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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Members Present

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, 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 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Status of Women.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 164-18(2): INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, a day recognized throughout the world as a chance to celebrate women's progress towards achieving gender equality while identifying the challenges that still remain. In this spirit, I am pleased to discuss the Government of the Northwest Territories mandate commitment to support the delivery of workshops that help to get women into politics. In the Northwest Territories, women have largely been underrepresented in elected positions at all levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, we have made some progress in the Northwest Territories. I am pleased to report that the rate of women serving on territorial boards has increased from 43 per cent to 50 per cent between February 1, 2016, and January 31, 2017.

In reviewing current community government councils across our territory, 36 per cent of the seats are occupied by women. The rate of women's representation on these councils goes from a low of 0 per cent to a high of 88 per cent. In 2016, 10 municipal elections were held. A total of 80 candidates ran, 28 of whom were women. Of the 40 seats that were available, 15 women now fill those seats.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers are very encouraging, but we have more work to do. In our own Legislative Assembly, of 19 Members, only two are women, and this was also true of the 17th Assembly. Recognizing that women make up 50 per cent of our population, our lack of representation in the Legislative Assembly is

concerning. Mr. Speaker, I would like to update Members today on the work our government is doing to encourage more women to run for political office.

During this past year, the first of two Campaign Schools for Women was delivered in Hay River by the Northwest Territories Status of Women Council. Participants gained knowledge of some of the obstacles specific to women running for election, and equip them for campaigning. I would like to thank the honourable Member from Hay River North and Minister Schumann for their contributions during this event. I would also like to offer a special acknowledgement to the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, who joined me for the two-day workshop and provided invaluable advice and tips to the participants. A second Campaign School is scheduled for the middle of March in Inuvik. I am looking forward to meeting potential female leaders from the Beaufort Delta Region.

Mr. Speaker, the territorial government is working in partnership with the Status of Women Council to develop an action plan that would support women entering politics at all levels. The action plan will build on the current Campaign School for Women, and include the delivery of a series of workshops over the next couple of years leading up to the next territorial election.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to highlight the Daughters of the Vote event hosted by you and facilitated by MLA Green as another proactive initiative. This event brought young women between the ages of 18 to 23 to Yellowknife, where they were introduced to the political processes and the Legislative Assembly.

As well, the Government of the Northwest Territories is supporting the participation of Indigenous women in the National Indigenous Women's Summit in Toronto. Delegates were nominated by Aboriginal government partners and the Native Women's Association. This summit is a forum for Indigenous women and governments to share knowledge and expertise, with the aim of building a better future for Indigenous women and their communities. This summit provides an opportunity for Indigenous women to express their priorities and to hear, learn from, and speak to Indigenous women leaders from across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, increasing the number of women in leadership also requires role models. I would like to acknowledge a few northern women who have received national recognition.

I will start by recognizing Dr. Erin Kelly, who was recently recognized by the Women's Executive Network as one of Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women of 2016. The network celebrates the contributions of women in Canada's private and public sectors, and I am pleased they have named Dr. Kelly, who has distinguished herself in a leadership role with our Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

During her six years with the Government of the Northwest Territories, she has led the implementation of the Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy, served as a lead negotiator on transboundary water management agreements and, as assistant deputy minister and acting deputy minister of the department, led the development and implementation of the Environment and Natural Resources Strategic Plan.

Dr. Kelly is passionate about working collaboratively with Aboriginal governments and organizations and acts as an advocate for environmental education, stewardship and the use of local, traditional, and scientific knowledge in decisions affecting our environment. Dr. Kelly's work encourages young women, particularly Indigenous young women, to consider educational opportunities in the environmental sciences with a focus on linking western science and traditional knowledge.

I would also like to mention Chief Frieda Martselos, who recently received the 2017 Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada, Excellence in Aboriginal Leadership award in the national category. Chief Martselos was recognized for her work as chief of the Salt River First Nation.

Congratulations also go out to Ms. Cece Hodgson-McCauley, the first female chief in the Northwest Territories. On March 24th in Ottawa, she will be receiving the 2017 Inspire Award for her work in politics. Ms. Hodgson-McCauley is an Honorary Chief for Life and is also known as a business woman, newspaper columnist, an activist, and the founder of the Women Warriors.

Finally, I would like to recognize Ms. Heather Fikowski, a long-time northern social worker, who was one of the 2016 National Social Work Month Distinguished Service Awards recipients. Ms. Fikowski is recognized for her five-year research project titled "Rural and Northern Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence," which is assisting in breaking the silence on intimate partner violence in our northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have named a few women who are role models; however, the Northwest Territories has no shortage of strong women who are working to create positive change for the North. I am proud to recognize all these leaders for, not only their work, but for the example they provide to other women who may be encouraged to pursue their own leadership roles.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, women make up half of our population in the Northwest Territories and, as such, we need to continue our work to increase our representation in elected seats. Only when women occupy half of all governing positions will our governments truly be representative of the populations we serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 165-18(2):
UPDATE ON NWT CLIMATE CHANGE
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to develop a territorial climate change strategy. I am pleased to provide Members with an update on the development of the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework.

Since my last Minister's statement about the Climate Change Strategic Framework in October, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Public Works and Services have coordinated four joint regional engagement workshops on energy and climate change issues.

Workshops have taken place in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, and Yellowknife. Additional workshops are occurring in Hay River this week and will occur in Behchoko in the coming weeks. Mr. Speaker, all workshops to date have been well attended, with more than 40 participants at each one. Feedback has been very positive.

Residents have been happy with the workshops. Participants were provided with a background and fact sheets and took part in breakout group sessions that allowed residents to share ideas and hear different perspectives.

A key issue raised was residents' concerns that a carbon tax will add to the already very high cost of living, create an additional barrier to economic development, and add to the already high cost of operating a business in the Northwest Territories.

At the same time, residents expressed a level of acceptance of a carbon pricing scheme if some of the revenues received are allocated to improving

energy efficiency in communities, getting communities off diesel and moving towards more renewable energy systems.

Residents also expressed support for increased research and monitoring. Key areas of interest included the impacts of thawing permafrost, an increase in invasive alien species and pioneer species, changes in wildlife migration patterns, the potential for contaminants and heavy metals to leach into community water supplies, and the impacts on human health.

Traditional knowledge was raised as a tool to help establish baseline information and identify changes occurring on the landscape. Traditional knowledge holders are concerned that their knowledge should be accessed, used, and acknowledged appropriately. Traditional knowledge will play an important part in the development of the Climate Change Strategic Framework.

We have heard, Mr. Speaker, NWT residents want better planning, community funding, and communication around climate change, renewable energy systems, and energy efficiency. It is important to remember, Mr. Speaker, we still have a couple of workshops to conduct. The remaining workshops will provide more information, perspectives, and feedback from residents, Aboriginal governments, and stakeholders on a draft framework.

Once the workshops have been completed, Environment and Natural Resources will analyze and summarize the feedback from community workshops, the results of the survey, and undertake a complete analysis of key topics.

These topics include carbon pricing, greenhouse gas emissions, and additional relevant issues flagged in the workshops. Mr. Speaker, the final NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework will rest on three key pillars: knowledge; resilience and adaptation; and emissions mitigation.

Currently, we are focusing our efforts on several important climate change resilience and adaptation issues. These include ecosystem management, resilient infrastructure, such as roads and buildings, health and safety, and Aboriginal culture and heritage.

We believe there are significant opportunities for our government to work together with Aboriginal governments and stakeholders on climate change. We believe there should be a particular focus on adaptation as we continue to take action towards ensuring our communities are healthy and resilient in the face of serious climate change impacts.

The GNWT is also working closely with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA, to

provide three days of climate change education in Yellowknife in April. The course is called Earth to Sky and will be the first time it has been offered in Canada.

NASA scientists will be delivering most of the course content and will be using their full suite of global data, imagery, and remote-sensing intelligence related to climate change. GNWT scientists will deliver presentations on the impacts of climate change on wildlife, forests, and permafrost and discuss the importance of traditional knowledge to support research on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with communities to increase our resilience to, and mitigating, the effects of climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 166-18(2): DEVELOPING THE NWT FILM SECTOR

HON. SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, investments in the NWT film sector are growing the strength and diversity of our economy while promoting the unique sights, sounds, and stories of our territory worldwide.

We have made the commitment to support the film industry through investments in skill development, infrastructure, marketing, and communications. We are fulfilling this commitment through the work of the NWT Film Commission and its ongoing implementation of our government's film strategy.

Today, I would like to celebrate some of the successes achieved through our continued work and investment in this area.

I begin, Mr. Speaker, with the continuing success of *The Sun at Midnight*, an entirely local production that was filmed near Fort McPherson. This film has been on the road, with showings at the Whistler Film Festival, Victoria International Film Festival, and, most recently, at the European Film Market; part of the Berlinale International Film Festival - and one of the world's largest film showcases.

Along the way, its cast and crew have collected positive reviews, accolades, and awards for their work. Through the NWT Film Commission, our government has invested in the film's marketing and promotion to highlight the world-class sights, sounds, and talent of our territory and its film sector.

Mr. Speaker, *The Sun at Midnight* is only one of many NWT-produced films that our Film Commission is supporting.

Three Feathers, based on the Richard Van Camp graphic novel, has just completed filming near Fort Smith. It will be produced in English, Cree, Chipewyan, and South Slavey; a significant challenge that reflects the ambition of the NWT's film community.

Meanwhile, a third feature-length film, *Dark Sky*, has been awarded one of the coveted top three positions in the Indie-Can-20-K competition. Again, the Department of ITI is pleased to have invested in *Dark Sky*'s post-production and in its success.

Mr. Speaker, building a film industry in the NWT is about more than just film projects. Our support includes initiatives to increase the industry's profile, encourage greater participation and develop the technical capacity and skills of those working in it. This was indicative through our sponsorship of the 5th Annual Dead North Circumpolar Film Festival.

As a result of the festival, the film *Bait*, by first-time Yellowknife contributor Keith Robertson, was selected to screen as part of Telefilm Canada's Not Short on Talent Program during this year's Cannes Film Festival in France. In other areas, we have worked closely with guest producers to connect them with locations and talent within our territory. This has provided both greater profile for our locations and opportunities for NWT residents to get valuable on-set experience.

Most notably, we have also worked with the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk to develop the first local film policy in any of our territory's small communities. There has been a great deal of interest from production companies interested in both the final ice road between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk and next year's opening of the highway. This will position the hamlet to realize benefits from local and guest productions filming in the community.

Finally, and in partnership with CanNor, we are expanding the branding and marketing of our NWT Film Commission to push our international competitiveness to a new level.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT's film sector continues to be a dynamic industry offering economic and artistic opportunities. The strong, growing network of film professionals shows the potential of this industry. The GNWT is committed to providing the support and funding necessary to realize this potential and position our film sector among our country's elite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER CANADIAN RANGERS PATROL

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the gallery today, we have five members of the 1st Canadian Rangers Patrol Group from Hay River that I'm proud to welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

Rangers have become a fixture across the North. The 60 patrols and the three territories are comprised of 1,800 Rangers, making the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group the largest single reserve unit in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Hay River Patrol was established in 2011 after two and a half years of commitment and hard work by its members.

It is often said that the Rangers are the eyes and ears of the military. However, Mr. Speaker, they are much more than that. Rangers provide local knowledge and expertise to the Armed Forces, participate in search and rescue operations, provide support in response to natural and man-made disasters and humanitarian operations, and provide assistance to federal, territorial, and municipal authorities.

The 18 members of the Hay River Patrol are responsible for patrolling an area within a 150 km radius of Hay River, which includes the Great Slave Lake to the north, Taiga Plains to the south, and boreal forest to the east. As we know, Mr. Speaker, conditions are very different in the winter and summer, so training occurs throughout the year.

Last summer, members of the Hay River Patrol took part in Operation Nunakput marine training exercises, alongside members of the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the RCMP, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, and various federal government departments. They participated in maritime patrols and training, and search and rescue exercises, that allowed them to practice their interoperability and hone their skills.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, training happens throughout the year, and this week, the Rangers in the gallery had a chance to hone their skills on the lake, under different conditions. They made their way to Yellowknife from Hay River via the Great Slave Lake. They spent four days traversing the frozen lake on snowmobiles. The temperature was in the mid-negative 30s; however, the wind chill meant that it felt closer to -70. One Ranger was forced to tum back, not because he couldn't handle it, but because the machine he was driving couldn't handle it. However, Mr. Speaker, despite the

machinery and communication equipment that could barely handle the journey, and despite the cold, the wind, the pressure ridges, the snow drifts, and the whiteout conditions, they made it across the lake no worse for the wear, and with a wealth of new experiences and knowledge.

At the appropriate time, I will introduce the members, but I would like to ask the Assembly to help me in welcoming them to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRIBUTE TO MOTHER ANNIE LOOK

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Today, I would like to talk about International Women's Day. I would like to talk about the ladies, all who are sitting here today. Today, I would like to talk about my mother. [End of translation] I would like to rise to pay tribute and thank the person with the greatest influence in my life, my mom.

Mr. Speaker, my mom was born April 30, 1934, in a place called Rocher River, as Annie Else Ana. Later, when she started school, they gave her her father's name, "Look." She went to school for only a couple of years, because there was so much pressure upon her to come home, do house chores, and care for her little brother. Her mother didn't believe there was any value whatsoever in education.

My mom had to try to learn how to educate herself, and she did that by reading all of the cans that were bought from the stores, so every time her parents went out and bought canned food, cereal boxes, or bags of flour, she would read everything, to teach herself how to read. There wasn't a single book in her entire house.

Mr. Speaker, at the age of 18 years old, my mom got married to my father, and lived life as a trapper's wife for 16 years. Her and my father lived on the Taltson River, and raised three boys, including myself, in the bush. We were taught in the evenings, after we spent the day out with my mother: the younger ones, like myself, with my mother, and my eldest brother with my father. At nighttime, my father would teach us, because he had grade 8. We would learn from my father.

Mr. Speaker, my mother wanted so badly for all of us to graduate that she made it possible for us. She encouraged us to attend school, she made sure that we ate, and she made sure we had clean

clothes, although we had no money at all, and all of us graduated from high school.

Mr. Speaker, she is self-taught. She continues to be a strong influence to all of her children, as we graduated and went on to good careers. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to continue my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my mother is 83 years old, and she lives in Hay River, and it is appropriate that Members are here from Hay River, who come from Hay River. Some of them may know my mom. She continues to be a strong leader in our family. I asked her if I could do the Member's statement. She said, "Make sure you talk about my sewing. I have been doing it for 75 years," so I thought I would mention that she had made all kinds of things, including slippers and card holders with Montreal Canadiens crests on them, for me. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: You are so special, Mr. Beaulieu. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MARY AGNES
BONNETROUGE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In honour of recognizing International Women's Day, I wanted to take a moment in honouring the late Elder, Mary Agnes Bonnetrouge, who is featured in the book Nohecho keh, Our Elders, and these are the words that she shared.

Mary Agnes Bonnetrouge was:

"Born at the first lake, near Horn River, in the autumn of 1916. When I was a child, my uncle and aunt would take me hunting with them, by boat. He shot moose, and she made drymeat, and we ate very well. I remember the land being so beautiful then, as though it were newly created. In the springtime, only the bird song call of the ducks broke the tranquility.

Today, that peace is gone. Our land is torn up and destroyed, because of mining and exploration. The Dene gain nothing. We don't understand, and are left out in the cold.

I was educated at the mission, but as soon as I was old enough, I returned to my parents. My mother was blind, so it was hard for me to learn how to work. I used to watch others.

After I was married, I lived between Mills Lake and Big Point, wherever there was fish.

I have had many sad times in my life. I have lost two husbands, and some of my children. I think of them, still.

When my children were small, life was very hard. I had to depend on my eldest son to provide for the younger children, but then he was sent away to the hospital for three years. My children could not fend for themselves at all. I had to pack one of them on my back, and go and set snares.

At that time, if you lived in town, you were entitled to a ration. I used to get one scoop of flour, one of tea, one of sugar, and some oats. That was to last for one month. Can you imagine living like that?

Sometimes, we had no candles, and I had to sit in the dark with my little children. Those were, in truth, the saddest times in my life.

I am so glad that my children are all happily married. We must always communicate with our children, and teach them well. It is too late to try, when they are already grown.

Whenever I see children living well, I always think to myself, 'They must have listened to their parents well.'

The words of the late elder, Mary Agnes Bonnetrouge, from Fort Providence. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRIBUTE TO CONSTITUENT GLADYS
NORWEGIAN

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you have heard from my honourable colleagues, today is International Women's Day. Women celebrate this day every year, and encourage everyone around the world to stand up for the equality and freedom for women, as well as their contribution to society.

As I decided on how I was going to recognize this day, I reached out to the regional women's leadership. We spoke about politics, leadership, education, and employment in regard to the equal opportunities for women. As we spoke, I explained that I was looking to recognize at least one woman today.

What I found to be very interesting is these women wanted me to celebrate other women in the region, including stay-at-home mothers, teachers, and nurses. You name a profession; that person was referred to me. They said it isn't always about the person in the forefront who makes the biggest change, or shows the biggest leadership. It could

be someone like Rosa Parks, who refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, spurring the Montgomery Bus Boycott and other efforts to end segregation. As they said to me, "You never know where true leadership will be found." With this in mind, I found it very difficult to recognize just one woman, so I asked them for their help. We were able to narrow it down and, finally, recognize one individual: Gladys Norwegian.

Mr. Speaker, typically, the road to be a First Nations chief carries a very small percentage of females willing enough to stand forward for the challenge. Miss Gladys Norwegian, who now calls Jean Marie River home, is one of the very few female chiefs.

After 33 years as an educator, Gladys returned to her community and became their chief. I asked about her position. She replied, "It is a very complex position on many fronts." One main area is re-growing her community to believe in their own language and culture, in doing so, threading their beliefs, values, principles and carrying their ancestors' words forward, not an easy task in the dominant Western society. To be an effective chief today is to be consistently building and strengthening the world views and perspective of the First Nation.

This, coupled with society's political issue of negotiating processes and addressing other political matters facing them, such as health, climate change, social wellness, education, and technology, requires local, regional, and global knowledge. Gladys has proven to put in every effort to make her position work best for her community. Under her leadership, Jean Marie River has developed a five-year strategic plan and economic development strategy plan. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks, colleagues. She believes that, once the right people are in the right positions, Jean Marie River as a small community can be a leading force in all areas of existence, including climate change, energy efficiency, and health.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the regional leadership, Gladys serves on the Dehcho Executive Committee, Dehcho Education Scholarship Committee, and is the president of the Dehcho Helicopters Limited.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one woman from the region. I encourage women to continue to be the fabric of our society and take on leadership roles they feel they can take on. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF
SAHTU WOMEN

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is marked as International Women's Day, a day to recognize women's achievements and acknowledge the challenges they face continuously in the quest for gender equality.

The missing and murdered Aboriginal and Indigenous women are our mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, nieces, cousins, partners, and wives, and they are missed and honoured every day.

The roles of the many women and girls are at the centre of our families and communities must be honoured and restored respectfully.

Mr. Speaker, I for one, would like to recognize my mother, Mary McNeely, a tuberculosis survivor. My brother and I, while attending residential school in Inuvik at that time, were off limits to visitors as she was in the isolation ward. We would only have contributed to her comfort and healing. I'm glad to advise and very fortunate that she is still with us today.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Sahtu region, I applaud all the women in the Sahtu for their dedication and hard work within their small respective communities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MANDATE COMMITMENTS TO INCREASE
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP
ROLES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Today, March 8, is International Women's Day. It's the day we celebrate the contribution of women to our society and commit ourselves to action to improve the equality and participation of women.

Looking around this house, we can see there's a lot of work to do to boost equality of representation and participation.

Members know that our mandate for the 18th Assembly called for actions to increase the number of women running for elected office. One commitment is to support the delivery of workshops aimed at increasing the number of female candidates in elections. My colleague from Yellowknife Centre and our Minister responsible for the Status of Women are doing that through the

Daughters of the Vote project and candidates' schools for women. I congratulate them on that work.

Another measure in our mandate aims to increase gender equity through appointments to boards and agencies. New statistics from the Department of the Executive show that half of the people sitting on boards are now women. In the past year, the government has appointed 107 people, 56 per cent of whom are women. That's up from last year, when only 46 per cent of board members were women. Three of the four Supreme Court judges and half our Territorial Court judges are women, although only a third of our departmental deputy ministers are women. I commend the Minister of the Executive for the transparent reporting and tracking of our board appointments. This is an important part of making our government more open and accountable. Perhaps the next step would be to consider the establishment of an NWT Public Service Commission to handle such appointments.

Appointments to boards are not the same as elections, but they are a very important first step in gaining experience and confidence. Participation on boards and governing bodies teaches invaluable skills in rules of order, accountability, and in pursuing priorities through cooperation. They are the incubator for tomorrow's elected leaders, and I encourage the government to continue our efforts here.

A third action under the mandate is the mounting of a communications plan to increase female participation in politics. The mandate progress report tabled in the House this week is silent on that matter. There has been some reporting and action from Elections NWT on this matter. I think we need a cooperative effort with that organization that ramps up soon, with the next territorial election only two years away. I'll look forward to details on that in the coming year. Happy International Women's Day. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am an advocate for women. I am still learning exactly what that means and how to advocate in the best way, but it is important to me.

As we've heard, today is International Women's Day, and I wanted to say something to recognize that. One can't help but reflect personally on the significance of this day. When I was a boy, my mom was my hero. She symbolized for me what I thought every person should be. Only in later years did I

come to realize what a remarkable person she was and how much she achieved. She was a successful businesswoman and a single mother, and I like to think she did a pretty good job raising me.

Beyond personal experience, when I reflect on the meaning of International Women's Day, I think about the progress of our society on including women in our work in how we make decisions and prioritize issues. When I look around this room, Mr. Speaker, reflecting on women and their place here, in the Legislative Assembly, well, it's pretty clear. Of 19 of us in this room, there are only two women among us.

That is not enough. In fact, one of the things I am sure about is that we need to spend more time contemplating this and our roles in changing it. We need to actively work to change the current reality, whatever it takes, the processes we need to modify, the statements we need to make, the ideas we need to challenge to ensure that more women sit among us as leaders and decision-makers.

All of the things we want to change, the mandate goals we've set for ourselves, the good work we need to do, requires the guidance and wisdom of both genders. We need women who are willing to take up leadership roles and put themselves out there, people who will explore alternatives and stand behind the decisions they make. We need to look for new solutions, include other paradigms, see the world from different perspectives if we are going to make a difference. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. This is a day to honour and celebrate the women in our lives. It's a day to stand up for the achievements in equality made by the women who have gone before us, but clearly we haven't done enough.

So today must also be a day to renew our commitment to gender equity. It's a demonstrated fact that better decisions are made when there are women at the table. Our government will be better, stronger, more responsive, and capable, if this Assembly stands to support more women as leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to make a difference. I want to support the women among us to participate in that goal. Let's start here and now by each one of us committing to a different future, a more inclusive Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS DISASTER COMPENSATION PROGRAM

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the loss of one's livelihood can be devastating to harvesters in the Northwest Territories, the impact of unforeseen events that severely damage a person's normal ability to work in many ways.

Mr. Speaker, the Hunters' and Trappers' Disaster Compensation Program is available in the event that a traditional harvester in the Northwest Territories suffers loss or damage to equipment or assets because of a natural disaster. The program is delivered by the Department of ENR through the Wildlife Division.

Harvesters who possess a general hunting licence or are land claim beneficiaries, actively engaged in harvesting activities that provide for at least 25 per cent of their annual income are eligible for up to \$4,500 compensation under this program. ENR staff are available to assist harvesters in most communities across the Northwest Territories. They also travel to communities where there are no resident staff permanently placed.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, forest fires have devastated millions of hectares of habitat. As global warming has greater and greater impacts on coastal areas in the Arctic, Inuvialuit harvesters may also experience losses due to natural events.

Mr. Speaker, the traditional economy continues to be an integral part of the our residents' livelihoods. The Hunters' and Trappers' Disaster Compensation Program is an example of how the Government of the Northwest Territories supports that. We must continue to support the icons of the North, who are the men and women who preserve our culture on the land of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WOMEN'S EQUITY

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today marks International Women's Day, and the theme this year is "Be bold for change." The Northwest Territories certainly has no shortage of bold women leaders who have made an indelible mark on our political landscape, from Lena Pederson, our first elected MLA in 1970, at a time when the territory was just beginning to form responsible government, to Ethel Blondin-Andrew, the first Indigenous woman elected to federal parliament in 1988 and later federal Cabinet

Minister. In 1991, Nellie Cournoyea was appointed as the first female Premier of a territory and the second woman Premier in Canadian history. We have often made great strides in the continued effort towards gender equality, but, unfortunately, we still have a long way to go.

According to the 2016 census, over 21,000 people in the NWT, or half the population, Mr. Speaker, are women, although this House only has two sitting Members. That is only 10 per cent. We can and must do better.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen a number of strong women leaders, of course, but also behind the scenes. The people who are deputy ministers or chiefs of staff, our advisors, these are leaders, as well, and they deserve recognition, as well. My own mother was a chief of staff to a federal minister at one time and a constituency manager at other times. Everything I learned about politics, I learned from those experiences. I remember going to her office at lunch and watching CPAC, taking breaks from high school. Those experiences were very formative for me and shaped me, but all of that is about getting an appetite for politics, and grass-roots activism is a sure enough way to do that. I challenge all Members of this House to get out and knock on doors and bring young women with you and women who are interested in running for office. Let them become your volunteers. Let them see what it takes to be an MLA. Give them the confidence and ask them to run because, Mr. Speaker, women's rights are everyone's rights, and we as men in this Assembly have just as much to gain by seeing more women represented in the next Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues who made statements today recognizing International Women's Day. It is, of course, a day to reflect on the accomplishments of women and to gather strength to continue the work required to achieve women's equality.

Mr. Speaker, as you've heard from some others, a unique celebration took place in the House of Commons today. It marks the beginning of the right of women to vote in some jurisdictions 100 years ago. It also highlights the need to attract more women to political life. I'm talking about the initiative that we have here and is in Ottawa today called Daughters of the Vote.

This morning, one young woman from each of the 338 ridings in Canada took a seat in the House of

Commons. It was a very inspiring sight to see every seat occupied by a woman, representing Canada in all its diversity. Olivia Villebrun from Fort Smith is there representing us. As Nelson Mandela, that great champion of equality once said, "It always seems impossible until it is done."

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that we here, at the Legislative Assembly, held our own NWT Daughters of the Vote workshop last month. Young women aged 17 to 23 joined us from communities around the NWT, from Tuktoyaktuk to Fort Smith. These young women heard the stories of women elected to a variety of roles, including city council and the school boards, as well as here, at the Legislative Assembly. We were joined by my colleague, the Minister for the Status of Women, along with former MLAs Jane Groenewegen and Sandy Lee. They talked about why they ran for office and what changes they wanted to make. As the Minister said that day, "The only one who limits us is ourselves." It is important to show these young women that, if we can get elected, they can, too. My hope is that some of them will come back in the future as MLAs for their ridings.

Mr. Speaker, we have nowhere to go except up in terms of equality of representation. There have only been 12 women MLAs in the whole history of this Legislative Assembly and no more than three at once. Our current legislature has the lowest proportion of woman members of any jurisdiction in Canada except Nunavut. At the federal level, a quarter of MPs are women, an all-time high. What I want to see and what I think we all want to see is equality. Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to finish my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. Our task is to offer the women we know the support, mentorship, and encouragement to turn the dream of equality into reality. Let's celebrate International Women's Day with our determination to make that happen. Mahsi.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Member's statement, I would like to welcome, from the Hay River Ranger Patrol, Master Corporal Rob Wilkins, Ranger Warren Gibb, Ranger Quentin Steinwand, and, as it is International Women's Day, I'd like to introduce and celebrate the two female rangers we have, Ranger Sheila Warren, who I'm told is the best marksman or markswoman in the Ranger patrol, as well as Ranger Linda Carter, who

is, in addition to being Hay River's co-reigning citizen of the year, I am told is also the toughest Ranger.

MR. SPEAKER: I, too, would like to say welcome to our proceedings. It's always good to have visitors as part of our gathering here. Keep up the great work. Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the NWT Languages Board members and chairs and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, in particular the two chairs, Beverly Amos and Dora Grandejambe; board members from the Sahtu, Mary Ann Vital and Theresa Etchinelle; and the rest of the women board members. Congratulations. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you. Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, colleagues, today I would like to recognize some hard-working and dedicated individuals from across the NWT who provide important advice and guidance to me as Minister responsible for Official Languages. These, of course, are the board members of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, as well as the Regional Aboriginal Language Coordinators, who are responsible for the implementation of their Aboriginal languages plans. I would like to recognize Official Languages Board Chair Beverly Amos, from my hometown of Inuvik, and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board Chair Dora Grandejambe, from Norman Wells. They are joined by their board members and language coordinators, Bertha Catholique from Fort Resolution; Mary Ross from Fort McPherson; Emily Kudlak from Ulukhaktok; Theresa Etchinelle from Tulita; Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault from Behchoko; Jonas Landry from Fort Providence; Vance Sanderson, Fort Smith; Celine Zoe from Behchoko; Barbara Memogana from Inuvik; Robert Charlie from Inuvik; Mary Ann Vital from Deline; Violet Jumbo from Fort Simpson; as well as Monsieur Richard Letourneau. Accompanying them is our 2012 inductee to the Educational Hall of Fame, Ms. Angela James. These committed individuals are currently providing their knowledge, expertise, and guidance towards drafting and updating the NWT Aboriginal Languages Framework "A Shared Responsibility."

As well, Monsieur Letourneau is here from Inuvik, and he's assisting us in providing improved government services in French to our residents. As well, Rendez-Vous de la Francophonie des Territoires du Nord-Ouest and March 20th is International Day of La Francophonie, so I would

like to wish all of our French and Aboriginal residents a happy month of language celebrations.

At this time, I'd also like to recognize Brad Firth, also known as "Caribou Legs," joining us in the House today, and, accompanying him, the five Rangers who provide an important service to us here in the North. One last one is one of our biggest fans of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Patrick Joss, who I'm sure is watching us here today. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker, and celebrate Aboriginal Languages Month. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in Gallery. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'd like to recognize Ms. Angela James, who I consider a huge friend a role model of her own. Ms. James has dedicated her whole life to actually working with Indigenous children and communities to bring forward their strengths and their pride in their culture, and she is one woman who I have known most of my life and I totally respect and bow my head to. Thank you, Ms. James.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The other person I want to recognize in the House today is Mr. Brad Firth, commonly known as "Caribou Legs." Mr. Firth ran 7,400 kilometres across Canada to raise awareness for family violence and the problem of the missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. This is a huge feat, and to you I offer as well my sincere appreciation. Thank you.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't be as long. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome all the Official Languages and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization board members, and also, in particular, some constituents of mine and relatives from Ulukhaktok, Ms. Emily Kudlak and Ms. Barb Mamogana, and also Ms. Beverly Amos from Inuvik. I just want to say thank you for all the hard work you do in keeping our language strong.

Mr. Speaker, earlier on in this sitting I said, with all the language and culture of Indigenous groups so prevalent today through colonization, Mr. Speaker, there is a core that is unshakable. The women and men who work hard every day are the greatest contributors to our society, and I appreciate the work that they do today and looking forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Monsieur le President. Today I have a page who is serving in the House, Simone Bruce-Cato from St. Patrick School, and she's a constituent of mine. I want to thank all the pages for the hard work in this session; it hasn't been easy, but much appreciated. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Violet Jumbo, a constituent of mine, to the Legislative Assembly. As well, Brad Firth, who I've had the pleasure of working with through my previous job and way back when during our hockey seasons up in Inuvik, so I welcome Brad to the Legislative Assembly. As well Ms. Linda Carter, who is a long-time family friend of my sister and the family, and I welcome her to the Legislative Assembly as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wanted to recognize members of the Regional Aboriginal Languages Board, the chairs and plus the language coordinators from the region: Jonas Landry from Fort Providence, and also Violet Jumbo from Fort Simpson. Also, people who I know: Theresa Etchinelle from Tulita, as well as recognizing the Rangers and Mr. Brad Firth for his accomplishment. I understand he just came across Great Slave Lake and he ran that course. I would like to recognize him. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't know that some members of my riding were in. I see Bertha Catholique up there; she's an interpreter from Lutselk'e now, and Vance Anderson, who is my grandson's father. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Mr. Beaulieu has got all connections throughout the Northwest Territories. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

I, too, would like to welcome the language board, the revitalization board, to our proceedings. It's always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. More specifically, I guess, Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault for doing all the great work for our region, and Ms. Sheila Warren, who is originally from Behchoko and now she is living in Hay River. She's still known as a Behchoko resident. Another one I would just like to highlight is newly anointed Dr. Angela James. Welcome to our proceedings. Doing such great, fantastic work. Keep up the great work!

---Applause

Of course, I'm recognizing Brad Firth as well, aka "Caribou Legs." Keep up the great work, and also all the Rangers who are here with us and just for making a difference. Mahsi for being here with us. If we missed anybody in this part of the proceedings, welcome. It's always great to have an audience. Masi.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 711-18(2):

FUR HARVESTING SUPPORT PROGRAMS

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Earlier today I spoke about the importance of the traditional economy. Mr. Speaker, my question is: how many people subscribe to the Genuine Mackenzie Fur Program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a program that we're quite proud of, and it seems to have been working for trappers across the NWT. I can tell the Member that close to 700 trappers a year for the last three years have participated in the Genuine Mackenzie Fur Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It's good to see that quite a large number of trappers apply to this program. Mr. Speaker, my second question is: how does ENR work with ITI to measure the value of the traditional harvesting economy in the Northwest Territories?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have a protocol agreement between ENR and ITI to deliver the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, including the utilization of a fur harvesters database. The fur harvesters database records and tracks the monetary value, the quality, and the number of individual species that have been sold at auctions.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It's good to see that the departments are working together to collect this data which is important for funding programs. Actually, that leads to my third question, Mr. Speaker: how does ENR work with the hunters' and trappers' associations to collect accurate data from harvesters?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: ENR they work very closely with the harvesters within our regional and area offices during the trapping season. The

harvesters, they bring in their raw animal pelts that they've harvested in order to be shipped and sold at auctions. All this information is collected by ENR and entered into the fur harvesters' database.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, my final question is: how does ENR work with hundreds of trappers' associations to ensure its program such as the Hunters and Trappers' Disaster Compensation Program are responsive to the needs of harvesters and the evolution of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our regional and area renewable resource officers are available to work with our local hunters' and trappers' associations to share information, deliver updates, and provide on-the-ground support related to harvesting including information on all the programs that are offered, including the disaster compensation. We are currently reviewing our Traditional Economy Program and looking at ways to be more responsive to meet the needs of local harvesters.

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

QUESTION 712-18(2):
YELLOWKNIFE AND AREA LAND USE
PLANNING

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, previously in the House I raised a question to the Minister responsible for Lands on the issue of land use planning; specifically, the mandate commitment to finalize land use plans. Today, I want to turn that line of questions towards the Yellowknife area, and specifically what is being done to finalize a land use plan for Yellowknife and the surrounding areas? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the government is, of course, working to establish effective and durable relationships with the Aboriginal government on land use planning. In those areas where there is no plan that has been established or agreed upon, we are developing under the recreational leasing management framework in the Yellowknife peripheral area plans that will assist us in the interim before land use plans are finalized with Aboriginal groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: The Recreational Land Use Planning Framework, does that only deal with

recreational land, as its name would imply, or does it deal with all other types of land that would be subject to a land use plan?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As the name would imply, it is dealing with recreational lands. Again, much of the Northwest Territories, there are comprehensive land use plans established by those areas that there are not. These are seen as interim steps.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think our capital region is, of course -- there's a significant population, like half the territory, that lives here and that wants to avail themselves of recreational opportunities, but also we have the TerraX mining operation at the Yellowknife Gold Project that is seeking clarity around these issues. There are also our partners in Indigenous nations that are seeking clarity of these issues. Apart from the recreational land use framework, is anything being done by the department to clarify land use for Yellowknife and its surrounding areas?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. As mentioned previously, we are attempting to regularize land use planning in the Northwest Territories. Hopefully with agreements with Aboriginal groups. It is a complex issue. In the meantime, as has been mentioned, there are interim arrangements that will take place through management planning for recreational lease and the Yellowknife peripheral area so that there can be some certainty in land leasing prior to comprehensive land claims being settled.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that it's a complex issue and the Minister is doing his best to explain it in a way that fits into the question period. Can you make a commitment, then, to let to us know when this recreational framework will be completed and start having an effect on recreational land leases for Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I can make that commitment. I will keep Members of this house fully apprised as to progress.

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

QUESTION 713-18(2):
MANDATE COMMITMENTS TO INCREASE
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP
ROLES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. I would like to thank her for her very thorough Minister's statement earlier today.

I've had to rejig my questions a bit. The 2016-2017 Annual Report on Implementation of the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories was tabled in House, I think, last week. In reporting on government accomplishments, there's no mention of section 5 items that deal with increasing the number of women running for office. I'm just wondering if the Minister can explain whether this was -- or, sorry, the words "woman" or "women" don't appear anywhere in this section of the mandate report. Can the Minister help explain what happened with the mandate report? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Status of Women

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason that the accomplishments that we've done with addressing with getting more women into politics wasn't in the mandate speech was because this Cabinet recognized that today is International Women's Day. We decided that it was important enough that we wanted to denote a whole Minister's speech to this issue. It was decided to not put it in there and actually provide a whole Minister's speech to address it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you to the Minister. It was kind of an interesting explanation. I would encourage you to report on that good work, and you did, but it should be in the report, too, to tell the public that we're continuing to do that. I do recognize the efforts of the Minister and my colleague from Yellowknife Centre in conducting that work.

One of the three specific activities as stated in the mandate is as follows: we will support a communications campaign to increase the participation of women in politics. Can the Minister give specifics on when that campaign will be launched, and mindful that we're only two years away from the next election and anyone planning to run should be starting their work now?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The communication campaign, we're just in the middle of developing it now. The reason that we're putting a little bit of still working on it is because we recognize that, when we are doing the campaign schools, that we are only addressing actually to get women into the Legislative Assembly. We are now looking at, once we do a workshop in Inuvik, we will be revising our whole campaign school so that we can address more women so that they can actually run not only for the Legislative Assembly but for Aboriginal governments, for municipal governments, hamlets, etc. Once we've decided our format and how we're going to address that, then

we will be rolling out a full communication plan to address all of the issues.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks again to the Minister. That's very helpful to hear that. I appreciate her efforts. Part of the work of Elections NWT is to promote and increase participation in the electoral process including participation of women. How is our government collaborating with Elections NWT or even other organizations to increase the number of women running for elected office?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Actually, we do collaborate quite closely. We do have our electoral officer attend the campaign schools with us. We will have the Department of Justice actually attending with us also to give us some feedback on where we need to move more and in what direction. We are working quite closely with the Status of Women on this issue. We are trying to be as inclusive as possible with the whole direction of getting more women in leadership in politics.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It's all good news today from the Minister. I appreciate her work on this. I'm just wondering if -- and I'm sorry, I didn't give her a heads up on this one -- she's been very thorough in answering everything else. What sort of specific funding, though, have we identified in the 2017-18 budget for these efforts as part of our mandate? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the first campaign school, we gave \$15,000 to the Status of Women, which was what they asked for, to do their campaign school in Hay River. We have just given \$25,000 to the Status of Women to do the campaign school in Inuvik. We haven't gotten a financial figure out of the communications campaign yet. Once we finish that, then we will know what we are looking at, and we are planning, as stated in my Minister's statement, that we will be doing more campaign schools throughout, right until the next election. At that time, we will be allocating more monies to that.

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

QUESTION 714-18(2):

REVIEW OF CONTRACTING PROCEDURES AND REPORTING

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance regarding sole-source contracting. In his October 14, 2016 replies to my oral questions, I asked if the Minister would commit to carrying out an evaluation of the sole-source contract awarding practice and performance, a request to which he agreed. Can

the Minister give an update on the status of that review? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct: I did commit to providing a formal review. The review is a bit behind schedule right now, and we are looking at providing something to Members in the May-June session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. I wonder if the Minister can commit to providing the draft terms of reference or, in fact, the final terms of reference for this review to the government operations committee before the close of this session.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Those are available, and those can be shared. I don't see that there would be a problem sharing; the work is already ongoing, though, so the terms of reference would just apply to the work that is ongoing. If there is a possibility that I could share them with the Members, then I will look into that.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister's commitment to investigating sharing that. I guess it would have been helpful if he had done that before the review began, so that the government operations committee could provide some oversight in this area, which is their responsibility. I also want to talk about reports. We certainly appreciate seeing sole-source contracting reports on a quarterly basis now. I think that that really walks the talk of transparency. It is my understanding that these reports are actually quite easy to produce, just a matter of selecting particular database fields. I am wondering if it would be possible to also increase the reporting on contracts under \$5,000? They are now only produced annually. I am wondering if they could be done more often.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I take the Member's concern about the terms of reference, and going before government operations before we actually went out, but we are elected to do the work. We go out and do the work, and we are held accountable by the Members' office for the work that we do. Sometimes we need to get out there and actually get to work right away, instead of holding it up with bringing everything forward to government operations. Having said that, the Member's question was contracts under \$5,000, or over \$5,000? I do know that the contracts over \$5,000 document is tabled once a year, I believe, with all different types of contracts, and they are sole source negotiated. I am not sure if her question was under \$5,000. It is something that I would have to investigate. The Member is absolutely correct: as the Department of Finance, we are posting all of the

sole-source contracts on our website, and they are reported on a quarterly basis, and we try to ensure that these reports are updated within 30 days of the end of the quarter. It is easily accessible, and in the spirit of transparency, we are putting everything on the website, so people out there will know which are sole source.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the importance of giving the terms of reference to government operations proactively is that the value of all the contracts left by the government is very substantial. It is a significant piece of business. I understand that you need to get on with the business of governing, and we want you to get on with the business of governing, but I think on an issue this size, it would have been useful for the committee to have contributed its oversight to this issue. I say that, as somebody who is not a member of that committee, that I know that they do good work, and they would have done it in this case, as well. To clarify my question from the previous one, I was wondering if it would be possible to produce reports on contracts under \$5,000, as often as you do the sole-source contracts. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. Since April 1 to December of this year, there has been a substantial number of sole-source contracts. I believe there are about 290 of them. On the contracts under \$5,000, I would have to look into that, because a lot of that are corporate credit cards and such. I think it will be a substantive piece of work to try and pull all of that information together. I will do some investigating. If I have to have a conversation with the Member on the number of transactions, which I think would actually be almost as large as the tabled document of contracts over \$5,000, I will do some investigating. I will have a conversation with the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to remind Members to keep your preambles short, and your questions short and precise. Also, keep answers precise and to the point. Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 715-18(2): LAND LEASE ASSESSMENTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Minister of Lands spoke in his Minister's statement on what the departments have been working on to serve residents, in the way that best reflects the Northwest Territories' interests and priorities. It talks about Lands and bringing the two

Lands acts together. One of the things they talked about was reviewing --

MR. SPEAKER: Member, what is your question?

MR. THOMPSON: That is good. We will get to the question. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. My question is: what factors do the Department of Lands use to come up with the rate of 10 per cent to charge on land leases? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member's office has correctly stated, the leases are based on 10 per cent of the assessed value, and that is standard across the Northwest Territories, that 10 per cent of assessed value exists from Fort Smith, all the way up the valley to the ocean. Now, that is standard across the Northwest Territories, and that 10 per cent is roughly a standard that would be true, all across Canada. What happens is that the MACA assesses the land based on several factors: location of force is always important; whether the land is developed or surveyed; or whether there is a road nearby. All of those factors go into determining what the assessment is, and the lease amount is based on 10 per cent of that. Of course, as mentioned when I was answering the other question, there is a reduced rate for agricultural, seniors, or for non-profit groups, which is half of the regular rate. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. Why isn't the department using the mill rate, like tax-based communities use, instead of using the flat rate of 10 per cent for land leases?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The Land Pricing Policy was developed in 1997, and as the Member mentioned, it is being reviewed. Now, the mill rate is a municipal rate which each municipality sets to determine the amount of money that is required to be raised from local taxpayers. That is different in each community, so the mill rate has to do with taxation. The lease rate, that I have referred to, has to do with leasing of the land itself.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. Will the Minister direct his department to look at how tax-based communities come up with their mill rate and then develop their own mill rate to replace the 10 per cent approach presently used by this government?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As mentioned in my answer to the previous question, of course the mill rate is the way in which municipalities establish their needs to raise tax revenue in each community, and that tends to be different in each community, depending on their needs. We are, of course, reviewing the whole policy in this area, but I don't

think we would be referring to a rate as a "mill rate," which is really specific to municipalities.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the mill rate belongs to municipalities, and I am talking about a similar approach. Since the Minister isn't going to look at that, will the Minister have his department look at only charging for 10 years and have the total cost spread over a 30-year time period instead of the lessees paying for, over and over again, as every 10 years, they are paying for their land? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned earlier, our lease rate is based on 10 per cent of the assessed value. We are looking at the whole regime, if I can put it that way, of taxation, but I am not prepared to commit to the specific plan suggested by the Member opposite.

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

QUESTION 716-18(2): LAND LEASE ASSESSMENTS

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the Minister of Lands for not giving him a heads-up, but it's just a bit of a continuation of the honourable Member from Nahendeh. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if this 10 per cent policy is a policy that is left over from the equity lease, where leases were paid out in full in 10 years? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I am not absolutely sure of whether there was a connection between the assessment, the 10 per cent assessment, that I have spoken of earlier and the equity lease situation, which is quite a different situation. I do know that the land pricing policy was established in 1997, so it hasn't been looked at in some time by Cabinet. Land leasing and equity leases are somewhat different. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: The honourable Member for Nahendeh talked about mill rates. In the municipalities where they charge mill rates, you get a service, curbs, water and sewer, piped systems, usually. What type of service does the GNWT charge to -- I can't think of the word that would constitute the 10 per cent being charged for the leases.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: One of the advantages to the tenant is certainty of tenure. By granting a lease, of course, a person is given rights, the

surface rights to the property, and that is certainly something that is very valuable. The revenue that is collected, however the government collects it, whether it's through regular taxation or through leases, of course would go into general revenue to provide all the services we provide to our citizens.

MR. BEAULIEU: The Minister speaks of the review on the land leasing policy hasn't occurred, I do believe he said, since 1999. There are some properties where the units have been on there since the 1980s, since the 1970s, and so on. Mainly since the 1970s would probably be the older units in our smaller communities. I would like to ask the Minister if he is prepared to look at what the original deal was, because many of the people who are leasing have indicated that that was their land to start with and they built their home on their own land and now they are paying the government for 10 per cent of the value of that equity that they have accumulated.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The Member opposite has raised a complex issue. I can advise that the Department of Lands, with assistance from Justice, is looking into the whole area of equity leases and our responsibilities under these leases.

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

QUESTION 717-18(2):
LAND LEASE ASSESSMENTS AND
CONSULTATIONS

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for not giving heads-up notice to the Minister of Lands, but it's a continuation on the same similar subject. I am really not too sure when the acts were developed, but one was mirrored from devolution. Is the Department of Lands having some preliminary discussions with the stakeholders out there who have claims or leases in preparation for the amendments to the act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, of course, the department is always interested in engaging stakeholders as we move forward. In particular, as I referenced earlier, there is this complex area of equity leases that we are looking at from both an Honour-of-the-Crown position, if I can put it that way, and also looking at our legal obligations that may exist under these leases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: I welcome the answer. My second question here is: is there going to be a draft schedule of consultation provided to Members on this side in preparation for those changes?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I have mentioned earlier, we are looking at the minimum lease changes. Certainly, we have been consulting with Aboriginal and other stakeholders, and I imagine I could provide a list of consultations that have taken place and those that are planned.

MR. MCNEELY: When can we expect a draft schedule so we can respectively assist in the consultation with the stakeholders in our respective areas?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I would have to consult with the department to determine how soon we could provide that to Members opposite.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Can we expect this material information to come to our side prior to the next session? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I think Members opposite could expect that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Actually, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to seek unanimous consent, if there are no further questions, to go back to item 5 in the orders of the day, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent denied

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

QUESTION 718-18(2):
ADDRESSING THE GENDER WAGE AND
EMPLOYMENT GAP

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a recent report by Statistics Canada has shown that the gender gap between a man's earnings and a woman's earnings has shrunk by \$0.10 since 1981. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women what response this government has to shrinking that gap even further here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has done a few things, actually, to address the wage disparity between males and females. It was the last Assembly that actually increased the minimum wage. I hate to say that, but the majority of people making minimum wage

happened to be women in society, so we have addressed that by slowly increasing that. I did hear from the Minister the other day as well that they were looking at more increases to that.

The other thing they have done is, many, many years ago, the Government of the Northwest Territories did a gender equity pay throughout all of the employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure that women who are working for the government actually are paid the same as males. Equal work for equal pay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Those are concrete steps. I know this is a complicated topic. Another issue is that Canadian women are less likely to be employed. Nearly 10 per cent are less employed than men and are four times more likely to work part-time compared to men. Often, this is due to child care. Does the Minister have any suggestions or proposals that this government will do to improve access to affordable child care in the Northwest Territories?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Child care is a huge issue for women throughout the Northwest Territories, throughout Canada, and internationally, actually as a barrier to accessing employment and other opportunities as well, but employment is what we speak about today here. To address some of that, the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment did do an increase to the child care subsidies that daycares are getting. He did a reformatting of their formula funding to address that. I am and always will continue to be a strong lobby for child care.

MR. TESTART: We've talked about universal child care for the Northwest Territories. There was a study done on this. Does the Minister support universal child care as a potential project or policy for this government to take on and will she assess the feasibility of that in the life of this government?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The Government of the Northwest Territories does recognize universal child care as a very proactive option to address the obstacles, one of the obstacles, for women entering employment. As such, the Minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is looking at universal child care as an option and seeing if it can be realized within our government.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some analysts have taken a look at these, the most recent statistics, and seen that improving women's participation in the labour force might actually offset some declines. This could be an economic drive for

getting more women into the work force. Will the Minister commit to applying that kind of gender-based analysis to things like Skills 4 Success and other government initiatives in her role of Minister for the Status of Women so we can start to see those benefits roll out in across the government approach to empowering women in the Northwest Territories across government portfolios? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gender-based analysis, gender-based plus analysis, is critical to looking at all policies and procedures that impact. One policy does not apply equally to every situation and every person, so it is important to look within that lens to actually see how different programs, different policies affect individuals, women, people of disabilities, etc.

Yes, we are currently in the process of working with the Northwest Territories Status of Women to look at how we can start to implement gender plus based analysis within the government policies.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll try again to request unanimous consent to go back to Item 5 in the orders of the day, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: You may proceed. Member for Yellowknife North.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I always envisioned that my first nay was going to be in opposition of a hot button issue, and it turns out it was to go back to recognition of visitors in the gallery. It's all good all the time.

Mr. Speaker, I got caught up in the emotion of my Member's statement today and all the action going around introducing all the visitors in the gallery. I have to apologize. I didn't take the opportunity to recognize and welcome to the House today, the executive director of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, Deneen Everett, and the president of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, Renee Comeau. I just want to take this opportunity to welcome them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Ms. Deneen Everett and Ms. Renee Comeau from the Yellowknife Chamber. I think we've been talking a lot about women and leadership in the Northwest Territories on the occasion of International Women's Day. This is the perfect example of strong women leadership in our business community whose advocacy is tireless and a huge benefit to the residents of the Northwest Territories and to Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize the manager of the Yellowknife Airport and a constituent of Yellowknife South, Lee Stroman. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Premier.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 330-18(2):
RESPONDING TO THE TRUTH AND
RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA:
CALLS TO ACTION, MARCH 2017

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, March 2017." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Notices of Motion

MOTION 33-18(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
MAY 25, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 10, 2017, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on March 10, 2017, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 25, 2017;

And further, that any time prior to May 25, 2017, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative

Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of Motions. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 8, first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 23:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2017-
2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2017-2018, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 23 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 23:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2017-
2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2017-2018, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 23 has had its second reading. Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole bills and other matters, Bill 7, Committee Report 6-18(2), Committee Report 7-18(2), with Member for Hay North in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will call the 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 Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, Committee Report 6-18(2) Report on the Review of Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Fund Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will consider the documents after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act. I will ask the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act. The proposed bill would amend the Revolving Funds Act to establish a new revolving fund for the Yellowknife Airport with an authorized limit of \$36 million. The purpose of this fund would be to support the ongoing capital and operations and maintenance expenditures of the Airport.

With the establishment of a revolving fund, all revenues generated by the Yellowknife Airport would be retained by the airport, eliminating our reliance on Government of the Northwest Territories subsidies to improve this critical piece of infrastructure.

Currently, operating expenditures for the airport are paid from the Department of Transportation's annual appropriation, and capital expenditures are

approved through the capital budget planning process. As such, the airport competes with hospitals, schools, and all other Government of the Northwest Territories programs for funding. This model does not allow for sufficient financial resources to support the effective long-term infrastructure investment, economic development, and business the airport needs to grow.

Air transportation in the North is vital to keeping NWT residents connected, brings economic benefits to people across the territory, and acts as a catalyst to enhance business and tourism growth.

Although we continue to work with and lobby the federal government for additional infrastructure funding, there is no guarantee. We need to act now to make improvements to ensure a safe, secure, and efficient Yellowknife Airport.

A dedicated source of funding for the airport means we will be able to invest in various improvements to the terminal building enhancing the traveller experiences and attracting new business. Making airport security more efficient, expansions in and outside the terminal such as de-icing and services after security are upgrades that key stakeholders and members of the public have repeated they want at the airport.

Bill 7 is the next step in working together with air carriers, tourism, businesses, and the public to strengthen the Yellowknife Airport in support of better passenger services, the delivery of essential cargo, and the development of northern businesses. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Typically, we would go to the chair of the committee that considered the bill for opening comments, but as the report on Bill 7 was read, the Chair has indicated that is sufficient. Minister Schumann, would you please introduce your witnesses to committee.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is the deputy minister of Transportation, Russell Neudorf, and on my right is Michael Conway, superintendent of the North Slave Region. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 7. We have general comments. Nothing from committee. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This has been a long road coming to this place for Bill 7. Initially it came to committee and some details were omitted that didn't allow proper analysis. It went back for review for 120 days and committee has had time to consider it. Those public consultations, at least for me -- and I'll be clear, I am speaking for myself as an honourable Member of this House -- those public consultations were a real eye-opener for me. At first, the bill seemed an important step forward in delivering on crucial infrastructure improvements for the Yellowknife Airport and further economic opportunities, but the more we looked into it and the more we heard from important stakeholders, the more we realized that there was more in play here, and the proposed benefits and enhancements were less important than pulling an expensive piece of public infrastructure off the government's books and asking consumers to directly subsidize it through increased fees and taxes.

As we looked through other jurisdictions in Canada, and even through global rates of airline competitiveness, Canada ranks very poorly in affordable air travel, and largely because of increased fees and taxes that are imposed on tickets through airport authorities.

Even more recently, perhaps coincidentally in time for this debate, the CBC has launched a major investigative report into how airport improvement fees roll out across the country, and it was found that anywhere between 4 to 6 per cent of fees are kept by airlines, and this plan, this airport improvement plan, that this legislation enables didn't seem to be aware of that concern and it was not subject to committee's study, so there are a lot of unanswered questions.

It was originally called a governance reform for the Yellowknife Airport, and really it's more a governance structure for accounting, not really governance for the airport itself. There is an economic advisory committee that has been proposed, and this committee is not publicly accountable. It's not even accountable to the Minister; it's accountable to his Ministry. These are red flags in terms of creating a really robust entrepreneurial basis for funding increased economic and commercial activities at the Yellowknife Airport, and, ultimately, for a government that has pledged to keep the cost of living low, to tackle unnecessary increases to the cost of living, and that initially opposed a national carbon tax scheme out of concerns for increasing the cost of living. I find it somewhat galling that we are embarking wholeheartedly into increasing the cost of air travel in the Northwest Territories, and not just for Yellowknife but everyone who travels through that airport, which includes our world class tourism industry.

This is an industry worth subsidizing in my humble submission, Mr. Chair, and the price elasticity of airline rates has been noted in many of the submissions the committee received, and there is a direct correlation in decreased commercial activity as a result of increase in fees. People are very shrewd when they are purchasing air flights, and there are many resources out there to help make the most economical decision for them, so there will most likely be an impact; all the evidence that we were presented points to that.

Furthermore, what we heard is that people want a better airport. People want better infrastructure, better opportunities. This plan doesn't get us there any time soon. It's aspirational, and it was sold on aspirations. The immediate short and immediate term results of this plan is going to be fee increases and substantial fee increases across the board.

Nunavut and Yukon, our sister jurisdictions, are continuing to subsidize their airports. They have engaged in the federal government and in P3 projects to improve their local infrastructure and those are immediate projects that are under way today. We still don't have a plan to improve infrastructure. I would also argue that, if this is a political priority for government, then we will find the political will to put those improvements in, and if that's what the Assembly agrees to as a whole when we develop our mandate or develop those broad political priorities, then that's what takes precedent and perhaps bumps things up the capital planning list.

So I think that there's been a lot of work done on a sales pitch for this, and I appreciate that the department is trying to communicate its objectives here but I think they missed the mark. Ultimately, although this -- I can only call it a cash grab at this point has a direction that is towards airport improvement is far off, and at this time I can't support it. Perhaps under different economic conditions for our territory I could support it, but at a time when our economy is still sluggish and needs assistance from this government in the form of capital, in the form of opportunities, this is not an opportunity that is going to help our economy at this time.

This is an extra burden on the backs of Northerners who will be paying for this piece of infrastructure through fees and taxes, and those are my number one concerns: ensuring that our residents are not unduly burdened by any increases to the cost of living.

I have heard that line repeated by our Premier, by our Finance Minister, by numerous Members of Cabinet, so I can't understand why progressive things like carbon taxes can't be considered because of their undue cost yet an airport tax is

completely reasonable and rational as a policy direction of this government.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I'll conclude my comments. This is not a quick decision that I have come to; this is something that has been with the committee that I serve on, Economic Development and Environment. I do want to thank my honourable friends on that committee and the work of our chair, the honourable Member from Yellowknife North, in moving this file along and ensuring that we were allowed to do our due diligence and had a thorough review of this proposal and well considered, including allowing the public to have their voices heard. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. There's two minutes left of your time; would the Minister like to respond?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know how many people are going to have opening comments, so we may be repeating ourselves when I respond to each individual Member, but I've taken some quick notes on the Member's comments.

Right off the bat I want to comment on the ATAC fees. We have had a number of questions in the House surrounding that issue. This is something that is done through ATAC; it's a national thing. As I said in the House, we are paying close attention to them negotiating these fees going forward.

There has been a concern, I guess, in the paper or in the press about the amount of money collected by certain carriers. The one thing that I can tell Members is, if they were able to negotiate that price to a lower fee within the airport improvement fee, that will mean more money for capital for our airport, so that's actually a good thing. In a certain way, I think it's kind of timely that that report has come out and in the best case scenario they will end up having a lower fee on that and there will be more money for capital for our airport.

The Economic Advisory Committee, this is an advisory board. This is a first step on moving forward. I know our committee has supported more of an airport authority when they originally looked at this, and so have some other people who we have consulted with, but as I've said many times in the House, this is our first step in looking on how we wanted to roll this all out, and we feel that the Economic Advisory Committee is the proper way to do it. We believe we are going to get a wide range of participants, from Aboriginal governments to tourism businesses to business people in the surrounding area, that will help advise the government on what are the best practices and what our capital investments should be moving forward with the Yellowknife Airport.

The Member also said that we don't have a business plan moving forward. This has already been posted on what capital investments that we want to look at investing in the Yellowknife Airport, and that's already posted in our business plan on our website.

Cost of living. We've already put out that it's going to be .08 per cent cost of living to the Yellowknife residents in the Northwest Territories. The other thing that always sticks in my head is over half the people who are travelling through the Yellowknife Airport -- over half a million passengers -- over 50 per cent of them are non-residents of the Northwest Territories. These fees are going to be spread out over a wide variety of people, and we believe that this plan of Bill 7 moving forward is the best thing for the Yellowknife Airport. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister, right on time. You mentioned an acronym, ACAT or ATAC. For those not in government, could you please spell out what that stands for? Thank you.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Air Transportation Association of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. O'Reilly. If Mr. O'Reilly has any time left, then I will cede it to the Minister to respond. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I will try to leave some time at the end for the Minister to reply.

I don't want to repeat all of the arguments of my colleague from Kam Lake, but I do have some additional items, as well. I think it's fair to say that this proposal for Bill 7, it was not part of the mandate. This was not an initiative that I knew anything about. It was not part of the mandate, so what was really driving this? I think the motivation was the fiscal reduction targets set by Cabinet to try to get this \$4 million contribution from our government off the books, quite frankly. That was the motivation, in my opinion, for this move. Because, if it had been such a great idea, this should have been done years ago, so I don't understand the timing of this. It's not just coincidence that it's being introduced at the same time Cabinet has their fiscal reduction strategy.

I think it's also fair to say that this proposal has been characterized by some rather poor communications. MLAs, we first heard about this because of media reports of staff from the department briefing Yellowknife City Council on this before we had received a technical briefing or even information about this. Also, when the legislative proposal was brought forward to committee in May, at that point, committee had asked for detailed

information about how this was going to be rolled out in the form of a business plan. That business plan was not put together and provided to committee until September. It took months for the department to get this together. I know that there have been some remarks in the past about how committee is delaying this. That is completely untrue. It really goes back to, I think, the poor communications from the department in bringing this forward and providing the information to the standing committee.

Now, I want to go on to some other points here. Committee and members of the public, in fact, and committee members had asked the department to consider a phased-in approach to the fees. We felt that that was a more reasonable approach to take. The answer, though, from the department, from the Minister, was no, they were not prepared to consider a phased-in approach. I will have some questions for the Minister about that to see whether he might be willing to reconsider that. As my colleague, the honourable Member from Kam Lake said, I find it very inconsistent that on one hand this government has resisted a carbon tax with incredible fortitude in light of potential cost-of-living increases, but, on the other hand, cost-of-living increases related to increases in fees for users of the airport, that is fine because we can get that money off of our books. I just find that inconsistency a little bit too hard to swallow. I will be looking for a much stronger approach in terms of carbon pricing from our government when it comes to cost of living. They do not see that that is going to be a big issue, so I look forward to that from our Cabinet colleagues.

Like the previous speaker said, I think part of the issue here, too, is to try to get our federal government to invest in our gateway airport into the Northwest Territories, and I don't really see a sufficient effort on the part of our Cabinet to do that, and perhaps by previous governments, as well. We do have a federal engagement strategy, and investment in the Yellowknife Airport I don't think is even mentioned in the federal engagement strategy. I will have questions for the Minister in terms of what we are doing to try to tap federal funding programs for investment in the Yellowknife Airport and whether indeed we can or should be adjusting the federal engagement strategy and our requests under various funds that are provided to seek more investment into the Yellowknife Airport, perhaps even above and beyond roads to resources, one of the favourite investments from Cabinet.

Why investment in the Yellowknife Airport is important is because it can help promote tourism, and tourism is sustainable. That is why I think that we have to go back and look at how we are

approaching the federal government to seek better investment in the Yellowknife Airport.

I want to move on to the Economic Advisory Committee. This is the thing that causes me the greatest amount of concern and my greatest issue with this proposal. There is nothing really changing with the governance of the airport. All that is happening is that the revenues from this are going to go into a revolving fund. It's still going to be a DOT operation. They just won't have to provide any money for that because it will be the users paying for it, but nothing else is really changing.

What I have heard from constituents and the community and the users is that they would like to have a more meaningful say in what happens at the airport. We pushed the Minister on this, and we asked about what this Economic Advisory Committee would be, and his response has continually been that we are looking for business leaders that already have an interest in the airport and that want to promote the airport, and that is what this Economic Advisory Committee is really all about.

Well, that does not meet the test of independence, representativeness, accountability. Having this committee appointed by a deputy minister rather than by the Minister, himself, I just do not understand how that creates confidence in what this committee can and should be. Pardon my terminology here, this is going to be essentially an "old boys' club" rather than a committee that is going to provide any kind of oversight.

I guess the example that I want to give, and we raised this with the Minister at the time, was that, under the Waste Reduction and Recovery Act, there is an Environment Fund established by Environment and Natural Resources. There is provision in that act in basically one clause of the act, section 2, that gives the Minister the authority to establish an advisory committee. Mr. Chair, I served as the chair of that committee for five or six years, and I served on it for five or six years even before that. That was a representative committee. It provided sound advice because there were people from the municipal order of government, people from the retail sector, from shippers. People from the electronics industry came on later, but it was representative. It had a terms of reference that were sound and where they had the ability to provide advice and some oversight on the Environment Fund, and it worked very successfully. That is not the model that is being proposed for the Yellowknife Airport. What we have is an advisory committee that is going to be an "old boys' club." I can't really see how they are going to provide any kind of meaningful oversight, and they're certainly not going to be representative.

I also would encourage the department to do some kind of metrics reporting as this proposal moves forward so that we can actually see that the funds invested are improving wait times and things like that as we go forward, as part of their public reporting. I have probably gone on enough, Mr. Chair, for now. Those are my opening comments, but I will have questions for the Minister as we move forward. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister, the Member has left you a minute and twenty to respond to his statement. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't get into the Economic Advisory Committee because we have already discussed that. I want to touch briefly on his comment on carbon tax and then around the government. This is a very complicated issue. He knows that. The government is having a very hard look at how we are going to implement that, or if we are going to implement it, or how we are going to implement it. There are a lot of discussions between us and Regular Members and the public on how that is moving forward, so I just want to get that out of the way because he threw it in there. It has nothing to do with Yellowknife Airport.

Business plans, we are going to put them online. They are going to be able to be scrutinized and have a look by the general public. Nothing is going to change there. He made the comment about us throwing a business plan, coming in late, to them. Last session, we agreed with committee to hold off until the next session. The reason for the lateness of the business plan, and we have already told committee before, was we were doing consultation. We met with 39 different stakeholders in consultation sessions on how the airport moves forward, engaging with the federal government. The territorial government is always engaging with federal government on how we're going to get federal funding for airports. It's always been a challenge on that. We continue to work on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister, your time is expired. Next on my list, I have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with all the comments made. Looking back, and I also appreciate this was a very delicate subject with many involved and opinioned by other stakeholders and the public, but when I come back to my conclusion as an individual and the riding I represent -- who, by the way do not have a road and all-weather roads -- so it's either fly-in or drive-in for portions of the season, or take a long boat ride. We rely heavily on air travel.

I'm taking that into consideration as well as my colleagues on the high cost of living. I look at the discussions we had. I got to fly home, so I go through the building. I look at the building, talk to some of my associate previous-life work colleagues down South and talking with them, gathering their suggestions, their opinions, and relating that to the economics of the improvement fee. I see a lot of value going to this community, the workforce, the permanent workforce that is going to be created.

Looking at this government's budget, continuously it has always been the same neighbourhood amount that we've been operating on for the last 10 Assemblies. The fee itself, combined with the revenue it's going to generate, will go towards reducing a subsidized aspect of this government and improve services which are needed, expansion of the parking lot, and establish a showcase as a capital should to attract outside visitors.

The economic benefits also include improvement construction jobs. I look at the tourism potential of our remote pristine area in central Mackenzie, and I also take into account if the traffic could make their way to the destination out here. We've got destination Deline to attract those individuals to the next largest pristine lake in the Northwest Territories. Who's to say, we may even see 10 per cent of that traffic going to that neighbouring lake two Assemblies from now. So the vision of prosperity could be assumed in two-fold.

After analyzing the only reasonable carrier that we have in our area, the businesspeople, friends who I associate with down South who travel up here -- here in the committee, and some in my area -- I come to the conclusion on speculation that I think what we can only assume is going to be addressed in a pro forma business case. At the end of the day, my conclusion and I'll say it for the record -- and that's me only -- I'll be supporting Bill No. 7. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll leave half the time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. You gave five minutes to the Minister. I just want to remind the Minister, as a Member of this House, you do have your own 10 minutes if you ever wish to speak to it.

I apologize for the abruptness of cutting off last time, but rules are meant to be followed. I also appreciate that you don't have a clock up there. Next on my list, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to touch on a couple of the issues, or concerns I'll call them, that I've heard as a Member of this House. I've heard that this was going to possibly have an effect on tour operators. It's not really affecting tour operators monetarily, but possibly affecting the numbers of tourists who

would come. If it was at a higher cost, I'm pretty sure that the tour operators could essentially pass their costs on to the tourists themselves, but if it was too high, then you eliminate the percentage of the tourists. It could have some impact there, a possibility, so I certainly have a concern there about that particular item.

The other concern that I've heard frequently has been it would have an impact on the cost to air transportation companies. In that sense, it hits a little closer to home for me as a Member of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh because one of my communities is affected with very, very high costs of living at this point, the fly-in community of Lutselk'e.

What happens there now is individuals in the community take full advantage of a trip to Yellowknife. If they have to pay for a ticket and then buy the groceries in Yellowknife and ship them in, the cost is significantly high enough that it just balances out if they can get a trip in for another reason. Many individuals take advantage of trips into the community, whether it be medical travel or travelling on other business that they have to do in Yellowknife or passing through here to do business elsewhere. They take advantage of the amount of weight that they're allowed to have and paid on their ticket. Anything above that, they pay a certain amount. If that company is hit with high fees, then they would pass that cost onto the customers that they serve and that would be many of the Tlicho communities and even the Nahendeh communities -- or one community, I'm not sure about that -- but definitely Lutselk'e.

When the people come, they look and they see. They take this opportunity to buy groceries here and save a lot of money on their groceries, and then the savings will go down when they have to put it on a plane at -- I think -- I don't know the amount, but it's over a dollar per pound. It's considerably over a dollar per pound. That will start to impact. This bill then -- if I look at this bill -- I would say yes, it would have. It may have an impact on people who are trying to lower their cost of living in the community at Lutselk'e because the Air Tindi is paying more than they are currently. They may have to pass that onto the customer.

I guess my question to the Minister -- I have three questions, actually. One is: has there been any discussion with the individual tour operators to see if there are ways where they could mitigate the impact on their operations? Number two: if there have been more discussions with the airline companies, especially the ones that serve communities where there is only fly-in, so especially when we have communities where they have to bring food in, just to keep the costs down. Food, of course, is an essential item, and that is one thing: even when the federal government taxes things,

they don't tax food. We know that, because everything is done to try to keep the taxes on food as low as possible. In communities where there are high food costs and there is an opportunity to ship stuff in, by having a reasonable freight cost, if this was to turn this freight cost from a reasonable freight cost to a high freight cost, then it would be, essentially, like our government is going to now not charge taxes on food for those communities with the highest costs, but actually charge fees to individuals who are trying to feed their families.

I guess the third question, which I haven't even touched on here, would be: if there is capital, if this bill is approved and the money is there to do capital, one of the things that may eliminate a lot of those costs would be an extension of the airstrip. By extending the airstrip I don't know how many feet --- 15,000 feet, or whatever, it may give an opportunity for tour operators to fly people directly from their countries right into Yellowknife with bigger planes, bigger loads, and less distribution of costs amongst the individual tourists, thus continuing to make it a feasible, attractive place for tourists to come. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister, there are three minutes. Keeping in mind you can always answer after the rest of committee has made their comments. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will answer him very quickly. First of all, we have met with NWT Tourism. We have actually met with them twice to discuss items that are issues around tourism. One of the things that we are working on with them is figuring out how we can attract direct flights from Vancouver to Yellowknife, which will allow for a lower cost for travellers from Asia, in particular, coming from Vancouver directly to Yellowknife. We believe that is going to help them out, because it is actually going to put more money in the tourists' pockets, and possibly even increase the numbers coming into Yellowknife.

As far as freight, our business plan says that the fees that are going to be implemented will only add one cent per pound to freight. That is a very minor increase. If the Member already said they are paying \$1 per pound, now they are going to pay \$1.01 per pound. I don't think that is a significant amount. Capital for expanding the length of the runway, that is something that is on the list, but I don't believe that is a priority right now, moving forward. It is something that we can consider in the future. I believe most planes are all coming in right now, and the runway is fine. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, at this point, a number of issues have already been investigated, so I will try to focus on those which, I think, haven't had as much attention. I guess I want to start with the fact that use of the airport is non-optional for a big chunk of the Northwest Territories, because they have no other way to get to their communities on an everyday basis, or to get freight to their communities, or to have a medevac from their communities, or to go on medical travel from their communities. A question I will ask the Minister, at the appropriate time, is: how much of the money that is going to be paid out in the increased fees will actually be paid out by the government in all these different ways that they pay for airport use?

I will also be interested to hear some more detail on the Minister's figure of how much the increased fees are going to increase the cost of living in Yellowknife, and whether that is just in Yellowknife, or whether it is through the Northwest Territories as a whole. Mr. Chair, this is a very economically slow time, here in Yellowknife in particular. We have had job losses on many fronts to do with our key employers: both the mining industry and the civil service. The result of that, along with increased costs in different directions, is people are feeling very vulnerable about the costs of living here.

This is not going to allay their fears in any way that they are going to be subject to an additional fee to leave the territory. This is going to increase their costs, and while that may be negligible, I think the psychological effect is more significant. I know my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Willideh talked about tourism. My understanding is that tourism operators sell their products well in advance, and so they would not have had an opportunity to include this extra cost in prepaid tours, and the result could cost them literally hundreds of thousands of dollars of having to pay those airport fees out of their own pockets. This comes at a time where the committee heard compelling evidence that tourism thrives when flights are affordable, so making them more expensive doesn't seem to be the right direction to go, in this particular case.

Making them more affordable will help us to encourage the growth of this fledgling industry, one which we have all agreed we want to see grow, and we want to take up a bigger portion of our economy. Making things more difficult for that sector doesn't make a lot of sense. In the business community, we all know that the mining industry is a very influential player, and they have said, very clearly, that they are opposed to this fee, that it will cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars because of the flyover workforce that they have, and also for their general cost of business.

This is, again, hitting an industry that has already been very clear that it is feeling the pinch of lower-

commodity prices, and so, as a result, lower profits. My bottom line here is that I can't support the bill the way it is now. I think there are some very significant outstanding questions about attracting federal investments, about strengthening the governments, about a more considerate approach to phasing in the additional costs, at a time when the economy is more able to bear it. With that, thank you, and those are my remarks.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will wait.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Do we have anyone further? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This should be brief. We have heard from our fellow colleagues, our honourable colleagues, as they addressed the issues. There are a number of questions that keep popping into my head. From my riding, it is a \$39 increase. If we want to go to Edmonton, we have to switch from here onto another plane and then continue on. It is not a direct flight, like some of the other communities. It is a \$39 increase. It doesn't sound like a lot, but when you are paying a large amount of money to get on a plane to get out just from Fort Simpson to Yellowknife, it is a factor.

Some of the other questions I do have, though, are: I asked the Minister regarding the costs of the GNWT. I understand we are saving \$4 million, but how much of this is actually coming back? The departments have to pay, through medical travel and business travel. How much is being put back into the coffer? To me, if we knew the information, then that would help make a better decision for me, but right now, I don't know what that is. That is a cost that is out there, which seems to be saying, "We are saving \$4 million, but if the government spends \$1 million, really, we are only saving \$3 million." That is an issue.

My other concern is in regard to O and M costs. If that is a \$4 million subsidy, if we are taking that and we're putting it in the revolving fund, that means those costs are going to come out of that. Or is it? Is there another pot of funding that is being allocated? So I am trying to understand these things. I am trying to get a clearer picture of it. The other concern is in regards to the parking expansion enhancement. The plan, I am looking at the airport, and I am seeing the airport and trying to envision where this extension of the parking lot is going to be. Is it going to be a parking lot moved away? Is there going to be additional cost to it? Is it going to be a charter or a taxi, or is it a shuttle? I

mean, these are costs that need to be reflected in the plan.

Finally, the cost, if it was actually implemented over a longer period of time, then it would be a better reflection of people to look at it and have a better appreciation of it. I understand the importance of doing business and that, but we are asking for a huge increase right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: This one, I want to answer right away. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know where the Member is coming from when he thinks there is going to be an extra fee on for his residents flying through from Fort Simpson south. Anyone who is flying from Fort Simpson directly through, if they have a stopover here and get on another carrier and continue south, there is not going to be a fee for that. The only way there would be is if they came here, spent a couple of days here, and had to rebook a ticket or something going south. Then there would be the \$20 fee plus the additional aeronautical fees that would be added to that. That is how that is. There would be a \$10 fee added to their ticket if they were flying north from here in that particular case, but, if it's flying through Yellowknife, if it's a stopover and a continuation of their ticket, there is no added cost to the passenger.

As for medical travel, I have stated in the House that it's a roughly \$300,000 incremental cost that is added to the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have already provided committee with that information once.

As for capital improvements moving forward, as we have said, we are going to have our advisory committee along with the Government of the NWT and the airline industries in how we are going to move some of these things forward. That will be determined moving forward. The business plan that is drafted, that is already posted online, has laid out in it some of the changes that we have already decided to try to move forward as a draft plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't be very long. My colleagues stated a lot of the obvious and actually answered a lot of questions that I had.

With my colleague from the Sahtu, I agree that, if we are going to pay maybe \$5 or \$10 for a ticket, I don't think it would change anybody's mind to come to travel to the Northwest Territories. I think, when you look at the business model of it into the future, I think Yellowknife is probably the place that will benefit most out of this, and I think a lot of the

surrounding communities will benefit, as well, from having tourists and clients. For myself, being in the outfitting business before, a lot of our clients were from Europe, and they had had to fly through other routes, sometimes it was impossible for them to reach my region and especially fly up to Paulatuk. In a sense, that cancelled some of their trips. From a business model, it affected our business, as well. I think this brings them a step closer to saying yes and drawing more tourists to the Northwest Territories.

Looking forward, earlier I had mentioned about how great our harvesting and our culture is, so we want to bring more people to see that, too. Yellowknife is the capital, and I see in Iqaluit, Nunavut, they are building an airport. Their population is less than half of what we have here, in Yellowknife, and their airport is by far a lot bigger. It shows that the territories are moving forward with plans to become more of an icon of the North. For me along with my colleague from the Sahtu, I support this, and I think it's a smart move in planning forward. I just wanted to say that I support the bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Would the Minister care to respond? The Minister would not. Next on my list I have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am a Yellowknifer. I live here. I do business here, and I travel regularly through the Yellowknife Airport. The idea of running the airport as a self-sufficient business, charging user fees and landing fees, property leases and vendor rents designed to generate a profit like a business, in that context, it would appear to be a good concept, but the fact is that the Yellowknife Airport is not a business, it's not run by businesspeople, and it's not expected by residents to be a business. It's a government-owned and operated facility. It's almost certainly the NWT's most important piece of transportation infrastructure. It provides critical services to every individual, community, and business in the territory.

Mr. Chair, I agree that the experience for the traveller needs to be improved, the terminal needs some updating, we have to get people checked in more quickly, and we certainly need to break the bottleneck at the security area. Parking needs improvement, and, yes, safety for passengers going to and from the terminal to the planes needs to always remain a priority, but these things should be the focus of managing the airport every day, not just when it wants to seek \$10 million a year in user fees.

The Yellowknife Airport should always have the travellers' best interests in mind and be continually improving the air travel experience, but the

Yellowknife Airport is also more than just an airport passenger terminal. It includes exploration support companies, such as Matrix. It has a new diamond polishing plant in Almod Diamonds. The ever-famous Buffalo Airways is also located here in a big way. Aboriginal-owned transport and logistics companies such as Det'on Cho Logistics, and BBE are located at the airport. Of course, a number the North's homegrown airlines and helicopter companies are located here, as well. We even have an auto dealership and a few rental car businesses located here, as well.

Mr. Chair, these companies represent lifelines to the North. They bring cargo in and out, they support tourism, they support industry, but, most importantly, they support residents and the communities. Not one of these businesses is just a Yellowknife business. They are part of that critical infrastructure hub I spoke of that makes up the Yellowknife Airport. All of these northern businesses have one expectation of us as a government: to keep the cost of doing business down. In fact, I can't even begin to understand how we balance this idea of a user fee against many other demands we face as a government.

We have to fight tooth and nail for more money for education needs, for justice needs, and social needs to help overcome many challenges we face on those fronts, but here and now with the airport, there is just a simple list of nice-to-have projects and let's grab as much as \$10 million a year in new money from residents to pay for it.

I don't need to shine a light on our economic realities anymore, Mr. Chair. Our residents are faced with those realities, and they are demanding every day that we keep the cost of living down. They told us clearly during the election campaign. That is why it's in our mandate. Yet, with this user fee proposal, we are going to be direct contributors to increasing the cost of living and the cost of doing business in the North. If we want to contribute to the economy, we need to keep overhead low. That will support established businesses and stimulate new ventures, and it will allow residents to keep their own money in their own pockets. Now is not the time to apply a new tax, a significant one at that.

Mr. Chair, the Northern Air Transportation Association, NATA, suggests the proposed user fee will work against the goals and priorities of this government. NATA points out that air travellers already pay significant taxes and fees. A recent ticket between Edmonton and Yellowknife with a base price of \$112 actually cost the traveller \$196. That is a 75 per cent tax. Now our proposed user fee would be on top of that. NATA also points out that it's the federal government, not a user-pay

system, that is responsible for providing key airport infrastructure funding.

Northern air carriers are doing all they can to remain competitive. Numbers from the Yukon-based airline Air North show that lower air fares there helped increase the number of visitors, stimulate the economy, and support the business sector, but estimates indicate that a user fee in Yukon that would raise roughly \$7 million for their airport would likely cost the economy \$6 million in reduced tourism, lowered business travel, and a higher cost of living. The NWT-Nunavut Chamber of Mines, the North's voice on resource opportunities, recently put out a news release clearly stating that they are opposed to such a fee. They said it decentivize investment in the North, it goes against support for a healthy mineral industry and it will add to the cost of doing business. The president went so far as to say that it goes against the NWT Mineral Development Strategy which was created to rejuvenate investment, and he inferred that, if the government really wants to generate revenue instead of new taxes, it should support exploration in mining opportunities.

Both NATA and the NWT Chamber of Commerce have argued strongly that the department has not made a proper business case for this new fee. They further suggest that the airport should show it operates at a maximum efficiency and take advantage of all other revenue-generating opportunities before users are saddled with more fees. A user fee that can be perpetually increased will take away any incentive to improve efficiencies of existing operations.

NATA is sponsoring the Northern Aviation Business Conference here in Yellowknife in April. The conference will specifically address needed airport improvements. I suggest our government needs to be at that conference with open eyes and open ears.

NWT Tourism and their members said no to the fee proposal. Why? Because tour operators -- among the brightest sector in our economic outlook -- will be burdened with higher operating costs.

Mr. Chair, we heard from northern airlines, we've heard from the Chamber of Mines, we've heard from the NWT Chamber of Commerce and we've heard from NWT Tourism and we've heard from individuals. Higher costs do not support competitiveness, resource development, business growth or tourism, and certainly, of course, higher cost is a direct conflict with our mandate goal to lower the cost of living. New user fees at the Yellowknife Airport create an obstacle to achieving all these goals.

Mr. Chair, I like to use the triple-bottom-line approach to evaluate policy and program proposals; that means, to go forward, an idea has to succeed on three separate bottom line levels: fiscal, social, and environmental. This is clearly a lopsided initiative that has very limited benefit to attaining sustainability. If this user fee proposal were to be tested using a triple-bottom-line scorecard, it fails, Mr. Chair.

I agree that the Yellowknife Airport needs to grow and provide better service to travellers, but I submit that now is not the time to take money out of our economy this way. Instead, I speak today to say that now is the time to support the mandate and support northern businesses and families. Now is the time to protect individuals, families and small businesses by sticking to our government's ultimate business plan: the mandate, where it is clearly stated as our second priority on page 6 "the 18th Assembly will lower the cost of living."

For these many reasons, Mr. Chair, I will not be in support of Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. I have no one further on my list. Would the Minister like to respond to the opening comments?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, I want to make it quite clear, this is raising the cost of living by less than a tenth of 1 per cent, so it's very minimal. If I thought this was something that was going to raise the cost of living by 10 or 15 per cent in the Northwest Territories, this bill wouldn't be in front of the House.

Through the Member's comments that he just made around the Yellowknife Airport, the one thing I want to -- I agree with a number of things that he said in comments, some of them were very valid, but one of the things doing this revolving fund Bill 7 moving forward is it's going to free up \$4 million that we're already spending, not including capital, and what that money alone is going to do just in the Yellowknife area for every million dollars that we bring forward is going to create three and a half jobs. So just out of that \$4 million, not even counting capital, is going to create roughly 14 jobs in the City of Yellowknife at the airport. So that's going to be an economic driver alone. So I think that's very important.

Also, this money that we're freeing up is also going to be used for other priority areas in this government that every Member in the House has brought forward, especially in this city, around healthcare, education, housing. This is the stuff that these departments have to fight with with our department over this money, and by doing this user

pay system moving forward, this is going to free up the money for other initiatives that are very important to every Member that is sitting around this Assembly. That's not peanuts; \$4 million going on every year that we already spend there not counting the capital. I don't want to get into a he said or they said; a couple of Members have made the point that I make a sales pitch, but I believe this is the right initiative moving forward for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

This is going to free up the money to put into other initiatives within the Government of the Northwest Territories, but this is also going to be a huge economic driver for the City of Yellowknife and the territory as a whole. It has huge potential to bring more tourists to the Northwest Territories; bring more business potential to the Yellowknife Airport and it is going to change the way the Yellowknife Airport is going to be looking in the future moving forward. That's it for my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Committee, we have concluded general comments. Does committee agree that we now continue to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Committee agrees. We'll defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses.

Please turn to page 1 of the bill. As I call out the clauses, indicate if you wish to speak to or have questions about a certain clause, otherwise either agree or don't. Mr. O'Reilly, clause number 1.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Presumably, this is the time where we can also ask questions of the Minister? Because I have a number of them. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly, you have 10 minutes to speak to clause 1 and you can ask questions of the Minister.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my first question is: I'd like to know from the Minister or staff what are the subsidy costs for other airports that we operate in the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we've just been through the main estimate process, and there would be a line item there that would provide the money that we need to run all 27 airports that we have in the NWT. I don't recall specifically what

that item is, but we also generate revenue from other airports as well. The amount of money that we generate, revenue from those airports, though, is a small fraction of what it would cost to run all of those other airports. It's only Yellowknife that has enough traffic volumes that we would consider this type of initiative to see if we can move forward with the business case and have the revenues and expenditures balance off.

In addition to that, there is also the capital budget, and as capital needs at airports come forward we would bring those projects forward through the capital planning process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I was hoping to actually get the number, but I'll try to look it up here myself in between questions.

Are there any plans by the department, then, to introduce airport improvement fees at any other airports in the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, there is no intention of doing that at any other airport. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that response. So can the Minister just tell us a little bit more about why the department is not willing to consider a phase-in of the fees? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we don't want to phase in these fees; first of all, it would create uncertainty for air carriers and travellers if we did a phased-in approach. The phased-in approach would mean that a significant operating subsidy would have to be maintained from the taxpayer, so that's another reason we wouldn't want to do it, and a phased-in approach implement would result in a delay in the ability to make necessary capital improvements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So did the department look at whether a phased-in approach

would help buffer the cost of living increase caused by these increased fees? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I've said in House, one tenth of 1 per cent is the increase of the cost of living. We don't believe that the phased-in approach would make any kind of difference on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess we're going to agree to disagree. Can the Minister tell us what sort of efforts he and his Cabinet colleagues have made in terms of trying to secure some of the increased investment or capital following from the federal government for specific improvements at the Yellowknife Airport? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've had several different programs that provide capital funding for airports. We do access those whenever possible. Any time you come forward with a need, you're always needing to determine what the highest priority is and then balance that with the needs in all different modes of transportation; and in fact, the needs across multiple departments that might be wanting or able to access the same pot of federal money.

Specific to airports, there is the Airports Capital Assistance Program. It provides \$35 million a year. It's an application-based program. The \$35 million a year is across Canada. We compete with all airports across Canada that are eligible. We typically get one, maybe two, projects a year that would amount to \$1 or \$2 million. Some current projects are we're replacing the lighting in Norman Wells and replacing lighting in Tuktoyaktuk.

We've also, as part of the Building Canada Program or one of its predecessors, the Canada's Strategic Infrastructure Fund, been able to find the funding or have airport projects be a priority there. Seven or so years ago, the Yellowknife Combined Services Building received about 50 per cent of its funding from the federal government. More recently, three terminal buildings in Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Tuktoyaktuk were replaced under the Canada Stimulus Fund.

We do take every opportunity that we can in order to obtain federal government funding. The thing is you're always subject to whatever the federal government program criteria are, so you have to make sure that your needs fit with that. You're

always competing with all of the other needs that are in all of the modes of transportation. At the present time, their Federal Engagement Strategy is really for new road construction and investing in new roads. That's the higher priority at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm glad that the deputy minister raised the last point about the Federal Engagement Strategy. I guess I'd like to ask the Minister if he and his Cabinet colleagues are prepared to review the Federal Engagement Strategy with a view to adding in federal investment and air transportation and make that become a priority? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, I want to point out the mandate of 18th Legislative Assembly was the three highway corridors, and that's what we focused on. The Federal Engagement Strategy was very strategic. We wanted to keep, as we've said in the House, our number advanced to a minimum and it was very strategic when we went down there. We focused on those key areas moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't think I actually got an answer, though. Is the Minister prepared to work with his Cabinet colleagues to change the Federal Engagement Strategy to include trying to secure federal investments in our airports? I think it is completely consistent with our mandate because, you know, looking at the mandate, they're talking here about strategic investment, diversification of the economy, transportation, lots of things in here. I guess I'd like to know whether he and his Cabinet colleagues are prepared to change the Federal Engagement Strategy to move airports out in the priority list. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I said, our focus was very limited. We didn't want to go down there with a number advanced. We've concentrated on energy and highway corridors when we were down there. As I have said, the mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly has the three corridors outlined and our mandate is our priority. We will continue to focus on that. We'll see

what the Federal Government comes out with their budget here on March 22nd. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Forty-seven seconds, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think that's a no. The Minister just does not want to say it. I'll move on to or yield the rest of my time to somebody else, but I would like to get back on the list at another opportunity. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Anyone further? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Minister has said a number of times that the effect of the fee increase will be 0.08 per cent of an increase to the cost of living. I'd like some details about how that was calculated. Thank you.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had worked with the stats bureau of the government in order to try to quantify what the impact of the increase in the ticket prices would be. We looked at how much air travel component is of the average household expenditures in Yellowknife. We looked at the number of people in a household and what, if assuming the increase is going to be in the \$27 to \$29 per ticket range, with the number of people that would be flying, and the percentage is on the total household expenditures. It would work out to that 0.08 per cent increase. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for that answer. That's the calculation for residents. What's the calculation for the increased cost of doing business for businesses? Did you do one of those? Thank you.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, we didn't do any increased costs for businesses. We did look at the GNWT, and the Minister has indicated that number before that the incremental cost would be about \$300,000, or about 2 per cent of the travel budget. Any business could multiply the \$27 to \$29 ticket price or the \$17 to \$19 if you're doing travel in the North. Just multiply that by the number of times that you're going to be flying and can come up with an impact. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for that response. What I heard the Minister say is that the increase would increase medical travel by \$300,000, but what would the increase be to the GNWT for all the forms of flying it pays for? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Member for asking that, because I misspoke when I said it was \$300,000 increase to medical travel. It's a \$300,000 incremental cost, the total expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wonder if the Minister can think of a remedy to the problem posed to the people who pre-sell tourism packages, where the fees have been made now and so the increased airport fees cannot be added on. Is there a solution he can propose that would allay the concerns that tourism businesses have about having to bridge the gap between their pre-paid and their upcoming business? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Any pre-sold packages at any of the tourism operators that have already sold will not have an effect with this fee. Once this is passed through the House we want to start July 1st, but anything that has actually been pre-sold before that is at a later date will not be affected by this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: That is good news. So just to recap this: as long as it has been pre-sold prior to the effective date, then the initial price is the price. Is that correct? Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. I will just remind everything to make sure the light is on before you begin speaking. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Okay. Thank you very much for that. I think that those are all my questions. Thank you.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I recall a number of years ago when the immigration funding established the Aurora Fund to provide venture capital for enterprises in private communities. In particular, there were quite a large amount of applications going towards air travel supports, expansion of existing chopper companies, airplane companies. As a result of that movement on capitalization to the opportunity and flexible terms of the immigration fund called the Aurora Fund, we saw the creation of some new companies. What my question is: is given the fact that they're still operating today, are our lease rates within the airport property considered competitive? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's correct, our leases are considered market rate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MCNEELY: None yet. I may have another one later. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. This discussion is actually better suited for the second clause, so I'm going to proceed to call the first clause and the discussion can continue on clause 2. So clause 1, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yea.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. The yeas have it. Moving on to clause 2. Clause 2, comments or questions. Comments or questions on clause 2. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The total cost of this, the Minister made a comment that the honourable Member for Nahendeh was incorrect in his assessment; I just want to get back to that number. My understanding is that, should someone travel to Edmonton on a return flight, for example, from let's say Fort Simpson, the cost of that would be a \$29 fee once they arrive in Edmonton and once they return to Fort Simpson there will be a \$19 fee. So there are fees on both ends of the trip, is that not correct? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this individual, if he flies from Simpson through the Yellowknife Airport to Edmonton, there's no fee,

nothing. But if the individual flies to Yellowknife on one ticket and then buys a different ticket to leave out of the Yellowknife Airport to go to Edmonton, there would be a fee. But if he's flying the Yellowknife Airport from Fort Simpson return, or even one-way to Edmonton, there is no additional cost to the ticket. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I suppose it's a bit clearer, but I think committee had a different understanding when we embarked on our report.

The other thing, the Minister made reference that carbon taxes and other cost of living increases are not part of this plan, but I would argue that our cost of living has everything to do with the Yellowknife Airport and any fees need to be carefully measured. The committee has recommended that the airport fees be implemented over time rather than all at once.

Now the Minister has already said that he disagrees with that, but does he further disagree with the committee's formal recommendation that these fees be implemented over time? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, I want to clarify, going back to the previous question first. If you're doing this flight from Simpson through to Edmonton there is no AFI, air improvement fee, but there will be a fee on that ticket for the aeronautical fees which would be in the \$7 to \$9 range. So that's actually going to be that one fee that will be affecting someone flying through from a community.

To the Member's question if would I support a phased-in approach, I've made it quite clear a number of times, no, we do not support a phased-in approach. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This one-tenth of 1 per cent cost of living increase would be .08 per cent, the department indicated it worked with Statistics Canada to derive that statistic. Can we get some more details on the calculation done on that or a commitment to see detailed -- granted that this is perhaps not the venue for that, but can we get some detailed calculations?

That wasn't shared with committee during our study, and it's a little troubling to find out on the floor that they have quantified the exact cost when

cost of living has been such a concern of committee and of the public who presented to committee. So can the Minister provide further detail or commit to providing a thorough breakdown of those numbers? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we can supply that information how we arrived to the multiplier effect on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I should note the household statistics seem to be lumped under one line "Transportation," is that correct or is there separate data being collected on air transportation? Did the department just multiply that transportation line and base its analysis on that or did it base its analysis on specific air costs? Thank you

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will pass that on to the deputy minister, Mr. Neudorf. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To clarify, it was the stats bureau in the Department of Finance that provided the information for us, and it was the average increased ticket price of \$27 to \$29 multiplied by the average number of times that a household would travel, which was three and a half times, on a southbound trip. So you can just take that number and work it up to the total household expenditures and you can come up with your percentage of .08.

So, in fact, it was three and a half southbound trips times \$27 and divided by \$124,105, which is the average Yellowknife household expenditures and it would come out to 0.08 per cent.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Testart, would you clarify for committee what document you are referring to?

MR. TESTART: Sorry, on the air increase? Oh, the statistics? The statistics bureau, sorry, Mr. Chair, the NWT -- I don't have the document in front of me, I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Okay. I'm sorry, you mentioned the line "Transportation." I assume that was from some sort of document that you were discussing. So continue your discussion.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and it's nothing that's before the House for consideration, it's merely how the Bureau of Statistics calculates household costs. I appreciate the comments from Mr. Neudorf.

Now, the witness has indicated that this was a breakdown of Yellowknife and I think that's prudent on one level, considering it is a cost increase to the Yellowknife Airport, but as honourable Members from smaller communities have mentioned this impacts them as well. So did the department do an analysis of the average transportation costs of someone living in Norman Wells, someone living in Inuvik, all the other communities that make frequent trips to our capital? Thank you

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We expect that this would be less for the outlying communities than 0.08 per cent. The other thing I want to mention, though, when we are talking about this 0.08 per cent of cost of living to residents of Yellowknife, this is only if you choose to fly. If you do not choose to fly, this does not impact you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't so much ask for an assessment, but if the department had done that work. So did they do a cost assessment for each of our regional centres and the average household cost of travel and how it will be impacted by the increased fees of our gateway airport? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, as I said, we never did that analysis. AIF is lower for the outlying communities, and the price of tickets are higher. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: I remain unconvinced. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I would like to just go back to the fees here for a minute. Is there any possibility, then, that these airport improvement fees are going to go down in the future? How would that be done? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is something that is possible once we get the airport up to where we think it should be. Maybe this is a fee that in a future government could be either lowered or discontinued. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The revolving fund itself, how is that going to be reported on annually by the department? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moving forward, the revolving fund will have a page in the main estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That is helpful to know. Presumably, then, it will also be in the business plans, but I guess I am thinking about how would the department show what the money was spent on in terms of capital improvements, and will there be any tracking of statistics to show how the money is improving services at the airport, things like wait time, line-up lengths, and delivery of baggage, those sorts of things? Is there going to be any attempt to track any of that and show how improvements have improved the performance of the airport, itself? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we move forward with this model, we do recognize the need for transparency and to have a good accounting for the public about how the revenues are being earned and how the expenditures are being tracked and how they are going to be spent, so, as the Minister indicated, there will be a page in the main estimates that provides information at a high level on the revolving fund. In addition to that, we would prepare an annual business plan that would outline the work that we want to undertake with the monies that are available to the airport. We would also prepare financial reports that would show how that money is spent at the end of the year.

In fact, air carriers are talking to us that they would like improved metrics, improved statistics for what is happening at the airport so that they can make their business decisions, so we would be, as part of

the business plan, also providing all kinds of information around use, metrics around the Yellowknife Airport. That will be adjusted based on what the air carriers' information is that they would want to see. I would note, as well, that the airport economic advisory committee will have oversight over this, but we will also be setting up an air carrier consultative committee that would be providing input into the capital and how those fees are expended, and then also an airline operating committee, which would provide input to the operations of the airport for how the airport is operated and any improvement that we might want to make there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'd like to suggest that it's not just air carriers that would be interested in that sort of metric information. It's probably actually the public and air travellers. So are those sorts of things going to be considered? The reason why I ask this is the economic advisory committee is just going to be a bunch of business folks, which is fine, but there is not necessarily any public representation on there. Air carriers may not even be represented. It's just going to be businesspeople. Is there going to be some effort to develop indicators of performance at the airport that might be of more interest to the travelling public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We certainly do think that the people on the Airport Economic Advisory Committee are going to be representing the interests of the public. The information that we provide, the business plan, it's available on our website now, so all of that information is public, and anybody in the public will be able to take a look at it. Some of the things that the public would be interested in are just the wait times, baggage delivery times, and de-icing times with aircraft. Those kinds of things are the type of metrics the air carriers want. We think the public is going to be interested in those, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that response, but I guess I think the real way to find out what the public would like to know is actually get some public representation on the economic advisory committee itself. Let's turn to the committee. The Minister did provide us a terms of reference. Is that a public document at this point? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will pass that on to Deputy Minister Neudorf. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have not released the document publicly yet. We are waiting to get through this process. Assuming the bill is approved, then we will have that information released publicly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to go to the committee terms of reference, which are apparently still secret. Why is there no public representation from a variety of stakeholders for the Economic Advisory Committee? It says that it's -- well, I am not allowed to talk about it, I guess, but it seems to be business leaders. We do not know what kind of business they may be involved with, but why was this not crafted with a view to getting representation from key stakeholders like the travel industry, the travelling public, air carriers, the Northern Air Transportation Association, and so on, the City of Yellowknife, which has a big stake and interest in this, Aboriginal governments, local Aboriginal governments? Why was it not crafted more as a stakeholder-based committee rather than just businesspeople? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We fully intend to release the terms of reference for that committee publicly, so there is no issue with talking about it here, now. It was just because we were waiting for the bill to pass before we had released it. All of those groups that the Member had talked about, I think that they are all going to be represented in various measures on the committee.

We want to have people that have a strategic focus, a good business focus, and can provide strategic business-related advice to the airport to help us make good choices, good business-related choices to help grow the economy of the NWT. In order to do that, we will need representation from all those groups that the Member represented, and, in fact, there are individuals from Aboriginal governments, from the City of Yellowknife, from the business community, from tourism, that have all expressed interest in that committee. So I think we are optimistic that we are going to have some really good representation with some good advice from

committee members as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess this question is for the Minister, if I could get him to respond. Is the Minister prepared to change these terms of reference, to turn this into a representative body with representation from the kind of stakeholders that I just talked about, and actually have the Minister, him or herself, actually make the appointments rather than the deputy minister? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we rolled this out, this was one of the things - this is an early step on how we are going to take Yellowknife Airport, if it becomes an authority or something else down the road, then we will look at changing legislation to do that. I believe this is the right step moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think this is the wrong step. It is not inclusive, it is not representative, and not terribly accountable. I raised all of these issues at committee, and do not like the responses I am getting, and for that reason, I will be voting against the bill itself. I had hoped that the Minister would have responded more positively.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly, your time is up. I will remind the committee that we still have the report of the standing committee to discuss, which discusses many of these topics. Next, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to go back to leaving from Fort Simpson. If I get on an airline leaving from Fort Simpson, land in Yellowknife, and then get on to another airline going to Edmonton, are there these costs to it? I understand the \$7 to \$9, but I am trying to understand the \$10 and the \$20. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe the Member said, if they caught a different airline when they got to Yellowknife, going south, there would be that additional fee. The AIF would be added on. If it was First Air, say, from Simpson

all the way to Edmonton, there would just be the aeronautical fee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Minister's answer. We don't have those connections. We actually have to land here in Yellowknife, switch airlines, and then get on from there. Sometimes, we can get there on First Air, and then land here, and get on another First Air flight. Sometimes we can't do that, so I just wanted to get that clarified. The second one is regard to charters. If we charter from Fort Simpson to our smaller communities, because of costs to get into these communities, how does that fee get collected? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CONWAY: Mr. Chair, on a charter situation, the charter operator would be collecting the fee. They generally are charging you "X" amount of dollars for however many passengers and your distance, so in that situation, that is who would be collecting the fee.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that clarifies what I was trying to get at in both areas. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the spirit of raising revenues, what sort of consultation or feedback, to make you feel comfortable, on the revenue portion that you have heard, from the current vendors and the enterprise or business community gives you confidence that these sales are where they are at? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we looked at the business plan, we looked at all the economic opportunities that come along with this. As I have said, for every \$1 million, 3.5 jobs will be created. The offset would create 14 jobs, but if you look at the business plan, there are cargo opportunities that would become available, with consultation with a number of these stakeholders, the 30-something groups that we have met with. That is one area of a particular increase of business opportunities, moving forward. There has probably been a number of people, I believe, already who have talked about, once we implement these

changes, changing the structure of the airport, and particularly the building of the retail aspect of it, moving forward.

I think, a year or two from now, you are going to see a totally different airport, and it is going to be a good change for the people of Yellowknife and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of questions with regard to current revenues being generated: can the Minister or the department let us know, with all the current revenues, let's say, if this fee goes ahead, will all the other revenues that are being generated at the Yellowknife Airport be a part of the revolving fund?

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, they will be. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Without the revolving fund aspect right now, all the revenue generated at the Yellowknife Airport, I am assuming it all goes into the general coffers revenue, so there have to be portions of that that get divvied out to our many other airports, to help them with their infrastructure needs. Is that not the case? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, none of that revenue goes back to any of the airports. It all goes back into general revenue, and ends up there through the business planning process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So it could go into any other government program or initiative of any kind, just for clarification?

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, revenues and expenditures are treated separately. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Will there still be a plan to continue to apply when and where appropriate to feds, for federal support funding, like we currently do for federal support programs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Underneath the current model of the revolving fund model, if it goes ahead, we believe that there will be enough revenues at Yellowknife Airport for it to become self-sustaining, that there will be enough revenues generated to both pay for operation expenditures plus our known capital expenditures. That will, in fact, free up other federal government programs so that we can concentrate those on the other 26 airports, and of which there are, of course, many needs out there that we require in order to continue to have those airports in a safe and acceptable operation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Therein lies some of the problem, and the concern that I have is that this could be well-meaning, but first of all, we should be identifying an infrastructure gap, which I am going to assume that maybe the Yellowknife Airport already has, to some degree. I see the list of projects that we want to achieve over the five-year plan, but this is probably part of what the people are looking for: show me what needs to be done, and build a plan around how we are going to achieve that.

If you are going to use this fee to apply to it, then fine. Then, when it is done, it is done, and the fee gets dropped. In the meantime, what we are going to do is put the weight of these infrastructure priorities on to Northerners and visitors, and we are going to divert federal funding into the communities, to help them with their high-priority needs. We could still be applying for federal funding. Use that and a user fee to fast-track getting the Yellowknife infrastructure down much faster, so that we can just get it off the books, and then start prioritizing other federal funds into the other 26 airports. I don't know if that is a comment, Mr. Chair, that the Minister cares to reply to.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know it was a comment, but I have to respond to it. As being the Minister of Transportation, I am now going to be the Minister in charge of infrastructure. Our infrastructure deficit in this territory is more than we could ever tackle. I've said many times,

even at the federal FTP tables, the money that they had allocated for transportation nationally across this country, if they all gave it all just to the Northwest Territories, would never, ever even meet the needs of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the citizens of our territory. These are ongoing challenges. They are always going to be there no matter how we address this; even if we took the Member's approach to what he is saying. It would just continue escalating. This is what we see as a way to move forward to address the capital needs and to change the Yellowknife Airport and, at the same time, make it into an economic driver for citizens in the Northwest Territories. That does free up other federal pots of money that we can put into all the other communities across the Northwest Territories for transportation and, particularly, airports. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne, was there anything further?

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To that point, the problem is that when you look at the list that's being proposed for the Yellowknife Airport, yes, there are aspects with regard to better improved service, but most importantly, improving safety. That's a priority. That's probably a priority for most of the other airports. It ought to be, but when you're being asked to take \$10 million out of the economy to put into a lot of these other projects that we're identifying as being part of the infrastructure gap but really are actually just nice, shiny, nice-to-have projects at our airports, that's where I have a problem with this.

The other thing is that I argue that the business plan is not a business plan, quite frankly. A business plan builds a case that does a cost-benefit analysis project by project. We have a list of things that we want.

Mr. Chair, the business plan suggests two things. The business plan suggests that the current rental rate of leases and vendor leases and vendor agreements of that sort may be considered for increases. Can the department explain? Is that also being considered right now, that the current existing lease holders there might be seeing a rent increase? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. All of our lease rates are at market rate. Our Public Airports Act dictates that we need to charge market rates for the lease rates for land. If the market increases and the price increases, then we would adjust the rates as appropriate, but otherwise we will continue to follow market rates on there.

We do also charge some concession fees to some of the vendors that are in the terminal building, for example. Like any business, we will look at those concession rates that we're charging and there's opportunities to improve the relationship that we have with the vendors, then we'll take those opportunities to negotiate different agreements with them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The business plan also indicates that the user fee and I believe the air nautical fee will be subject to annual increases under influence by the CIP. Is that what's anticipated? Is that what can be expected that we're actually going to see an annual increase in these fees based on the CIP adjustment? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. All of the fees that the Department of Transportation charges -- any department, in fact, charges are -- we've been directed by the Department of Finance that they are to increase annually with inflation. Our air nautical fees would follow underneath that. We would expect that they would increase annually with CIP. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Just for the record, currently, right now, the CIP is at 2.1 per cent. Just so folks know, that's the kind of increase we might potentially be looking at on an annual basis. I don't mind increasing a fee when it's for the purposes of trying to keep up with the costs of inflationary factors, but when this is just trying to take more money out of people's pockets, that's a troublesome thing to swallow.

Mr. Chair, my last 20 seconds, as I've said in my opening comments, this is not a time to apply a new tax of any kind especially when it's as steep as such. For those reasons, I will not be supporting the bill for what the bill allows us to enable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Vanthuyne. I see nothing further. Clause 2. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't think this is going to take 10 minutes, but I just want to have one more kick at the Economic Advisory Committee. I'm looking at the -- it's called the iCareNWT.ca website. This is through the Environment of Natural Resources. The Waste Reduction and Recovery Advisory Committee provides advice and assistance to ENR to ensure improved reduction and recovery of waste in the NWT. Members of the committee are appointed by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and reflect the following sectors and organizations:

- Retailers;
- Distributors/manufacturers;
- Environmental organizations;
- Community governments;
- Public at large; and
- ENR.

Here we have a committee that is established in legislation and is representative. It is inclusive and it does manage or provides advice on the environmental fund, which is about \$6 to \$7 million a year. I just contrast that with this Economic Advisory Committee, which is set up through a terms of reference signed off by the Deputy Minister. It is not inclusive. It is not representative. I would be advising on a larger pot of money. I just don't understand how the Minister can rationalize this that on one case with this government, we've got a representative and inclusive community that's establishing legislation and then on the other hand, we've got this one that's going to be providing advice on a larger pot of money that the Minister refuses to make representative of in any way.

It could be done under the Public Airports Act. In fact, the standing committee recommended that it be established under the Public Airports Act, the same one clause that's in the Waste Reduction and Recovery Act could be added to the Public Airports Act and establish this with legislation. The Minister could have authority over all of this, appoint the people, and so on, but does not seem to want to do it.

I'm just wondering if the Minister wants to respond in any way to these comments. For me, this is a deal breaker. I've heard from people. They want to have some meaningful say in what happens at the airport. These terms of reference just don't do it. I'll give the Minister one further opportunity to reply, if I could. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member and I myself have disagreed on this from day one. We have already said we agree to the different types of membership. We believe that the broad range of people will be on this committee from tourism to business people to the city of residents of Yellowknife. We don't have a problem with that. We want to leave the terms of reference the way they are. That's what we are proposing because we want the flexibility that moving forward, we're going to make sure that this is what's going to work for the best situation that we're proposing for the Yellowknife Airport. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments from the Minister. We haven't actually disagreed on this since day one because it took a lot of prying to actually find out what this Economic Advisory Committee was actually going to do. Finally, we get a terms of reference. We gave advice to the Minister about how to try to make this more representative and inclusive. He just doesn't want to take it. I'm sorry. For those reasons alone, I'm not prepared to support the bill. I'll be voting against it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I see no response from the Minister. Would Mr. O'Reilly like closing statements?

MR. O'REILLY: No, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Clause 2. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Committee agrees. Clause 3. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee agrees. Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that Bill 3 as a whole is now ready for third reading? Sorry, does committee agree that Bill 7 is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Can I see a show of hands for agreed? Thank you, committee. The bill is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. I want to thank the Minister and the

witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, next we have agreed to consider Committee Report 6-18(2): Report on Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act. I will turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment for any opening comments. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the report has already been read into the record, the report on Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, and so, at the appropriate time, I would like move a motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Please proceed. I am sorry, Mr. Vanthuyne. First, it's general comments. Do we have any general comments on the report? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Should this bill move forward and the airport improvement plan be implemented, although obviously I do not support that, but should it move forward, I think the committee has provided balanced and sound recommendations to improve upon the government's plans for the Yellowknife Airport. I would encourage our colleagues across the aisle to support this and to implement the recommendations and ensure that this plan is held to the highest level of public scrutiny and has the greatest benefit economically to our residents. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Anything further? Any further general comments on the report? Seeing none, I will return to Mr. Vanthuyne.

COMMITTEE MOTION 89-18(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 6-18(2), STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF BILL 7: AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING
FUNDS ACT - RESPONSE TO REPORT WITHIN
120 DAYS,
CARRIED

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to Committee Report 6-18(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on the Review of Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. There is a motion on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order. To the

motion. Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Committee, do you agree that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 6-18(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of the report. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman. I move that the Chair rise and report progress.

---Carried

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

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act and Committee Report 6-18(2), Report on the Review of Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted, and that Committee Report 6-18(2) is concluded, and that Bill 7 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do I have a seconder? The Member for Sahtu.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 23:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2017-
2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 23, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2017-2018, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Member has requested a recorded vote. The motion is in order. All those in favour, please stand.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Nahendeh.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those abstaining, please stand. The result of the vote: 16 in favour, one against, zero abstentions.

---Carried

Bill 23 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, March 9, 2017, 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
 - Motion 32-18(2), Referral of Petition 6-18(2): Elimination of Time Change in the Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Social Development
 18. First Reading of Bills
 19. Second Reading of Bills
 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 7-18(2), Report on the Review of the Members' Conduct Guidelines
 - Committee Report 9-18(2), Report on the Review of the 2016 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Support to Communities for Municipal Services (MACA)
 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
 22. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 23. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 9, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:51 p.m.