action very seriously and does recognize that we do have a dearth of Aboriginal lawyers. Part of that is the reality that we don't have as many Aboriginal lawyers as we would prefer and not enough Aboriginal law students as we might prefer. Certainly, we do apply the Affirmative Action Policy when we are hiring and encourage Aboriginal candidates, where we know of them, to take opportunities to join our public service.

I can certainly say that my experience within the department has been one where it has been welcoming, and I have had, as an Aboriginal person, the benefit of development opportunities being provided as a result of the work that this department does. That is certainly a tradition we want to encourage and continue on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Deputy Minister Goldney. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Perhaps I could address the overall issue of Aboriginal and affirmative action within the department. I see from the statistics supplied to me that, as at December 31st, 28.5 per cent of our employees are Aboriginal, 18.6 are Indigenous non-Aboriginal, and the balance are neither Aboriginal nor non-Aboriginal residents. That is the overall department. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you to the deputy minister and the Minister for that information. I was going to give the department a hard time, but I know that all the northern Aboriginal lawyers who have come to the department that I know of personally have had good experiences and the department has been welcoming and encouraging.

So I guess, as Mr. Goldney pointed out, the issue is getting those potential employees in contact with the government or getting them into law school in the first place. I know, when I was in law school, there was a program and the U of A Faculty of Law accepted 12 Indigenous law students. The person who was sort of running that program left that year, and then the next year they accepted two.

So there are these programs that law schools can use to encourage students to get into law school and become lawyers. Is the department doing anything to reach out to these schools to say that, you know, we would like to work with you. We would like to get more Northerners into law school, either outreach to the schools or bringing those schools to work with the high school students or something like that?

This is another issue I have discussed before, is just reaching out to students themselves. I mean, when I was in law school, I never heard anything from the government, and I brought this up for different departments, as well, that the government should be doing more outreach, contacting, sending letters to students saying, you know, we would like to have you back. We see you taking an engineering degree, a law degree, whatever it is. We would like to have you back. Is the department doing anything more proactive like that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly, we agree with the comments. I do know that, perhaps, there are several universities down south that have a long-term history of being particularly accommodating for Aboriginal students. A Member mentioned the University of Alberta. The University of Saskatchewan has had a program for many years that enables students to be fast-tracked into the law school, either their law school or other law schools, but yes, we probably could and should do better. I am willing to work with the Department of Education to provide more of an outreach and, perhaps, an encouragement to students who are either in university now, or finishing high school, to encourage them to go to law school. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, for that answer. It is good to hear that they are willing to work with the Department of Education, as well as reach out. If they need any help, I would be happy to offer my services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Reply to that? Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Only to add that we do support Law Day, and clearly more needs to be done, particularly to encourage those students who are considering law as a career to follow that path. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on page 254, under the program category, I see that the Nunavut exchange of services is declining from \$2.5 million to \$1.1 million, and I am wondering if the Minister can give us a reason for that change? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Deputy Minister Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That revenue item relates to inmates who are in our facilities on behalf of Nunavut. Certainly, Nunavut is making efforts to reduce that number. They are making changes to their policies and practices, and certainly building capacity within their own facilities, as well. That does reflect in the revenue estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Deputy Minister Goldney. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I can add to that by saying that the facility in Nunavut was in rather shocking condition, as I understand it, so it was absolutely necessary that they send inmates out. I understand also from the note I have been given that the Government of Nunavut has signed an agreement with Ontario which has provided the means to transfer additional offenders south versus west to the GNWT. I imagine it is an issue of accessibility. It is easier to get from Nunavut -- less expensive, maybe, from Nunavut to facilities in Ontario than it is in Yellowknife. This is likely an amount that will continue to decline. Thank you.

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

MS. GREEN: No further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Recognizing Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am looking at the same page, 254. I see that we collected a whopping \$4,000 for access to information and protection of privacy fees. I know this was an issue that was posed in the discussion paper that came from our government recently, but why do we even bother, because I am sure the administrative costs of collecting the money is probably even greater than \$4,000. Is this something that the Minister is looking at in terms of updating the act and working towards more open government? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are looking at that very issue as part of the ATIPP review. Obviously, it is not a large revenue item. I

do not know what legislation says in other jurisdictions. Clearly, you do not want fees to be an impediment to reasonable requests for information. I imagine in past times there was concern that the government might be overwhelmed, or the ATIPP people might be overwhelmed by requests for information that were not terribly serious. Whether that is an issue or not, I do not know. It is an issue, obviously, that we are looking at, because we do not want to have people prevented from accessing ATIPP because of the costs. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do not have any further questions, other than I do want to express my thanks to the Minister, and I do hope that the department will seriously look at getting rid of the fees completely, if we are only collecting \$4,000, so that we can move forward with a more open and transparent government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister explain what operator licenses the Department of Justice is earning regulatory revenue on? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Is the Member talking about the \$1,000 item?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Clarification there, Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Yes.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am told that it has to do with licenses related to exploratory work under the Oil and Gas Regulations and Operations Act.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I suppose that speaks to the state of our oil and gas industry, which is disappointing. I notice that the Witness Expense Assistance Program is no longer accounted for, or it doesn't seem to have any revenues. I am assuming that line item is rolled into another program. Is that correct, or has that source of revenue been eliminated?

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: -- ability, and therefore costs have been rolled into with PPSA, the federal government. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Nothing further. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. No further questions? Seeing none. Committee, please turn to page 253. Justice, total department, \$123,417. Does this committee agree? Before we proceed on, I'll recognize Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 66-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE, DEFERRAL OF FURTHER
CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES FOR
JUSTICE,
CARRIED

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that committee defer further consideration of estimates for the Department of Justice at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

Committee, the consideration of the Department of Justice has been deferred. I want to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Thank you, committee. We have next agreed to consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, which begins on page 307. I will turn to the Minister responsible for her opening remarks. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2017-2018 Main Estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$2.56 million from the 2016-2017 Main Estimates, which is a 2.4 per cent increase.

These estimates continue to support the Government of the Northwest Territories' objective of ensuring a strong and sustainable future for the government and its programs by managing expenditures due to limited revenue growth.

The 2017-2018 Main Estimates include an increase of \$1.6 million from the 2017-18 business plan

reviewed by standing committee in September. This increase is the result of two changes:

- Under the Government of the Northwest Territories' obligations in the Deline final self-government agreement, Municipal and Community Affairs has moved \$809,000 in capital funding into the regional operations budget. This \$809,000 will make up a portion of the block funding grant that will be made to the Deline Government this fiscal year. Since this is a transfer between budgets, there is no financial impact on the Government of the Northwest Territories; and
- New funding of \$616,000 to begin to implement 911 service in the Northwest Territories.

The 2017-2018 Main Estimates reflect:

- \$606,000 in reductions that the department was able to find without reducing core funding to community governments;
- An increase of \$1.129 million in funding to community governments to support the increased cost of operations and maintenance and water and sewer delivery at the community government level; and
- Initiative funding of \$500,000 to provide increased support for the hosting of the 2018 Arctic Winter Games in the South Slave region.

The department's proposed spending in 2017-18 continues to support the priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly. Specific activities in support of these priorities include:

- Within the governance priority area, we are advancing legislative priorities including amendments to the Civil Emergency Measures Act, the Western Canada Lottery Act, and the Fire Prevention Act. We will also engage with community governments and stakeholders on potential amendments to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to address local improvement levies for energy retrofits.
- Within the education, training and youth priority area, we will continue to develop and enhance the online training and certification opportunities available to community government staff and officials through the department's School of Community Government.
- We will provide young Northerners from across our territory with once-in-a-lifetime structured volunteer experiences and opportunities to travel the country as youth ambassadors.
- Within the cost of living priority area, we will

continue to support community governments as they apply for and take advantage of the suite of federal infrastructure funding programs available to them.

The department will support mandate objectives related to accountability through the implementation of our action plan to address the Office of the Auditor General's Performance Audit of Municipal and Community Affairs. That action plan will result in improvements to the department's accountability, as well as community government accountability. Finally, Municipal and Community Affairs will work with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to improve our relationship and support to Aboriginal governments as they deliver essential services to residents. That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: On my left I have Eleanor Young. She is the deputy minister for Municipal and Community Affairs. On my right is Gary Schauerte. He is the director of Corporate Affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. We will now open the floor to general comments from committee. As usual, committee members will have 10 minutes to make comments, and the Minister will have 10 minutes at the end to respond. First, I have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my role as chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, our committee is responsible for reviewing the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' business plan and proposed initiatives. We have spent time with this department, both in business planning and more recently, and perhaps of higher priority, the recent report of the Auditor General of Canada.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations and the Committee on Priority and Planning are pleased to see the department produce an action plan and put a high degree of priority on that action plan. Furthermore, we are pleased to see the development of a costed implementation plan for 911 service in the Northwest Territories. These things are welcome initiatives that are both important to our residents and important to our priorities as an Assembly.

The standing committee continues to recommend that the elimination of positions within the

department be delayed or not implemented at all, to take a stronger look at how we are developing the new lottery fund and potential reductions and impacts to multi-sport game contributions. These are important to the areas of responsibilities that they benefit the regions where these positions are located. Multi-sport games, of course, are crucial for young people in the territory to develop skills for volunteerism amongst community members and to celebrate the culture and athletic achievement of Northerners. We very much would like to see this funding maintained and these programs operating to the best ability that they can.

On a personal note, MACA has a lot on its plate, and that includes a fairly lengthy legislative agenda, especially with new commitments to develop 911 services and to update pieces of legislation stemming from the Auditor General's report. Some of this is in our mandate, including the commitment to review the Cities, Towns and Villages Act.

Unfortunately, myself and other members of the standing committee do feel that the department could be moving more expediently in this manner and is duplicating work that has previously been done. There are many, many consultations that have been proposed and although consultation is always welcome, some of these are uncontroversial and well thought-out amendments and initiatives that have been kicking around our cities, towns, and villages for many, many years. So honourable Members on this side of the House would like to see more decisive leadership from the Minister on these files, especially when there are existing recommendations and resolutions from our municipal partners to make these changes happen.

So I guess I will end on saying that, while we welcome some of the direct actions that have emerged in this budget, there is still a bit of hesitation to move more expediently on other areas that are of crucial importance to the communities that we serve. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all I'm going to talk about some good things that are happening out there. It's great to see that the government is looking at the Western Canada Lottery Act and actually bringing it into the system so we're not losing the million dollars. Now, give credit where credit is due on that. However, when we come to looking at these -- I know, sorry. Shock to the heart. When it comes to the multi-sport games, we see a reduction of \$500,000. We're losing \$150,000 to the games. These games belong to the Government of the Northwest Territories, and if the government doesn't want to own these games, then please give them to Sport

North and Aboriginal Sport Circle, and give them the money to run it. We're cutting money right now, \$150,000, to the games, and I don't know where we're going to see this shortfall come from, unless it's coming from lotteries.

If it's coming from lotteries, then we're taking away money from the grassroots. Lotteries are about grassroots development for the five organizations, and it's a Sport and Recreation program that the Minister talked about in her Minister's statement today.

I have to give credit to the department when they talk about 911; it really doesn't have a huge impact in my region, but potentially I'm hoping that it will and then they can work with the companies that have electronics out there helping people out in the bush so they can work with that, so they can actually get this information where people are and emergencies are dealt with in that manner.

Moving on to my concerns about the position that's being deleted from the budget. It belongs in the Nahendeh, but actually the focus is working with designated authorities. We just heard the Auditor General's report about how badly the department is dealing with designated authorities. I'm hearing stuff out there that they say, well, you want self-government, here it is. This is self-government. We're hearing that from the communities I'm dealing with. I don't think the department is saying that, but I'm hearing that from the people. The people are sitting there saying, well, it's great, we're going to have somebody from Yellowknife who doesn't understand what's going on in our region. How is somebody from Fort Smith going to help?

Well, both these people, if it's out of Fort Smith or out of Yellowknife, there is additional cost to it. Unless we're just going to do lip service, which is, we'll give you a phone call. This is capacity. We're talking about capacity and designated authorities. Why do we have problems? Because we're not building the capacity.

Yes, this department does a great job of the school community government, but there are costs to it. Regional staff need to be in the communities, working with the people. If we're not doing that, we're going to have the same situation as we have presently, and that really is disappointing. I have a strong feeling for this department, because I worked for it for 23 years. I understand the importance of it, but it's about capacity, and we're not doing that.

If we want to look at some cost-saving measures, why do we have two offices in the North Slave? When I first started out, North Slave was based out of Rae, which is now Behchoko. Now, we have one

in Yellowknife and one in Behchoko. So, again, there is a cost-saving measure that we can look at.

Location of regional offices. We have an office in Fort Smith. If you want to look at efficiency and better service, it should be based in Hay River. Or then you look at the two Deh Cho communities, which are Fort Providence and Kakisa. Maybe they should be serviced out of Fort Simpson, if you're going to keep the office in Fort Smith. So it becomes more efficient. You want to save money? There are two ideas.

We're not going to save money. We're not going to look at that, unfortunately, and it really saddens me because the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the big concern is capacity and building our communities. The great thing about building capacity is it's ongoing. When you get a good job done and you train people, unfortunately, they move on, but you need to continue working on that until the community becomes self-sufficient. If we're not going to allow that, then we're in trouble; and by cutting that position, we're having a huge detriment to my region.

If you don't want designated authorities and you want to say, well, it's a DIAND issue, or the federal government's issue, then why are you in the business? Realistically, the federal government and the Department of Municipal Affairs have a responsibility for the people in the communities. I know, in my riding, where we're lacking right now, and we have four designated authorities. If we're not going to work with them and you're going to delete positions that have a huge impact on us, then we're still going to be having problems year after year after year. We're going to have to bring people in, and that's unfortunate. That's sad.

I know. My time is up, so I thank the Chair for allowing me to rant on for about an extra minute. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. We were going to take a short recess. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber, and we will reconvene shortly. Thank you to the witnesses; we'll see you soon.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we were making general comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Do we have any further general comments? Seeing none, I will give the Minister up to 10 minutes to respond if she wishes. I would like to remind everyone that it is getting late and to keep your comments and answers concise, if at all possible. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the comments that were made by the Members of the Legislative Assembly, I want to talk a little bit about some of them. The Auditor General's report came at an opportune time, actually, because of just accepting the new portfolio and a new deputy minister, it gave us the time to really look at the difficulties that the department was having and gear us towards the new programs and supports that we can actually help people in the communities. It also identified the need to work with Indigenous and Northern Affairs closer.

At no time have I heard any talk and at no time would I expect any talk about leaving the designated authorities on their own; that is not the mandate of the department, nor was it what I picked up from the Auditor General's report. The basic thing that we needed to do was develop stronger partnerships and look at things that we can do to improve so that the communities that are designated that do report to the federal government will actually have the supports and maintain the services that are needed in their communities.

The legislation pieces that we're doing, I've heard the Members saying that they don't want us to review it again with stakeholders, although I am probably the biggest advocate for actually engaging all people who are appropriate to doing any kind of work. So the legislative amendments that were put on the table were passed by the NWT Association of Communities; however, after that was done we did get some feedback from community members who said they didn't really want to just hurt people's feelings and they still have concerns. So in reflecting on that, then, we need to engage those stakeholders and make sure that they do have a voice in it.

Restructuring the department, we're looking at some of the office space. Eleanor is brand new in her position. She's talked about once she can get a handle on what's going on -- because we've been very busy with the mains right now and in session -- she will be looking at the department and seeing if there are other ways that we can save money, that we can restructure to provide better services to communities again and to people who access our sports and recreation programs. So that is something that she's got on her plate. It doesn't mean that anything will happen, but she will be looking at it thoroughly to see if there's a way that we can restructure and provide better services.

Other than that, the lottery funding. Again, lottery funding will be coming into the Government of the Northwest Territories; it's a way to save on taxation. It's also a better way to make sure that the community governments and volunteer organizations are actually getting better support

within that. Again, we will be going to the stakeholders, the sports and rec associations, to define if the Sutcliffe Report, if those recommendations should be implemented or not; we will present our findings and see if they're in agreement. We will be looking for service provision gaps and overlaps within the whole sector to see if we need to restructure the whole of our operations when it comes to the sports and youth volunteer positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. As always, we will defer the consideration of the departmental total until after we look at each activity. The first activity can be found on pages 314 to 316. The activity is community governance. Do I have comments or questions for community governance? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question for the Minister that relates to this section in her opening remarks. Apparently, there are some LPs coming on the Civil Emergency Measures Act, the Western Canada Lottery, and the Fire Prevention Act and then later on the Cities, Towns and Villages Act. Could the Minister give us some timing around when these pieces of legislation will be introduced? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. I will let the deputy minister answer that; she knows the timeline in place.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So for the Civil Emergency Measures Act, we have a legislative proposal in place right now, but we are looking at some of the research that we've done to make sure that it is adequate or whether it needs any changes. We plan to go to drafting instructions for a bill in the spring -- or sorry, to be able to bring forward a bill in the fall. Sorry, I'm just looking at my timelines here. Reviewing of a draft bill in the spring and bringing a bill forward in the fall.

For 911 legislation and regulations, we have started our work on researching this. We intend to have a legislative proposal prepared by April and again looking at a draft bill for early October.

For the Fire Prevention Act, we have a stakeholder engagement process that is under way right now. Folks may have seen a document that was sent out to get feedback. We will be putting a What We Heard document together before we actually develop the legislative proposal. In that case, we are looking at a little-bit-later timeline, with the legislative proposal planned for probably

September, and looking at a draft bill introduction in the fall of 2018, if I am not mistaken. I will confirm that one.

Western Canada Lottery Act and Regulations, we actually intend to have a legislative proposal submitted hopefully within the next two weeks. We are hoping that we will be able to actually move that one forward for this spring.

Finally, the amendments to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, we are going to be engaging with the six cities, towns, and villages over the next month to six weeks. Subject to the results of that engagement, we anticipate a legislative proposal by May and being able to move forward with amendments to the bill by late spring, early summer.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the deputy for that answer. Can I just confirm that the Cities, Towns and Villages Act LP is coming in May of 2018? Thank you.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can confirm the engagement will happen. We will then develop the draft bill, so May of this year would be too aggressive. Depending on the nature of the changes to be made, we may be able to move very quickly.

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

MS. GREEN: I have no more questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Anything further to this activity? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we note that, in the business plan for MACA under the description of core services within community governance division, the community governance unit provides advice on community governance issues and helps with various pieces of municipal legislation. It is noted in here as well that the chief and deputy chief municipal electoral office functions provide advice and support related to community government elections. I am just wondering: can the department describe what kind of support that is? Do we have a chief municipal electoral office, and what role do they play in support of the municipal elections? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do have a chief municipal elections officer as well as two deputies in the department. Their role is to train returning officers at the local level for the administration of the Local Authorities Elections Act. There are some limited areas within the act where, if necessary, the chief municipal elections officer could cancel an election and reschedule it. An example would be what we saw most recently in Fort McPherson, where there were some issues that arose with the original election call. We had to stop that election process and reschedule. That was done under the authority of the chief municipal elections officer.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Young. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the reply. In some of the planned activities that we have for community governments, we indicate in there that, with regard to the support of one of our mandate items, we will create and coordinate a multi-departmental working group to inventory and then transfer GNWT-owned lands and assets within community boundaries to community governments. I am wondering if the department can provide us with an update on if the multi-departmental working group has been established and what is the status of this goal that we are trying to achieve? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The land and assets transfer project is a project that results from properties that were developed for communities prior to the implementation of the New Deal in 2007. There were a number of garages, water plants, assets of that nature, that were built, but they were built on Commissioner's lands or other types of land at the time and not officially transferred legal tenure to the community government. What we are doing is we are currently validating that inventory to make sure that those assets are still on the ground and that they haven't been written off or that transfer hasn't already been effected by the community. We will be taking a look and seeing if there is any survey work that needs to be done and coordinate it with the Department of Lands. We are just trying to figure out the best approach, whether it will be community by community or type of asset by type of asset, to be able to proceed with the transfer initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Young. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I thank the deputy minister for the answer. No further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next, Mr. Thompson. My apologies. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am looking at page 315. The line item is community planning. There seems to be a catastrophic drop-off of funding for this line from \$421,000 in 2015-16 to \$54,000 in the budget next year. Can someone explain to me why there is this ongoing reduction under the community planning function for MACA? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. SCHAUERTE: The Member has identified an actual error in the statement of the main estimates. The community planning area, where it states \$54,000, that number should be \$162,000. Right above it, the community governance area, where it says \$384,000, it should read \$274,000. The changes there represent the reduction of two positions within this unit, including a junior governance advisor position and a community planner position. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that the Members have now been straightened out. I guess I am looking for an explanation as to why there is a reduction, why this reduction is being made. Is there less work to do? I would like an explanation. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thanks, Mr. Chair. When the department was looking at some restructuring to see if there were ways that we could be more efficient with our resources, we decided that the two positions could be terminated - they are through headquarters -- and that we would have enough staffing to actually do the extra work that was required. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So it sounds like this is part of the fiscal reduction targets set for the department. Can we just have a little bit more information about what these individuals do? Do they support community governments? It says "community planning," so I know maybe this isn't the right place, but are these people within MACA who, say, review land use planning bylaw changes,

zoning changes that have to go to MACA for approval? Some more detail on what the functions are of the positions that are being cut would be helpful. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The community planner position was actually responsible for assisting in the development of the community plans, but, with the New Deal, actually we have changed it so that communities actually develop their own plans now and we allow them to hire their own planners within the new funding arrangement that we have. Then, at headquarters, we still have two positions. We have a planner and a technician. Like I say, these two positions that are currently here will take over the overlap, and it is not as in-depth anymore. Now that we are not doing actual community plans and we are allowing the communities to develop their own and hire their own planners, the level of work is less. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I would to remind everyone to just make sure the little light is on before they begin speaking so that we can get it on the record and get it into Hansard. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is getting closer. Are these the people, though, within the department who give advice to the Minister about whether the Minister should be signing off on zoning changes, general plans, those sort of things that require ministerial approval? The reason I ask this question is because, if we have fewer people giving advice to the Minister or we have a diminished capacity here, is this going to delay the ability of communities to carry out the land use planning that the department seems to want them to do? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the positions actually do provide advice and support to the Minister. However, we still have two positions in headquarters -- like I said, the planner and the technician -- who will be able to provide the support. There should be no delays to the communities actually doing their community plans because of these reductions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate getting that information out. So the Minister says that it won't cause any delays, but does the

department actually track the time that the department takes?

It is fine for the Minister to give her word, but I am looking for a little bit more objective information or data. Is the Minister committed to tracking the amount of time that is taken by the department in reviewing these changes and seeing if this reduction actually increases the amount of time the department requires to sign off on those changes? That is the kind of tracking and evidence-based decision-making that I would suggest the department put in place. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we can commit to actually starting to track the time that it takes for us to reach out to the communities and actually have their community plans. However, there may be extenuating circumstances. It is not always the responsibility of the person providing support. Sometimes there are community issues that make delays in the planning, but we will track what the reasons are and how long it takes.

Like I said, we are looking at, once we get a little bit of time on our hands, actually looking at the whole department and seeing if there is a restructuring that needs to be done. At that point, then we will be pulling in that information to give us information on whether we need to restructure or not. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. It still seems rather counterintuitive to me that we are asking communities to do more land use planning for themselves, yet we are cutting the capacity within the department to approve the land use plans, the zoning bylaw changes, and so on, that they come up with. It just does not make much sense to me. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, as stated, we are not anticipating that it will cause any delays. We will be conscious of it, though, and watching for it in the future. The planning for the communities isn't done all the time. It is not a constant thing. It is usually done annually. Therefore, we don't see it as being a huge issue, and not all communities are doing it at exactly the same time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't want to prolong a debate here. I don't think this is a good idea, but I look forward to getting the evidence from the Minister that this is not going to result in delays. I think this is actually being driven by the fiscal reduction targets again. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I would like to clarify with the Minister. There are two typos in the main estimates here. I would just like to clarify that the activity total remains \$2,036,000. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: That is correct, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further? Seeing nothing further, I will call this activity. Municipal and Community Affairs, community governance, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$2,036,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue on to the next activity, located on pages 317 to 320, community operations. Do we have comments or questions on this? When you do have comments or questions, please indicate which page you are speaking to. Pages 317 to 320, community operations. Seeing none, I will call this activity. Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$2,043,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Continuing on to the next activity, directorate, found on pages 321 to 324. Comments or questions on this activity, directorate, page 321 to 324? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I mentioned in the opening comments, and the Minister is well aware that honourable Members have a concern with the pace of legislation that MACA is responsible for, or that she is responsible for as Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Is the policy and planning unit encapsulated by this activity adequately staffed to accommodate that lengthy legislative agenda? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we are adequately staffed to

complete the legislation as provided by the deputy minister within the time frames. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: How many policy analysts or positions are with the department? I will start with that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we have a manager of policy, we have a senior policy adviser, we have a junior policy adviser, and we have a legislative adviser position. We also have been provided access to Justice if we need it at any time, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister. Again, I will make the same comment, that, if the Minister feels that this is adequate, then the burden of meeting this objective falls squarely on her shoulders. I look forward to an expedient delivery of these priorities rolling out over the next two years. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Do we have further comments or questions? Seeing none, I will call this activity. Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$3,837,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Continuing on to the next activity. Public safety, found on pages 325 to 328. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am aware that there are a number of aspects of legislation that the department is working on that are going to stem from this division. One thing, as a representative of Yellowknife North, the Highway No. 4 Ingraham Trail is in my riding. We have had, obviously, some considerable concern over the last couple of years with regard to forest fire seasons and lost assets, but most importantly, there are residents who live out on Ingraham Trail, a significant number of residents who live out there.

I am just wondering if the department has been engaged by residents on the trail as it relates to a communication strategy, and if that is the case, or even if not, is there a communication strategy in case there is an emergency of some nature out on

Ingraham Trail that either is going to block people from getting from the city out to their homes, or vice versa, block people getting from their homes into the city where they might find safety in an unsafe incident or emergency situation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister. When the light comes on, please respond.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, when there are emergencies such as a forest fire, we do have a public alerting protocol that we have in place. We are working with corporate communications as well to develop a more thorough public alerting. We are reviewing our emergency plans as well, so we are in that process currently. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the reply. So in the effort of public alerting, is there a means, or a way in this instance, that we have the ability to have direct correspondence or communication with the residents on Ingraham Trail? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did public service announcements through the television. We do radio announcements as well. I am not sure if the Member is looking for us to knock on doors. Currently, we do not do that. If the Member is looking at providing feedback from people into our development of the emergency plan, we could probably find some way to implement feedback from the residents on Ingraham Trail when we are developing the emergency plan for Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the instance of Ingraham Trail, would there be any consideration or opportunity for such thing as a direct e-mail alert or possibly even direct calling to the residents who live year-round on Ingraham Trail? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One thing that I did forget to mention also, besides the radio and television, was the social media that we use as well. I do see it as quite

cumbersome, and perhaps not very safe, actually, to be knocking on doors or calling residents individually, but when we develop the emergency plan, we will take that into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions at this point.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister just to update us on the whole ground ambulance highway rescue activity. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just relying off memory. I believe that we met with the Municipality of Hay River in December, was our last meeting, and we will be calling together all of the tax-based communities, the six communities, in April of this year. At that point, we will be looking at the gaps, the areas that they are having difficulties with, and deciding how much funding we will need, what is the best use of resources, and what is the best way to roll out the program for ground ambulance and highway rescue services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Minister could let us know if the discussion will include non-tax-based communities that are placed strategically on the highway with no ground ambulance nearby? For example, maybe Providence, maybe Fort McPherson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, no, we are not inviting other communities to the table. We are looking at the communities that have some kind of ground ambulance or rescue services in place to be able to provide those provisions, so only those that have the services that can provide ground ambulance currently are going to be at the table. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when the Minister talked about gaps, that would mean that just the tax-based communities would be responsible for the huge gaps that lie in between the tax-based communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will do a review again, but currently, the only communities that can actually provide ground ambulance supports are those communities that have the infrastructure in place to be able to initiate the call and to be able to respond to a call. As pointed out before, since the New Deal in 2007, communities themselves make their own capital plans, and so within that, they decide if they want to do something such as building a fire department or an ambulance service or any of these services within their communities, or if they would rather use other services. At this point, only the communities that have those services are going to be at the table. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all I have.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am looking at page 326. I'm at the top, program details. Consumer affairs is listed at \$150,000. Last week, I raised in the House concerns around our weak Consumer Protection Act, and I was pleased to hear the Minister say that there was supposed to be some sort of a plain language brochure that goes out soon to help consumers understand what their rights are under the existing legislation.

When was the last time there was any change or increase to the consumer affairs line in the MACA budget? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we do not know when the last time an increase was made to the consumer affairs portion of the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know how far back that goes. It looks like we haven't actually even tried to keep pace with the cost of

living or Consumer Price Index in terms of bolstering resources for that, so there has been an erosion over time.

Is the Minister committed to looking at the work that we do in consumer affairs with regard to possibly increasing the budget for next year's main estimates? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we are developing the next year's budget, we can take a look at the consumer affairs; however, I do have to point out that over three years we've had less than two dozen cases that we've had to deal with. So unless our numbers pick up dramatically I can't see that there would be an increase at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like the first question to clarify when we're talking about the six communities, tax-based communities, sitting around the table, are we including all the six tax-based or is it specifically for ground ambulance and highway rescue? In other words, communities that have highway rescue and ground ambulance, or is it all six tax-based communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. So it will be the six tax-based communities. I'm going to run them off: Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Norman Wells, and Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: I just wanted to clarify that. In regard to program management, it's \$660,000 and then on page 327 it has \$365,000. This is for 911, correct? This is where the money is and \$365,000 is the furniture and stuff like that, building it, and then the other remaining is for the implementation for 911? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, if you look at page 326 you'll see that the total for 911 implementation is \$616,000. That is broken down with the \$132,000 for a 911 emergency coordinator; the \$365,000, as the

Member stated, is implementing furniture, office space, et cetera; and then the last \$119,000 is for the contract services for the implementation of 911. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Having no further comments or questions, I will call this activity. Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$2,142,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Moving on to the next activity, regional operations, pages 329 to 333. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The first question would be on 331, and we talk about recreation funding of \$825,000. Can the Minister inform if this funding has been totally allocated? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this money is allocated to each community, so all of the communities have actually got their allocations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for the clarification. In regard to the other contributions, has all this allocation of this money been spoken for and utilized this fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To date, yes, all of the budget allocations should be out. If the Member would like, we can bring back confirmation of that if the Member wishes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that. Yes, I would really appreciate it if we could see if all this funding is being utilized to this date. Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Minister can make that commitment.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I will make that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. On page 333, I talked about the reduction of the one position. Can the Minister advise us why this position is being cut? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This position was cut because we were looking at efficiencies and using our services and supports the best way possible. So not every region has a works advisor position; it was only a couple of them that did. What we're going to do is we're taking away the one position, which will leave two other regions with positions, Fort Smith and Inuvik. Fort Smith will cover the southern side of the lake and Inuvik will cover the northern side of the lake. As well, we have five managers who can actually provide support as well.

With the new technology, the fibre link and the video conferencing that we have in place we are fairly positive that we will be able to provide the same level of services. This also allows us to use our supports more strongly and to be able to share the resources. So if one staff member has skills in one area, we'll be able to time share that with others, so just being more effective and more efficient with the resources that we have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I'm struggling with this decision. If you're taking it out of Fort Simpson, which we have six small communities, four very small communities that are designated authorities, and to keep it in Fort Smith, which is Hay River and Fort Smith, they're not going to use those resources. They're not going to tap into this as much as the small communities need it.

I understand the technology, but my biggest concern is: where is the department's commitment to developing the capacity in these small communities? If you're using technology by Internet and that, great, but where is the face-to-face and why aren't we looking at that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have some funding through our gas tax

agreement that will provide for travel. The agreement does not provide for salaries, for wages actually, so therefore we'll be using the money that we are allocated for travel to provide the support for face-to-face as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that. It's great that you have the money, but if you're going to be more cost efficient and effective, would you not put it where the position needs to do most of the work? So if it's within Nahendeh, which has the six communities, Fort Providence and Kakisa are closer than Fort Smith is. Why isn't the department looking at it? Unless it's just bigger centres and that's why we're doing it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Deputy Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we took a look at a number of considerations when we were trying to figure out where the best location was for services as well as looking at where we may have opportunities to support from elsewhere.

We are aware that there are challenges in not having all of these facilities or positions in every region, but we did try to take into account that we did have some travel dollars available, we have new technology available, and we want to build on the strength of some of our capital staff in the regions. So where the cut came or didn't come was not as much of a part of the consideration as it was making sure that we were going to be able to provide services across all of the regions with the number of positions that we had left and then taking a look at where we had incumbents, where we had staff retiring or on other types of leave so we could balance that out a little bit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the deputy minister for her answer. I am still struggling with this, though. I am not talking about retirement. I am not talking about leave. I am talking: what is the best service for the residents of the Northwest Territories? When I talk about looking at the position being in Fort Smith, again, we are talking two tax-based communities that don't utilize or need that service as much as the smaller communities. So, when we are looking at these cuts, it was not logically done, in my opinion,

because most of the work, the capacity that needs to be done is in the smaller communities. If we are not building the capacity in the smaller communities, we are going to have people who keep on coming back in.

The other issue I have is that this position could have been done by somebody from the Northwest Territories. When I talk about that position, there are lots of people who have developed their skills in the communities who could move up. The capital position needs more of a specialized approach to it. Will the Minister look at this and come back with a more logical approach to this and change it to not be either delete the position or look again at where they are going to put this position? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The works position actually did assume the capital planner position in that region. When we look at restructuring we can take another look at them and see if the placements are in the right places; however, recognizing that not all regions did have this position before. Many regions went without, and that is not only large communities. The two positions not only have to serve the six communities in the Sahtu, they have to serve all of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: So, I guess what I am looking at is, this is a fiscal cut; this is why we did it. So it is going to have a hindrance to the smaller communities in my riding, and I don't care, we can call it potato or potahto, it is still going to have a hindrance in my communities. They are still going to have the issue of trusting the individual from Fort Smith or Yellowknife, and those individuals need to know what is going on. I understand that the works guy moved into the capital position. I am well aware of that, but I am not talking about him. I am talking about the position that needs to be done within the communities, for the communities.

Again, I am starting to feel that you are going to look at it again after the fact, and that is a concern for me. If you are going to reorganize and look at things again, then why are you making these cuts? You shouldn't make a cut until after looking at where it is best fitted. This is my concern. I understand that the Minister will follow through on what she has to do, but it is still hindering the smaller communities and the communities that I represent. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. For clarity, direct questions to the Chair. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The commitment to look at the positions isn't because we are doing the cuts now and looking at it later. The commitment to actually look at restructuring of the whole department is because we have a new Minister and a new deputy minister, and so it makes sense that, with new upper management, we would be looking at efficiencies and revisiting the whole of the department's services and programs.

I would also like to say again, to reiterate, that only three regions actually had this position before, so two regions were totally off the map and, those two regions, we never had any complaints; the services were still provided. So I am not so sure that we do need to have a sole person to just take care of one region when four other regions were getting served by two people. So we will go down to the two people, and we will look at it after and see if it is the best usage of the time. If we have complaints or if it does not work, then we can look at that later, but, yes, I am not going to fix anything that is not broken. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. During the review of the business plan, we talked a little bit about the community governments' compliance with the gas tax reporting requirements. I am wondering, because the business plan review took place six months ago, whether the Minister can update us on the level of compliance with gas tax reporting. Has it improved at all? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have been working diligently with the communities to get the reporting in, and we are anticipating that by March 31st all communities will have their reporting in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is good news. How has the department been able to turn this situation around? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department provides supports to all community governments in the administration of

their obligations as a government. When we notice that communities are having a little bit of difficulty, we actually bump up our support to those governments and offer to go in. It can be one-on-one. We can be working with them intensely. Again, once communities have identified a problem or we see a problem, we intensify our support to that community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the response. That is not what the Office of the Auditor General showed, but I am happy to hear that this is now the approach that the department is taking. Will this be the approach that the department will take on those issues that were identified by the Office of the Auditor General as needing more attention from the department? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. All of the recommendations through the Auditor General's report have been taken very seriously, and we are working diligently to fulfill all of the recommendations. One thing we should note is that one of the biggest areas that we recognize that we need to step up is just the paperwork. There were a lot of visits done into communities, there were supports provided, that we actually didn't keep track of, so, as part of our commitment to the recommendations of the audit, we are actually increasing our tracking of supports we provide to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am wondering about the recreation funding. I don't know if this is exactly on the right activity line. Often we find that the arenas around some of the smaller communities are not operational all year or sometimes not operational for a year or longer. In the past, I think there has been longer. Lately, we have built some youth centres. Again, a little bit of difficulty funding youth centres.

I am wondering if I could ask the Minister if the recreational funding activity is the money that would be used to support the ongoing operation of an arena or a youth centre? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the New Deal in 2007, it is up to communities to decide what they are using their funds for. We provide the funds to the communities. They decide within their capital planning process what type of infrastructure they would like, whether it is an arena or youth centre, whatever it may be, swimming pool, et cetera, and then they use the operating and maintenance funding that we provide them as well to be able to operate those facilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If there were funding needed to operate an arena or keep the youth centre open, the Minister is advising me now that that money is coming from the community government funding on page 331 and not the recreational funding, which is also on that page as a community government contribution. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, if they are looking at an arena, then they do have to use that from their operation maintenance funding. We do have a small funding for youth centres. It is \$500,000 a year that we provide, and that is specifically for youth centres. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, is that \$500,000 incorporated into community government funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, it is found in the recreation section of the binder. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Recreation funding of \$825,000. Of that, \$500,000 is used for youth centres? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 340, it shows the youth centres funding for \$500,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wasn't sure where the funding was situated, so I am happy that it is not in this section. Just the same line of questioning now for arenas, to operate the arena. Where does that funding come from? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The operation of the arena if a community sees fit, that that is what they decide to operate is found on page 330, and it is under grants, contributions and transfers, the \$81,081,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister when the last time the funding model, all of the money that is going to communities, has been reviewed? It appears as though sometimes, depending on how the year goes, they don't have enough money to fully operate an arena or the arena opens up fairly late. I was wondering if the Minister could advise, when they are doing the funding for the communities, if they contemplate all of the infrastructure that is in the community and if they target funding towards the infrastructure in that community.

I guess the reason I am asking this question, Mr. Chair, is because, prior to the New Deal, there were some arenas built with direct capital from the Government of the Northwest Territories. When the New Deal was created, I don't know if there has been substantial increase in the O and M, but I know that in the capital there haven't been any increases there. I am not sure that it shows a significant increase here as well.

I am wondering if there has been some sort of budget review, I guess we will call it for lack of a better term, at the community level so that we ensure that huge, expensive assets or infrastructure items like arenas are not sitting there empty, not used, when the department, even recreation, supports and encourages residents to become more physically active and so on and so forth, and also some responsibilities for youth. I am wondering when that review occurred last. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The New Deal came out in 2007, and that was when the Government of the Northwest Territories stopped telling communities what to do with their funds and actually started listening to the communities and allowing communities to decide their own.

In 2014, though, we did do another funding review. At that time, when we looked at the operating and maintenance, we did take into consideration all of their core infrastructure needs, and an arena is a core infrastructure. It is in the category of core infrastructures. At that point, we realized that, I can't remember the exact figure, I think it was \$39 million in deficit. We presented to FMB a package to deal with the deficits within a five-year period. It came back and said that they would want over 10 years.

We have a 10-year commitment actually, and that is why you see new increases every year to address the gap. I think at this point we are now at \$34 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I am saying is that, yes, the operating and maintenance is included with the communities and it does take into account the fact that they would have an arena as well as other core infrastructure in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I thought the Minister had indicated that the review was done in 2014 and that it was a 10-year plan to recover the deficit. I was more or less asking, not about what type of deficits were accumulated, but why, maybe, the deficits got accumulated to start with? Trying to operate some infrastructure that was not funded for? The Minister indicated the arena is a core infrastructure that gets funding. I am wondering why it occurs that they are not able to operate the arena. I guess that is more of a comment, but if the Minister wants to comment on that, that would be fine. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am done.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like I stated, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs spends a lot of time with communities to develop their community plans. We try to give them recommendations. If they are, for example, building a fire hall that is too big or an arena that is too big, when they have the infrastructure in place, we talk to them about their plans in regard to what it will cost to run it.

There are certain categories that they are allowed to spend their monies on to take care of their needs. Although some community governments, in all honesty, are not using their funding appropriately. We have had community governments that have loaned out some of their funds to Aboriginal governments. We have had some community governments that have decided to use quite a bit of funding for things like travel, etc. When those things do occur and we get alerted about them in their quarterly reports, we do try to work with the communities to try to provide them with advice on how they should be spending their money. Again, with the New Deal, it is the community governments' determination on where they want to spend their money. If they would rather send their council members on trips versus having an arena open 24-7, then that is the choice of the community government, but we do fund them appropriately within their operating and maintenance to be able to run the arena. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I have no one further on my list. I will call this section. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just going to go back to the position in Nahendeh there and those three positions. The Minister said if it is not broken, we are not going to fix it. Well, is this program broken now and that is why we are fixing it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We looked at this program because, like I said, we did not have this position in every single region. It was already an inequality amongst the regions, and when we looked it over, we decided that we could provide the services more effectively with the two positions versus having an extra position in the one region. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that. Can she please tell me if it was broken or not broken? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my opinion, I try to be as fair as possible within reason. When I look at the whole of the Northwest Territories, and I see that within five regions, we are only providing support to three regions, then yes, the system is broken. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for her answer. I guess we are going to have to disagree on this. Unfortunately, she makes the decisions, and I do not. We will have to live with that.

In regards to the recreation funding, the honourable Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh talked about it. When was the last time this program has been evaluated? In other words, the funding that is being allocated per community, when was the last time it was evaluated besides when it was implemented? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, I do not have that information on hand. What I can state, though, is that we are meeting with the five sports and recreation organizations, and at that point, we will be looking at every single sport and recreation program that we have. We will be putting them on the table with the funding levels to determine if they are still relevant, if we are providing overlap, if there are areas that we need to increase or decrease on, so we are going to be doing a full review with the five organizations on our sports and recreation programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. She is talking about the five organizations, and I totally understand that, but this is community municipal funding contribution that is going to the community. It is not going to the regional associations. If they are going to be putting this on the table, will the Minister invite to have the communities sit at this table as well? I know they have regional associations that represent, but we are talking about money that is going directly to the communities. Will the Minister confirm that if this money is on the table, will they make that commitment to have the community people there as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just in consultation, we have figured out that we have done recently an evaluation of the recreational funding. We have done reviews in the youth areas, and we will be willing to do a review of the recreational funding to the municipalities, so we will actually work with that with the community governments to get their input on that as well. Not

to say that I'm going to give an increase. I mean we will take their input. For me, it is more about finding out, are the services and the programs still effective and still efficient because if we have not reviewed them in years, it is time to do a review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I greatly appreciate the Minister and the department looking at this. I know in my smaller communities are getting \$14,000 from this pot of money, from the smaller communities, and it goes up all the way up to Yellowknife. The smaller communities are suffering from this. Fourteen thousand dollars, it sounds like a lot of money, but it isn't a lot of money in the smaller communities. I look forward to this. Will the Minister make a commitment to, once this review is done, to share it with the committee? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I am trying to be as inclusive of the Regular Members as possible, so once we have done this review, any work that we do with the stakeholders, we will actually bring forward to the standing committee to provide a report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I see nothing further from Committee. I will call this section, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, activity total \$86,755,000. I see Mr. Testart has his hand up. Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 67-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, DEPARTMENT OF
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS,
DEFERRAL OF REGIONAL OPERATIONS
ACTIVITY,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity of regional operations under the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Main Estimates 2017-2018 on page 330 at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We will defer regional operations. Thank you, committee. Now, we shall continue on to the next activity, School of Community Government, which is pages 334 to 337. Does this committee have comments or questions for School of Community Government, pages 334 to 337? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I notice a reduction in the program management service for School of Community Government. Can the Minister or the department explain why this reduction? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the reduction of \$115,000 is a reduction from the public service capacity initiative, but we are now getting external money from Indigenous and Northern Affairs of Canada arguing as capacity building funding that we are using for that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate that. I just noticed on page 337, though, it is a reduction of one position. Is that where this \$112,000 has come from, or is it something else? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, that was a master trainer position. It was a two-year term that sunsets, and it was never filled the whole time. That is why you are not seeing the difference. The money from that sunset was returned to Brilliant North, so we returned \$100,000 to Brilliant North. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that clarification. On page 336, I see a reduction of \$15,000 for Brilliant North, so we're turning money to them, and then, but it is a reduction. If you can clarify that, please? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, the money that we had for wages for the public service capacity initiative was \$115,000, and then, we are returning the master training funding to

Brilliant North of \$100,000. Yes, there is a decrease of \$15,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate all the work that the School of Community Government does, however, the capacity issues since the New Deal have been noted by various reports and constructive criticism over the years, and we have another body in LGANT which is also working on the same thing, developing capacity. I note that in other jurisdictions they have developed similar organizations to LGANT, but have taken over this activity's functions and have been able to deliver that programming for a reduced cost comparatively and to greater success.

Is the department willing to consider finding efficiencies by transferring some of these functions to LGANT and supporting LGANT as the dedicated delivery model for capacity development and move it out of the department? Thank you

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, we are not looking at turning it over to LGANT. Currently, LGANT only provides support services to their membership, whereas we provide supports to all municipal and Aboriginal governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do understand that, but is the Minister willing to look at those kinds of solutions as a way to increase efficiency and improve service delivery? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll take that into consultation. We'll take that under advisement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you. I'm sure that LGANT would have a better capacity. So will the Minister commit to sitting down with LGANT and evaluating whether or not that they are in a position to take on these activities? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we are not willing to do that. We received funding from the federal government to develop some online workshops for Aboriginal governments, and so we are in the middle of that process, and so at this point, no, we are not going to disrupt our services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister. That's a much clearer response. The workshops that we're providing to Indigenous governments or Aboriginal governments, whatever terminology we're using, are those designated authorities or are those self-governments? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is both. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So where would I find that federal contribution in these mains? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It can be found on page 343, work performed on behalf of others. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not to belabour this, but I assume that there are strings attached to this money and how it is used, or has it been given to us with broad latitude to develop the programming as we see fit? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to be able to say that they just gave us the money and said, do what you want, but the reality is they do have pretty firm guidelines on it. We are working closely with the Aboriginal governments to develop an online training program relevant to Aboriginal governance specifically. So it's a partnership between the Aboriginal governments, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just vis-a-vis my suggestion that LGANT might be in a better position to deliver these services for less, how long will this funding last and when could this government start considering making changes to the delivery of these programs?

Are we locked in for four years or are we locked in for one? What is the length of this funding and how long is it limiting our ability to make changes to the school community government activity? Thank you

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, the federal funding is on a yearly basis, but they have shown a commitment and voiced a commitment to actually work further in this area towards supporting Aboriginal self-governance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Then perhaps in next year's business plan, we could evaluate whether or not LGANT -- could the Minister make a commitment to including that kind of evaluation in next year's business plan, then, after we've seen the course of this funding expire? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, I'm not willing to commit to that. It would take a lot of thought. At this point, we wouldn't be looking at LGANT to do, for example, city council training, those kinds of things. Also within our 18th Legislature, we have a mandate that talks about the online support services. So in order to meet our mandate we want to make sure that we do it appropriately and we want to make sure the community governments have the services they want and actually have a say if we were going to turn that programming over. At this point, the community governments have had nothing but positive comments in regard to the support that Municipal and Community Affairs is giving them, so I would not want to make a determination without asking them if they wanted to drop our support and take on another entity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will leave this issue, but I will say I appreciate where the Minister is coming from. This government has made

unilateral funding decisions, not necessarily in this department but in other departments, without necessarily talking to our partners. So I think, if we can provide the service for less and find greater efficiency, which is what my suggestion is we can do with LGANT, then it's beholden on us to look at that opportunity and see if it can be made a reality if it doesn't compromise service delivery.

So I'll just leave that with the Minister and hope that one day we might see a more enhanced and effective service delivery for this activity. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, for that comment, Mr. Testart. Seeing nothing further I will call this activity. Municipal and Community Affairs, School of Community Government, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$2,855,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Moving on to our final activity: sports, recreation and youth on pages 338 to 342. Seeing no comments or questions. Mr. Thompson

MR. THOMPSON: In her opening remarks, the Minister talked about providing youth ambassadors across the territory once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for volunteers, and that. So can the Minister please advise us exactly how many opportunities our youth will be getting this year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That actually is very difficult to break down. We have a number of different programs that provide supports. Some of them are under \$5,000, some of them are over \$5,000, some of them are school-based supports, some are where people can even apply for support, so it's really hard to actually put a number down on how many supports we will actually be providing in the year when the pots are so varied and so many and people can apply for so many different amounts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think what I will do is a colleague once told me, if you didn't ask the question, ask it again properly. So the question is: the youth ambassadors program is being offered; this is in your opening remarks. So how many youth ambassador programs are being offered for this fiscal year coming up? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Specifically for the Youth Ambassador Program, recently we just had the 2016 NWT Association of Communities 50th Anniversary Conference in Yellowknife. We have also just done the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Greenland. Upcoming events include the 2017 Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg in July and the 2018 Arctic Winter Games in the South Slave in March. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for taking me down memory lane. I understand that. I was looking for this fiscal year coming up, but she did answer that. Can the Minister explain why they are not looking at the North American Indigenous Games in Toronto as an opportunity for the youth, as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are going to the Indigenous Games. We are just not taking the Youth Ambassador Program there. Different programs will be utilized for that event. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer. Will the Minister then provide us with what the department is doing for the youth at the North American Indigenous Games? Besides the team going, what other opportunities the youth ambassadors are able to go? I am not talking about Team NWT. I am asking about the youth ambassadors. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At this point, Mr. Chair, we don't have that level of detail. We can get back to the Member on specifically what supports for youth will be provided through that event. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that commitment. I am looking forward to that information -- which brings us to the multisport

games. Can the Minister please provide us with the rationale of why they are cutting \$150,000 from NWT Games? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we have noted earlier, part of the exercise that the department went through over the preparation of the main estimates was looking at where we had opportunities to seek some efficiencies and be able to operate our programs and contribute to the overall financial stability of the GNWT. As part of that exercise, each of our units was challenged with taking a look at their operations and taking a look at the proposed needs over the next couple of years to see where opportunities may exist.

In looking at what is planned for the next couple of years in multisport games, it was felt that this was an area that we could contribute to the overall financial stability but also that we have demonstrated experiences in the past where, if resources are required above and beyond what is budgeted, that the department can meet the call and that that would be the manner in which we would manage this, that we would identify this as an area that we can operate with less but also be aware that, if the situation changes and our "crystal-balling" is not accurate, that we will rise to the challenge and be able to address that concern.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, if I understand this correctly, the next games, we have the North American Indigenous Games in Toronto, the Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg, and the Arctic Winter Games in Hay River Fort Smith to which Team NWT is supposed to be going. So you are saying that, this \$500,000, they can do that with these three games coming into place. Is this correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The way we approach the multisport games program, including all of the events that the Member has identified, part of the funding includes the money that is provided in our main estimates. There is also a component of lottery dollars that has historically funded multisport games, as well. Up until the time that this line item in our budget was identified about 10 years or so back, the lotteries exclusively fund our multisport games commitment. At that point, we identified that it was inadequate to do so over the long term, and our government made the

investment into the multisport games contribution budget that we have there.

So, as we look at our commitments in the coming years and we budget it, based on historical levels of funding, both from our main estimates and from the lottery, we are able to make our commitments in this area. As the deputy minister suggested, if our budgeting is inaccurate, the department's full intention is to fund this from within our main estimate envelope and not to take this from the lottery thereby compromising contributions to other organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank Mr. Schauerte for his answer. Just to understand this correctly, I am looking at the Western Canada Lottery program funding framework they are looking at, and they are saying that anything after over \$5.1 million, 80 per cent of this is going to multisport games. So is this the way the government is going to use the lottery dollars now, after it's over the \$5.1 million, to fund multisport games? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the details of the lottery expenditures in front of me at this time. Our lotteries right now are a program that is outside of the main estimate budgeting process. Eventually, when the Western Canada Lottery becomes part of our operations formally within government and we re-describe them in our main estimates, we will be able to provide those kind of actual details over the long term.

It is the department's intention to bring a presentation to standing committee during the term of this sitting to give more detail about the Sutcliffe Report, the Western Canada Lottery legislative initiative, and where our investment through the lottery fund is going to go towards stakeholders that currently receive funding. I am hesitant to comment on specific numbers as it relates to investment through the lottery fund without having those details in front of me. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am very concerned that this government is looking at the lottery funding as an opportunity to get away from our commitment through the money from the \$650,000. It is a concern. The money that is in lotteries presently, for the last five years, has been going to the five partners' organizations, which is

the grassroots. The other people on the other side can shake their heads and say, no, this is not what we are doing, but this is how I am looking at it.

This is how I am feeling this government is utilizing lotteries, once it comes in the system, that it becomes part of this, that the department can use that money to pay for games. I am hugely concerned, and I wish the government and the department would stop looking at utilizing lotteries as a way to fund our games. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, during the business plan, the department said that, in this activity area, they were going to provide opportunities for residents to improve health and fitness. I have not been able to find exactly where that is laid out, so I am wondering if the Minister could provide some detail with that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is within our mandate and it is part of the Sutcliffe Report that, actually, we are to provide a physical activity strategy. We are meeting with the five sports and recreation organizations in April. At that point, we are going to be looking at developing a territory-wide physical activity strategy to address the issues that the Member has brought up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a point of clarification, I understood this was meant to be personal health and fitness ventures, rather than team sports. Can the Minister clarify, please?

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a variety. The ones that will meet with the organizations will be more towards the group sports and recreation activities. We do have some programs that individuals alone can apply for as well, schools can apply for. We have a whole host of programs to meet the health and wellness needs of residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: No questions. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I know I have raised the issue of support for seniors in sports. I think I got some kind of a commitment out of the Minister that this was something that they were going to evaluate. Could the Minister tell us where their current thinking is at, if we can get support for seniors in sports? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do recognize that when we were providing services, it tends to be that mostly youth were taking part in the activities for sports and recreation. There is a huge population that has gaps, including seniors and women. We were also noticing that we need more women involved in some of our supports for sports and recreation. These are two areas, along with others, that we will be addressing with the five organizations when we look at the gaps in services, the overlaps, and try to decide where best all of the five organizations, and ourselves as the Government of the Northwest Territories, where we should be gearing our strategy, our long-term action plan, to address the needs of all residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Glad to hear that. Can the Minister give us a timeline for when this policy funding review is going to be finished? Does she contemplate having it done in time for the next fiscal year? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our beginning meeting will be at the beginning of the fiscal year in April. I am very hopeful that we will have it done in time for the end of the fiscal year. The reality is we are dealing with five organizations, so what I would like to see as a timeline might not be the same timeline that all of the five organizations -- there are some issues that need to be hashed out, so I do see it taking a little bit of time to deal with it appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that answer from the Minister. Is this something that is going to be done in time for the business plans for next year so that we could see an allocation within the business plan for seniors' involvement in organized sports activities? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I can commit to is that I will do my best. Our department will do the best to try to get the working group resolutions out and finished and agreed to by the next business planning process. We will share that with the organizations, that that is our timeline, and we will push them towards meeting that timeline. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. Seeing nothing further from committee, Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask about the annual Non-Government Organization Stabilization Fund. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has had quite a lot to say about this fund. I wonder if the Minister could speak to how this fund has been successfully deployed to encourage volunteers in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The NGO Stabilization Fund is actually one that I am very familiar with. It is a resource very critical to these social agencies, the non-government social agencies within communities in the Northwest Territories. It was presented during the capital planning process.

There was a bit of miscommunication. It was promoted as it was really to support volunteers. That is a little bit incorrect. The assumption is that non-government organizations do use a lot of volunteers for their boards. A lot of the boards actually have to have volunteers. They cannot be paid positions. The funding will remain exactly the same as it was. I can commit to that as long as I am the Minister of MACA, that I will not let that funding be touched by any other. It is specifically for stabilization of non-government organizations that provide social programs to the communities' critical services, services such as shelters. Anything that is a critical service that the Government of the Northwest Territories would have to do on its own is specifically what that funding is for, and it will remain so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Minister. I could not have said it better myself. The standing committee completely agrees. Will it remain in this department or return to the Executive where it can serve more of a central

stabilizing role for our non-government partners? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Government of the Northwest Territories decides that it is better fitted within the Executive, I would not fight that. However, in saying that, I am the strongest advocate to actually keep it within the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, especially since I am the Minister and such a strong advocate and previous user of this program. I think that, in all honesty, it is best protected where it is at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wonder if I should be worried about what the Premier would do with this funding, but I digress. How many sport, recreation, or youth-focused NGOs are currently receiving funding from the non-government organization stabilization fund? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. As far as I am aware of, there are no sports organizations that are accepting this funding, but we will have to check on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: I believe I have made my case for moving this out of this activity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Where see nothing further from committee. I will call this activity. Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 68-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, DEPARTMENT OF
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS,
DEFERRAL OF SPORT, RECREATION AND
YOUTH ACTIVITY,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity; sport, recreation and youth under the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, main estimates 2017-2018, on page 339 at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion to defer. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

Committee, we have deferred sport, recreation and youth. Committee, we have an information item on pages 343 to 344, work performed on behalf of others. Do I have comments or questions on this information item? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on gas tax, is that a decrease of \$7 million? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the figure in 2016-17 of \$22 million was because of a carryover in that year, and then the current year is \$15,750; it goes up every two years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, also could I get the Minister to explain the \$10 million drop in the Building Canada Plan also? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So what you see in the revised estimate is actually based on the cash flow for the projects that are approved by Canada and funded in any given year, and so the amount will vary every year depending on the projects approved. The Build Canada Program is a 10-year program, so there's a different amount of cash flow every year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Young. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, staying with Building Canada Plan's Small Community Fund, is there a population criteria for that particular fund? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So for the program itself small communities are considered a population under 100,000 people. So currently MACA is not considering population in our figures. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, is there a minimum population criteria on this program?

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: No, Mr. Chair, as long as they are a municipal community there is no minimum. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair, that's all I have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I see nothing further for this information item, so if committee would please return to the departmental total on page 311. Do we have comments or questions? Seeing none, I will call the department. Municipal and Community Affairs, department total, \$106,760,000. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 69-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, DEPARTMENT OF
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS,
DEFERRAL OF FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF
THE ESTIMATES FOR MUNICIPAL AND
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS,
CARRIED

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to defer. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. All those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

Committee, we have deferred Municipal and Community Affairs. I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Now, what is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to report progress. The

motion is in order and non-debatable. All of those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

I want to thank all our Pages for sticking around for the late night. Thank you to committee. I will now rise and report progress.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018, and we would like to report progress with four motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do I have a seconder? Member for Great Slave.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, the orders of the day for Wednesday, March 1, 2017, commencing 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

- Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
- Bill 13, Marriage Act
- Committee Report 6-18(2), Report on the Review of Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
- Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 1, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

