



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Great Slave)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

ELDER MURIEL BETSINA: I want to open a prayer with very positive, because this is a prayer that God is going to hear. We did not choose God, but we choose religions. By praying to God we have an open heart. Our heart is open; our soul is open. Our ears are open. God gave us eyes.

I remember when this legislature was built 50 years plus. You know, as a Native person, registered, I am from Ndilo in debt of my nation, too. I have very, very awesome time to say prayers for all of us in this House. We have to pray for one another; we have to pray for our neighbours. We have to pray for the people that were chosen to run this House because a lot of time they will reach some poor community. We have to start looking in our back yard. This is where we have to really look at our heart; not our mind, our heart.

I have said a lot of prayers in all different places, but this is my first time I have ever come here to say a prayer. They asked me to pray, and I thank the legislation; whoever picked me, I thank them.

Lord Jesus, when he was on this earth, the apostle told him, my Lord, how do you pray? Jesus turned to his father in heaven, he said this is how you pray, and when you pray do not be ashamed, do not be shy to pray for others. Sometime maybe you might say prayers in this House, but give your heart when you say a prayer, not your mind. Your mind can wander all over the place, what am I going to do next, what am I going to do next, but the good Lord gave you peace to say a prayer.

I want everyone in this House to say the Lord's Prayer from your heart, from your soul, you know because this is the Lord's Prayer. We cannot forget him. We have chosen different churches, but our heart is still the same. God created over 7 billion plus people still on this earth alive. We are all God's children, our father in heaven.

Remember Him when you say a prayer, because we are praying for others. Be kind to one another. Love one another the good Lord said when he was on this earth. We have to carry the compassion of

love. It is so powerful, powerful of love that God gave us. If somebody argues with you or puts you down, just smile and say thank you. You know always say thank you. When you say thank you all the time, you mean it. You always say thank you to God. Even though you said somebody gave you something, in this House you say thank you. That is from our heart to the good Lord. So let's say our prayer: the Lord's Prayer.

Touch your heart. Touch your spirit. Because God is a spirit. God told us, Jesus told us, "Have faith in me." He didn't say, "Believe in me." When you say, "Believe in me," you have to see action before you believe, but God said, "Have faith in me." So let's have faith, and let's say a prayer. Some will make the sign of the cross. Some will say open prayer. I always say open prayers. Let's say our prayer, please.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us. Amen.

Thank you so much.

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Colleagues, good afternoon. On behalf of the Assembly, I would like to thank Elder Muriel Betsina of Ndilo for joining us today and leading us in prayer. I'd like to say masi to her.

Colleagues, it is my pleasure to welcome you back to the Chamber to resume the Second Session of 18th Legislative Assembly.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish good luck to all of the candidates who are seeking election in upcoming Tlicho community government elections in the communities of Bechoko, Whati, Gameti, and Wekweti. Members, as you know, it is not always easy to run for public office, and I wish to thank all of the candidates for the effort that they are making. Good luck on June 12th.

In addition, today Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School is celebrating its grade 12 graduation day. I would like to congratulate all 2017 graduates

for their achievement and best of luck with their future endeavours.

Colleagues, I know that you had a busy spring with constituency tours, meetings, visits, and the ongoing work of government. Our work does not stop when we are not sitting, but I hope that you have had some time to spend some quality time with family and friends. Connecting with those who matter most gives us strength and keeps us humble, things that we do every day.

Colleagues, I'd like to acknowledge the Pages. The Pages that we have here with us throughout this sitting: the students from Chief T'selehye School in Fort Good Hope, P.W. Kaeser School in Fort Smith, Ecole Sir John Franklin High School, and Ecole St. Patrick High School in Yellowknife.

Welcome and thank you for being Pages during the time of our sitting. It is always a pleasure to share this Chamber with the future leaders of our territory.

Colleagues, this will be a short but very busy session for all of us. At times, we do not see eye to eye on issues; however, we must conduct ourselves with dignity and honour. We must continue to have and demonstrate respect for each other as colleagues, for the House and its rules, and for our unique form of consensus-style government. We must show respect for our constituents and for all the people of Northwest Territories.

It is by showing this respect that we earn the respect of each other and the people whom we represent. Now, colleagues, I would like to advise this House that I have received the following message from the Deputy Commissioner of Northwest Territories. It reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of Northwest Territories the passage of

- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2017-2018
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2017-2018

During the Second Session of the 18th Assembly.

Yours truly, Gerald W. Kisoun, Deputy Commissioner.

With that, masi, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 174-18(2): SESSIONAL STATEMENT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to

welcome all Members back to the continuation of the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. I am looking forward to hearing from all Members during this brief sitting as we continue our work together to create a strong and sustainable future for the people of this territory.

Settling land claims is essential for creating this future for the Northwest Territories. Settled claims both advance reconciliation with Indigenous communities and create the foundation for social development and economic growth that can generate benefits for Indigenous people and all Canadians.

That is why it is so important for this Legislative Assembly to succeed at its priority of advancing, finalizing, and implementing land, resources, and self-government agreements, and that is why I have also made settling outstanding claims during the life of this Legislative Assembly a personal priority.

Our government has made a commitment in its mandate to work to resolve outstanding claims with the Akaitcho, Dehcho, NWT Metis Nation, and Acho Dene Koe.

We continue to make real progress at many tables, including in Tulita, where negotiators recently initialled a self-government agreement-in-principle. Other tables, however, have encountered issues that have slowed progress. Our government wants to change that, and we have taken steps we hope will ensure residents of regions like the Akaitcho, Deh Cho, and South Slave are able to enjoy the benefits that settled claims are providing in other regions.

To help us advance negotiations in these regions, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Carolyn Bennett and I appointed two ministerial special representatives last year. The MSRs, one for the South Slave and one for the Deh Cho, were mandated to speak to all parties to the negotiations and report back to us on current challenges and make recommendations for resolving them.

On April 5th, Mr. Speaker, Minister Bennett and I met in Ottawa with leaders from the Dehcho, the Akaitcho, and the NWT Metis Nation to discuss the reports of the MSRs and their recommendations. I am hopeful that the work of the MSRs will give all parties a path forward and lead to the resolution of these longstanding claims.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to settling these claims by taking innovative, flexible approaches that will result in fair and equitable agreements in these regions. I expect to update Members further on this issue during this session.

A predictable, efficient, and integrated system for making decisions about land use and development that reflects the interests and priorities of Northerners is another essential building block for a strong and sustainable future, Mr. Speaker.

Our government has made a commitment in its mandate to evolve our legislative, regulatory, and policy systems in order to advance the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. Reviewing, updating, and modernizing this territory's land and natural resources legislation will be an important part of this work.

Mr. Speaker, we have long held that decisions that influence our territory's economy and environment are better guided and managed by the people who live here. The devolution of authorities over public lands, water, and resources gave this Legislative Assembly the power to update, align, and create new legislation for our territory.

Over the next several years, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be updating legislation and regulations in the areas of mining, land administration, parks, oil and gas, and water and environmental protection. We will be seeking input from Members, the public, and stakeholders, who will have multiple opportunities to shape and influence our work so it best meets the needs and priorities of the Northwest Territories.

Through these updates, we will create a made-in-the-Northwest Territories legislative model that ensures sustainable, responsible development, while respecting the rights of Indigenous people and the agreements we have reached with them.

Members will begin to see some of this work later in this session when the government introduces proposed amendments to the Environmental Protection Act. Work in this area will continue throughout the term of our four-year mandate as the Ministers of Lands, Environment and Natural Resources, and Industry, Tourism and Investment develop and bring forward proposed amendments to several acts in the coming years.

The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to make progress on the mandate adopted by the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Of 200 commitments made by this government, 153 are in progress, seven are being planned, and 40 have been fulfilled.

Among the accomplishments guided by the mandate are investments and funding in areas such as infrastructure projects, film and the arts, family violence shelters, early childhood programs, and local housing organizations.

Several strategies and implementation plans have also been completed under the mandate, including agriculture and commercial fisheries strategies, the Recreational Leasing Management Framework, the Skills 4 Success Action Plan, and a strategic framework for mental health and addictions. We have also contributed to the development of the Canadian Energy Strategy and the Pan-Canadian Task Force on reducing diesel. To increase the number of women running for elected office, we have held our first campaign schools in Hay River and Inuvik and are currently evaluating our approach.

The mandate has also guided work to develop and expand programming in all the priority areas of the Legislative Assembly, including governance; cost of living; education; training and youth development; community wellness and safety; and economy; environment; and climate change.

The mandate was meant to guide the work of the Government of the Northwest Territories throughout the four-year term of the 18th Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, several initiatives are on the horizon, and I am confident that we will remain on track to fulfill our commitments by late 2019. I plan to table a report later in this sitting that will provide Members with a more complete update on the status of our mandate commitments to date.

Mr. Speaker, while the mandate is the primary guiding document of our government, we cannot ignore the need to act when circumstances demand it, or fail to take advantage of opportunities to address other longstanding needs of Northwest Territories residents. The mandate also does not eliminate our obligation to carry on the typically expected planning and management work that any government must conduct.

Some of that extra work has been thrust upon our government by federal government priorities, including work toward the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, and the development of a Pan-Territorial Sustainable Development Strategy. Work to support the legalization of cannabis and negotiation of a new healthcare funding agreement has also been driven by federal priorities.

Responding to emerging needs of Northwest Territories residents where we are able has led us to begin work on establishing a territorial 911 service, and ground ambulance and highway rescue services. We have worked toward

developing a youth community wellness pilot program in Fort Good Hope, and to increase the Senior Home Heating Subsidy and Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit.

Our government also stepped in when it became clear that there would be no commercial replacement for the marine shipping service of the former Northern Transportation Company Limited. This service provided an essential link to several small communities that would have been left with no affordable alternatives for receiving fuel, building materials, and other essential dry goods without our intervention.

Mr. Speaker, this sitting will be our last before we begin the review of the mandate as required by our process convention on priority setting. That review will be an important opportunity for us to make sure that the mandate set near the beginning of our term still reflects our shared priorities and the needs of Northwest Territories residents.

I look forward to hearing from and meeting with Members over the coming months as we consider whether our priorities have shifted, whether there are new challenges to be addressed, and what we can reasonably expect to accomplish together in the remaining two years of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN FRONTIER VISITORS CENTRE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. There has been a lot of shock and uncertainty over the closure of the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre here in Yellowknife. I firmly believe this could have been avoided through adequate and equitable support from our government. We have been without a visitors centre for 10 days now. A temporary home has been found, until summer's end, at the museum. Now we need to concentrate on a longer-term location to support the large, growing, and sustainable tourism sector in Yellowknife.

Aurora tourism has soared from a \$6-million industry in 2010 to \$40 million in 2015-2016. A recent study indicates that our visitors' centre boosts tourist expenditures by about \$5 million annually. Our centre received over 50,000 visitors last year, far more than all of the other centres in the NWT put together.

It is inconceivable that Yellowknife would not have a tourist information and interpretive centre, and a world-class one. We must find a new permanent location. Who is to pay for that?

Figures supplied by the Minister show that visitors' centres at the Highway No. 1 border crossing in Inuvik and in Dawson are owned or leased by the GNWT. GNWT also pays over \$100,000 for the staff and operating costs of each of these centres that are only open over the summer. Here in Yellowknife, the centre was owned by a non-profit society that received only \$160,000 in GNWT core funding support last year, and it was open year-round, seven days a week.

This is not only unfair, it is poor support for this success story and economic diversification in general. The current emergency situation has been looming for years, with no effective or proactive support from this government. We can't allow that to continue. We need to get to work now on costing and identifying funds for a new, permanent location, operated with GNWT funds. I will have questions for the Minister later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUSING FOR JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this month, some of the Yellowknife MLAs and I have met with the three school boards to hear their concerns, and it is a long list of concerns. Today, I want to highlight just one that is common to them all, and that is busing junior kindergarten students to school.

During the last session, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment said his department was, "working with education authorities to ascertain the incremental costs of providing transportation for junior kindergarten students, and will be undertaking a review of the busing component of the School Funding Formula."

The education authorities have preliminary numbers of both the students who need busing and the costs of the buses. About 20 per cent of students will require busing, and the cost estimate is a mind-boggling \$10,000 each per year. Just as a reminder, these are students who may be as young as three years, eight months.

The school boards receive money for busing from the territorial government, but about two weeks ago, the department informed the boards that busing JK students was not mandatory. It's at the discretion of the boards, and so the cost is theirs.

To put some numbers to this, YK1 and YCS are together looking at spending upwards of \$500,000 on additional busing costs out of owned source funds. This, Mr. Speaker, is for a program that is "fully funded."

The school boards are apparently going to have to make a difficult choice: either make additional cuts to come up with the money, or don't provide busing. They shouldn't have to make this choice at all. JK is billed as a grade of school. It should be fully funded, including busing. If busing isn't funded, the program isn't universal and low-income families are barred.

It has long been apparent that JK has been grafted onto the school system as an extra grade without the necessary resources. There are no dedicated resources for inclusive schooling, none for Aboriginal and cultural education, and none for busing. This situation is unacceptable. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RETIREMENT OF PEARL NORWEGIAN

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome everybody back and hope you all had an enjoyable few months either back at home working for your constituents doing committee work or as a Minister doing their work here back home.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House to recognize my former constituency assistant, Leona Norwegian, known to everyone as Pearl. It is a bittersweet day that I recognize her today. If you know Pearl, you will recognize that she was never one for the spotlight. She was a person behind the scene and did not want the spotlight on her. Well, with her retiring away from political life, I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Pearl Norwegian has served as a constituency assistant in the Nahendeh riding for some 20 years. She has worked for the offices of former MLAs Jim Antoine, Kevin Menicoche, and now myself. Pearl's devotion to the constituents of the Nahendeh riding did not go unnoticed. As the face of the riding, her friendly and open demeanour allowed her to be approachable, trusted by the public. Pearl is truly passionate about her riding and the six communities we represent. In her own way, Pearl was a counsellor, a confidante. She guaranteed advocacy for the less fortunate and ensured that no one's concerns went unheard.

Mr. Speaker, Pearl's years of constituency assistance in the Nahendeh riding has allowed her to get to know and care for two generations that

have grown up throughout the riding. She was equally caring and kind towards our elders and youth. As an avid promoter of education and business within the riding, she also kept our constituents aware of opportunities and potential that they had.

Mr. Speaker, with her strong traditional ties and knowledge, Pearl had a high willingness to promote the culture and tradition of the Dene people. Her generosity was enormous and, whether it was for a wedding or funeral, no community feast goes without Pearl's papa's fried bread.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to highlight Pearl's high commitment to her job. She displayed this commitment on several occasions, such as when she returned as a CA to assist me with the transition and when she took additional responsibilities for other former MLAs. I'd like to thank her for her time again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROGRESS ON GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome back the colleagues of the House and the guests in the gallery. Now that conclusions are given to the federal and territorial budgets over the last several months, on November 4, 2016, I highlighted the many strategies and plans of this 18th Assembly moving forward and the additional ones recently completed.

One thing is to have a plan or a strategy and the next thing is the implementation or phase 2 of it. Tracking and progress properly implemented of these plans and strategies will show results throughout the progress reports and with the labour of the departments for the publication and the many efforts in doing so.

Mr. Speaker, reflection on previous decisions is a strong element of good management and, by this, I look forward to working with the 18th Assembly on monitoring and tracking the progress of these strategies as we conclude our next half of the Assembly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FOREST FIRE PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, devastating forest fires have had a major

impact all over the Northwest Territories over the last few summers, altering the landscape and reminding us how vulnerable our campsites, cabins, communities, and other values are to forest fires. In my riding, assets have been threatened year after year. A 35-year-old lodge was destroyed along with thousands of hectares of surrounding trails and wildlife habitat within the last season.

Mr. Speaker, the Ingraham Trail has become home to an increasing number of year-round residents. It is heavily used by visitors to campgrounds and locals for recreational use. There are over 500 values at risk in the area that are vulnerable to forest fires. The popular Reid Lake campground, the Foster Family Coalition's campsite called Camp Connections, and Highway No. 4 South have been closed on several occasions due to forest fires in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, ongoing drought conditions and the high to extreme risk of fires further highlight the need for a robust public communications plan, forest fire prevention measures, and emergency preparedness. I'll give credit. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has made progress in recent years on its website and social media platforms. The record-breaking 2014 fire season popularized Twitter as a public communications tool between the government and the general public, but there are still areas for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, what's scary is that forest fires move very quickly and, in reality, ENR might not be able to respond in time to save properties. We have seen this in other jurisdictions as well as in our own backyards. We only have to think of Fort McMurray as the recent tragic example. We need to get the message out that there's a responsibility on our owners to defend their properties against fires, but we have to be their partners and support them in doing that.

Earlier this month, ENR hosted an Ingraham Trail FireSmart barbecue where people could learn how to prepare for forest fires and reduce their risk. Commendable, but let's do it more often. Let's arm our residents with knowledge through excellent communication.

Mr. Speaker, ENR has dedicated and knowledgeable staff, a new air tanker fleet, and continues to develop forest fire fighting expertise. We need to ensure these resources are put to the best use and that lessons learned from previous seasons are fully applied in the future. I will have questions for the Minister of ENR at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2017 YOUTH PARLIAMENT

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few short weeks ago, 19 students from across the Territories took the role of honourable Members in the 15th Youth Parliament. This is an event that is a great way to engage our youth in our unique system of consensus government, civic participation, and assist them in becoming the northern leaders of tomorrow. I would like to thank the Legislative Assembly staff that was involved in this program and the staff who worked tirelessly for months in order to make sure Youth Parliament would come together seamlessly. I can say with great confidence you succeeded beyond all expectations. Well done!

During the week, the young leaders got to see how "the sausage gets made," splitting into two different sides of the Chamber, Cabinet and Regular Members, with one temporarily filling your very honourable shoes, Mr. Speaker. They got to learn the dynamics we face while working with the consensus system through writing Members' statements, introducing petitions and, of course, debating on motions before the House.

The subjects before them were not just softball motions, Mr. Speaker. They instead took debate on serious issues such as the legalization and regulation of cannabis and a more vigorous teaching of local Indigenous languages in our education system. Throughout it all, I had the pleasure of paging for these young leaders and saw these debates first hand. I must say they conducted themselves in a manner far beyond their age. I have no doubt we will be seeing a few of them in the years to come as important leaders of the North and Members of this Assembly.

I must note, Mr. Speaker, the greatest honour of the week was working with the youth member for Kam Lake, Ms. Anusha Sivakumar, who showed great ability and integrity when serving the people of Kam Lake in this Youth Parliament. I was inspired by Ms. Sivakumar and expect to see her making real change for Northerners in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Speaker, Youth Parliament is a great program put on by our Legislative Assembly. It's exactly the kind of program we need to engage youth in order to hear their perspective on the issues of the day which, as adults, we often ignore. We have a responsibility to listen, and I can say I heard them loud and clear.

I was proud to participate in the 15th Assembly, and will be just as proud to throw on a Page's vest for

the 16th sitting of Youth Parliament. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RESIDENT POLICE SUPPORT FOR
TSIIGEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it took a bit of work for me to get into Yellowknife from Tsiigehtchic in time for committee meetings and the start of this sitting. When you're travelling to and from our small communities, especially during freeze-up and break-up, you have to be ready for anything.

Spring and fall make our rural and remote communities especially vulnerable to isolation. That means that communities that don't have resident RCMP officers might be stuck without them, and with no way to get them quickly and in an emergency. The people of Tsiigehtchic have brought these concerns to my attention. Although they don't have a regular RCMP officer, they've also reported to me that having RCMP in town on the weekends is working very well. It means a lot to residents to have that support and to work on those relationships.

To build on that, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister can keep working with the RCMP "G" Division to ensure that, starting this fall, the community can also have resident police support during freeze-up and break-up. The Department of Health and Social Services already covers community services like this. At the moment, we have a resident nurse who stays in the community during those times. Making sure Tsiigehtchic residents have that RCMP support would mean a lot to the community. It would improve safety and community services, and it would enhance residents' access to justice and to services that other, larger communities already enjoy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will have questions later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
AFTER-HOURS SERVICE FOR PUBLIC
HOUSING TENANTS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, I'd like to welcome my colleagues back to the House and acknowledge my constituents, whether they're watching from home, listening on the radio, or sitting in the gallery.

Now, Mr. Speaker this is a short sitting, but there's a lot of work to do, so I'll get down to business. Mr.

Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation operates more than 2,400 public housing units in 30 communities. With our small population, think about just how many families those units serve.

Now, when you're in market housing, it might seem that something always goes wrong on Sundays or holidays, just when it's more difficult and more expensive to call a plumber or a furnace technician. When you're in public housing, though, it's even harder. Residents of the Deh Cho riding have come to me, seriously concerned that they are unable to access repair services after hours. If a furnace breaks down in the middle of the night in January and a family can't get immediate repairs, that's downright dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, families in public housing don't have money to spare. They can't simply pay out of pocket for urgent repairs. They can't even undertake major repairs to units, because they're tenants, not owners. The Housing Corporation is in the business of public rental housing in the NWT. To fulfill its mandate, it must provide after-hours services. This might be done through an on-call serviceman. Really, Mr. Speaker, addressing this problem would be a win-win: prompt repairs protect both tenants and the corporation's infrastructure investments. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONAL SPRING
HARVEST

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome all our colleagues back to the Assembly, and yourself for the warm welcome. Mr. Speaker, spring is a busy time for traditional hunters across the Northwest Territories. Spring hunting is also very important to the people of Nunakput.

Mr. Speaker, spring is when the caribou migrate north to calve, arctic char can be caught in large numbers as they swim from freshwater lakes to the Beaufort Sea. Traditionally, the Inuvialuit cut a hole through ice and fish with a net or jigger with a line and lure. The fish were then prepared and dried for the winter.

We know it is really spring when waterfowl arrive from the South. Geese are hunted along the coast and spring is a time to collect eggs. Mr. Speaker, before the 1900s the Inuvialuit had very little contact with outsiders and were a completely self-sufficient people. They lived entirely off the land and sea. Everything they ate, wore, built, hunted with, and used for daily activities came from the plant or animal life in their surroundings.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvialuit, like all traditional cultures, saw themselves as part of the environment, not separate from it. The plants and animals of the Arctic are still respected in our communities today, and that value needs to be passed on to the next generation. Nutritious meat from the animals that are hunted and fish that are caught is still central to many people's diet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Arctic landscape may look empty, especially to the people who are unfamiliar with it, but it is home to approximately 1,700 kinds of plants. When the snow melts, thousands of flowers and lichens grow on the tundra. Arctic summers are a time for berry picking. Mr. Speaker, subsistence harvesting makes a huge difference to people's health and well-being. Imported foods are expensive even in the southern parts of the Northwest Territories.

Pre-packaged and processed foods, like chips and cookies that are easier to transport, convenient and popular, especially with youth, aggravate problems such as diabetes, Mr. Speaker, but they are more affordable than imported perishables like fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Speaker, let's not forget where our traditional health foods are: on the land where our ancestors hunted. A traditional diet consisting of food from the land is healthier and less costly than a typical modern diet.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize all of my constituents who are out hunting this spring and the Indigenous peoples across the Northwest Territories who are keeping subsistence harvesting and our cultures strong. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGIES FOR CLIFFORD JOHN CARDINAL AND HARVEY MANDEVILLE

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it has become a tradition of mine to do eulogies for the people who have passed from sitting to sitting in my riding. Today I have two such eulogies. I would first like to speak of Clifford Cardinal, who was born December 4, 1952, in Hay River and passed away on April 14, 2017, at 64 years of age.

Clifford had three brothers: Lloyd, the late Ross Cardinal, and Allan Cardinal, as well as three sisters: the late Stella, Clara, and Freda. Clifford was the son of Dora and Ben Cardinal. Ben Cardinal, I believe, was originally from Lac la Biche, where apparently a lot of Cardinals live, and Dora

was a Beaulieu from Fort Resolution. Clifford was my cousin.

Clifford was a well known individual in the community; a hard-working man. He went to school in Peter Pond, Grandin College, Akaitcho Hall, and went to school in Moose Jaw and Aurora College. Clifford was very well liked in the community and was very helpful to the elders in Fort Resolution.

Secondly, I would like to also acknowledge Harvey Mandeville. Harvey Mandeville was born on May 26, 1945; he passed away April 25, 2017. Harvey was the son of Adeline and Maude Mandeville. He was better known as Modeste Cho. His father was a well known Metis leader for the Northwest Territories when the Metis Nation had first started in the NWT. Modeste Cho was one of the people that led the nation.

Harvey's wife was Lillian. Lillian was also from Fort Resolution, but spent many years down in Alberta. She had four children and Harvey had a son who lives here and attended the funeral. Harvey was a long-time employee of the diamond industry, and Harvey was 72 years old upon his passing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the families as well. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, please allow me to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery today. We have Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford. As many of you know, Mr. Whitford wears many hats, many roles: former Commissioner, former Speaker, former Minister, former Member, former Sergeant-at-Arms, and Honourary Clerk at the table. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Whitford to the House this afternoon. It's always a pleasure that he is a visitor to this House. Masi.

---Applause

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I usually don't recognize individuals from other ridings, but today I have somebody who I have known for a long time, Raymond Michaud, who was my supervisor when I was in Grandin College. I just acknowledged Mr. Clifford Cardinal had gone to school in Grandin, so I'd like to recognize Mr. Ray Michaud.

Also, I want an opportunity today, it may be my last opportunity to recognize the translators, because I won't be in tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Maryrose Sundberg and Dennis Drygeese, who are interpreting in the Denesuline and Wiilideh language. Mahsi cho.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Fraser Oliver, a constituent of Kam Lake and president of the NWT Teachers' Association. Welcome.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, Northern and Remote Health Network, are with us here today. The foundation was one of two organizations to be highlighted in the federal budget for enhanced funding from Health Canada. This network meets twice annually to share success and develop collaborative approaches to share challenges in delivering healthcare in remote regions like the Northwest Territories.

I would like to welcome the following network representatives: Gregory Cumming, Stephen Samis, Laura Wessman, Sonia Isaac-Mann, Helga Bryant, Lynn Ryan-MacKenzie, Patricia Kyle, and Susan Gillam. I apologize if I have missed any of you. Welcome to the gallery. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to recognize a couple of constituents: Pam Schlosser and Dean MacInness, who are both educators.

There are also some folks in the gallery from the Northern Frontier Visitors Association: Mr. Kyle Thomas is the chair of the board, and Ian Henderson is on the board as well, and Tracy Therrien is the executive director, and I believe some of her staff are here as well. I am sorry if I missed anybody, but thank you very much for joining us today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Annemieke Mulders, who is with the Northwest Territories Status of Women. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to recognize a man of many hats, a resident of Yellowknife North riding, Mr. Tony Whitford.

I would also like to recognize and welcome from Yellowknife Glassworks, Matthew Grogono as well as Emily Lawson are both here today. I also want to recognize Yellowknife resident, professional development coordinator for the NWT Teachers' Association Amanda Mallon, and as well as Adrien Amirault is also a resident of Yellowknife North and the executive director for the NWT Teachers' Association. I apologize to anybody that I missed. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize some of our executive from the NWT Teachers' Association. Our president, Mr. Fraser Oliver; executive director, Adrien Amirault; and our past president and past Canadian Teacher Federation vice-president, Ms. Amanda Mallon.

Mr. Speaker, together they have over 91 years of teacher experience in the Northwest Territories and I want to thank them for that. That is a lot of experience and a lot of hearts and minds that they've touched. Any other educators who are here joining us today, welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Ray Michaud, who is a former mayor of Fort Simpson and a very strong candidate for our region, and I welcome him here.

As well, Tracy Therrien, who is a long-term friend; we've known each other for a long time. Welcome to the Assembly along with everybody else. There are some former bosses of mine from the deputy minister's office, I'd like to thank them and welcome them here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to the proceedings. It is great to have an audience. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 743-18(2):

TRADITIONAL HARVESTING FOOD INSPECTION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, pertaining to my statement earlier, I have questions for the Health Minister. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: what food safety education is available to residents of Nunakput and across the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have environmental health officers employed by the Department of Health and Social Services who can offer NWT food safety courses when requested by a community. They can go out and do that. They are usually waiting until they get at least 10 individuals who are interested in that course. However, we do know that, in some of the smaller communities, finding 10 individuals has proven to be difficult, so that can be offered by Telehealth as well, but we would need a request from the community that they would like that course provided and we can certainly provide it.

There are also a number of other training opportunities or training courses available online. They are available on our NWT Health and Social Services website. I would strongly encourage the Member to encourage his residents to review those courses and see if any of them meet their needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response from the Minister. It looks like we can work with the Inuvialuit on that. Mr. Speaker, my second question is: what steps can be taken to make sure small businesses will pass food inspections and get local foods into local stores?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Currently local meat must be inspected to meet food establishment safety regulations in order to be sold in stores. The Department of Health and Social Services is working with ITI to set out a method for legal sale of locally harvested and grown foods. This method needs to ensure that food are safe, which I think is understood and supported by the Member and all residents so that it is safe and the residents will not get ill by eating the food.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: My third question, and this may overlap with the previous answer, but: how is the Department of Health working to help small operators sell locally sourced meat products?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The environmental health officers are working with small operators and people applying for temporary or permanent food establishment permits to ensure the food they provide is safe. Providing for locally sourced meat products will require revisions to the Public Health Act and regulations, and it may require other regulations or amendments to be done, regulations and legislation that might exist in other departments, like ENR, Lands, or ITI, so we would need to work with those departments to ensure that any sales or distribution of locally harvested foods is safe for the residents when it involves for sale.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the response, and you mentioned ENR. Mr. Speaker, my final question is: how does the health department work with Environment, ENR, to ensure food from the land is safe and free from contaminants? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We need to have a close working relationship with ENR, and ENR does conduct monitoring activities which include measuring the different types of contaminants that are in the environment as well as in wildlife. They also fund some independent researchers both locally and internationally who can do some measurements on some of the wildlife and land around the Northwest Territories. When that information is made available to Health and Social Services, if there are concerns of contaminants or there are concerns that the locally-sourced meat or other food might be contaminated, we will share that information with the communities and we will do public health announcements to let residents know what, if anything, what amounts can be consumed, what amounts should not be consumed. Health and Social Services maintains information on a public website on this type of advice, so what people can eat, what they should not eat, and that is available to the public.

I would once again encourage the Member and all Members to share that information with their residents so, if they have concerns about food in a particular area or where food might be contaminated, they know so that they can adjust their consumption.

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

QUESTION 744-18(2):

NORTHERN FRONTIER VISITORS CENTRE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My statement earlier today focused on the need to begin planning and budgeting for a new permanent

home for the new Northern Frontier Visitors Centre. Does the Minister of tourism agree that it is inequitable and obviously unsustainable to expect the Northern Frontier Visitors Association to foot the cost of a Yellowknife visitor centre when centres in Inuvik, Dawson, and at the border are fully funded by GNWT? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would disagree with the Member that it is inequitable. We fund these different tourist information centres across the Northwest Territories based on different needs. Some are run by societies, some are run by local governments, some are run by contractors and such, and we base our funding on needs across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I am disappointed to hear the response from the Minister. He has provided the numbers, and I think they show otherwise, but the situation that we find ourselves in today with no visitor services in Yellowknife is unacceptable. Dedicated full-time staff have been laid off, artisans have lost an important retail outlet, and summer tourists will have reduced access to services. I just do not understand why we are in the situation that we are and that it is has taken this much to get the government to finally act.

Can the Minister explain what he and his staff are doing to find a permanent location for the Yellowknife visitor centre, and will this include GNWT finally picking up the cost of its operation?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As we dealt right now, we dealt with the short-term situation that has come upon the northern frontier visitor information centre. They will be moving into the museum just down the road here in a short time, and we have assisted them with that along with the City of Yellowknife which has topped up some of their funding. In the long-term need, we have to sit down with City of Yellowknife and the northern frontier information centre and find out what is going to be the best practice going forward and the needs of this tourist information centre to serve the residents of Yellowknife.

MR. O'REILLY: I appreciate the response from the Minister, and am happy to help in any way I can, but we have got to move this forward very quickly so we have a permanent location in time for the aurora season. In the last sitting, my colleague from Hay River mentioned poor highway signage for the new hospital in Hay River, and the Minister had signs up the next day. What a great response, but there are virtually no signs on the highways into Yellowknife to help tourists find a visitors centre.

Can the Minister of Tourism talk to the Minister of Infrastructure and commit to putting up signs here in Yellowknife so that tourists can actually find even a temporary location for the visitor centre?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I will look into the matter. We will have to consult with the City of Yellowknife as well because, depending on where the signage is going, some of it will be within the municipality. Anything along the highway system, we can certainly have a look at it and we will have that discussion and I will let the Member know.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I do appreciate the response from the Minister, and I will be watching the highway very closely to look for those signs.

Over a week ago, the City of Yellowknife committed to an additional \$17,000 in funding to support the transition of the visitor centre to a temporary location. In a news release dated yesterday, the Minister committed to "cover costs associated with the association's move to the new location and the interim storage of its assets." That is great; I appreciate that. Can the Minister confirm that these costs will indeed be covered from funding supplemental to the existing contribution agreement to the Northern Frontier Visitors Association, and how will this work? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, the Member is correct. We are going to do the supplemental funding above and beyond what we already allocate to the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre, and we have already allocated quarterly the money that they need to operate for the first part of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 745-18(2):
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PERSPECTIVE ON
GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Northerners know that supporting the development of the next generation of Northerners is a top priority for any government, and this one is no different. As Minister responsible for Youth, I would like to ask: what resources are available to the Minister to support young people, and how does the Minister formally engage with young people and learn their viewpoints, what kind of services they need to support their development? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Youth.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of different intergovernmental, interdepartmental programs that we work with other departments within the government, that provides a lot of program services. I believe I have been asked this question before in previous sessions, and I would be willing to share that information with the Member.

Just recently, I and the Minister of Health went to Camp Connections and spoke to about 60 youth on health, wellness, education, culture, and language, and wanted their views and their input. At the end of this week, we should be getting it. We also engage in schools, many different venues, avenues, different groups that are coming out of the schools, but we work within our government with the departments and our stakeholders to find out what is important to youth and work on addressing those challenges, those concerns, supporting the successes, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Does the Minister have any information on how those consultations or interactions with young people have shaped government policy? Does he have a "what we heard" document that is kind of an ongoing tally of youth issues and youth concerns as we do with other stakeholder groups?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As we engage with youth, we always get feedback on how the programs are, whether we want to continue working to support those programs. The one in particular that we just attended earlier this week is an excellent one. Both I and the Minister of Health encouraged and challenged youth to come up with policies, come up with ways we can move forward into what we need to do as a government and the decisions that we need to do, and that is where it starts.

This is a new generation of our young adults that is going to be taking over our seats and other leadership in the community, and we want to get their feedback so we can make the appropriate changes.

MR. TESTART: So that was a no I heard from the Minister, but, that being said, the Minister is clearly quite engaged in this topic and clearly enjoys working with youth and listening to what they hear, so will he commit to establishing a youth council that will be a standing body for young people to participate in, not just in a youth parliament setting but year on year, and provide ongoing feedback to government programs and policy and allow the Minister to canvass young people on their ideas about what our priorities should be as a government? Will he commit to establishing that youth council?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Such programs as the Youth Ambassador Program, the one that we just worked with the Department of Health on, we engage youth from all 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. This one in particular we had a really good engagement, from 12-year-olds right up to 18, asking them what we need to do in terms of policy change, legislation change, programs and services that we need to provide. We will continue to work with the departments and our communities to address those.

It was not a no. We support our youth. The youth is our future, and anything that works in government, we need to hear from the youth because they are the ones who are living in a time that is a lot different from the way a lot of us have grown up in the past.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all support youth. I think everyone here is very proud of the young people in our constituencies and our communities and the work they do, but I think it's key to actually establish bodies and policies that give youth a voice in government. Again, if not a youth council, why not establish a youth secretariat to better coordinate the government programs directed towards youth? Currently, they are scattered, as the Minister said, scattered throughout the public service. Why not have a youth secretariat to better coordinate those resources and so the Minister responsible has a clear sense of how those programs are working and can evaluate them against their success? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, we will take that information. We will have discussions, obviously, when we go before committee, and continue further to have these discussions and how we establish regional youth councils or even a territorial youth council. That is information we will look at, and we will bring it to committee to get feedback from committee moving forward. We will continue to evaluate the programs such as Back to the Trail, the program that I and the Minister of Health just attended, and see the successes and where we move from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 746-18(2):
PROGRESS ON TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, I had mentioned strategies tabled by this government, and more specifically my question

today is on the transportation strategy here, to the Department of Infrastructure. My question: since the last session, and more specifically, what progress has the department accomplished or done since the tabling of the federal government's budget this past couple of months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister for Infrastructure.

HON. WALY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the federal government has passed their budget, I and the Premier had the opportunity to go down there and talk to the Minister of Infrastructure, the Minister of Transportation, and also the Minister of DFO to figure out the plans that the government has laid out in their budgets. We have learned a lot of different things about different pots of money and how they are spread out through different ministries and the timeframe that has been laid out for these different pots of money. Our government will continue to work with the federal government to figure out the best way forward for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: Now that there has been some dialogue on the programs available to Canadians, more specifically on the application of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, has the Minister and the group had some discussions on a formula or financing plan on the programs available to support the Mackenzie Valley Highway application?

HON. WALY SCHUMANN: When we were down there talking to the federal Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, which is two different pots of money, our understanding is the Mackenzie Valley Highway application is still there. It is still frozen until the federal government has figured out what they are going to do on bilateral agreements with the territories and provinces and Canada and how they are going to roll out some of this other infrastructure money.

MR. MCNEELY: When does the Minister expect to have a decision on the bilateral reviews and the decision on the application that this government continues to support as a priority for the Mackenzie Valley Highway extension?

HON. WALY SCHUMANN: My understanding with our conversation with the federal Minister is that decisions on most pots of money around infrastructure will be decided by fall of this year.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very happy to hear that we are drawing near to a decision on the highway application that was submitted by the previous government. Will the

Minister keep us informed if there is an immediate reply this coming fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALY SCHUMANN: As soon as we hear something from the federal government, I will definitely let the House know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 747-18(2)
AFTER-HOURS SERVICES FOR PUBLIC
HOUSING TENANTS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently we completed the constituency tour, and it was a pleasure to have the Minister of the Housing Corporation view firsthand the concerns and issues that my constituents have regarding housing, so it's appropriate that I ask the questions to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. My first question is: where is the current process for public housing tenants who identify an urgent repair need after-hours? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In every community that we have a local housing organization, we also have a 24-hour emergency response system in place. When those systems are called on, the emergency is moved to a priority, taking precedent over any other scheduled regular maintenance that we're doing. If the situation is deemed not to be a priority, then it falls within the realm of regular maintenance, but we do provide a reply within a week's business time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Members in the Housing Corporation have often talked about training and employing local community-based skill workers to deal with day-to-day repairs and maintenance of public housing stock. What is the department currently doing to make this a reality in every community with public housing?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation recognizes that it is important to have accessible workers in every community, and so we do strive to do that. We do have in every community that has a local housing organization, a position for a housing maintainer, a maintenance worker, so if that position is vacant, then we do our best to fill that position as soon as possible.

MR. NADLI: This is not the first time I've heard the matter being raised before. It was actually important that the Minister hear this concern. Has the matter

been raised during the corporation's major policy review?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The housing survey that was conducted by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is actually to be tabled tomorrow. We're really pleased to provide that. There were over 6,000 responses, and so, in all honesty, I do not know if that one particular, it wasn't highlighted as a major concern, but I would like to state that when we were doing the tour, I did hear within the community of Kakisa that they had concerns about after-hours support. The difficulty within that community is, currently, we only have four home ownership programs and zero public housing in that community. Because we do not provide public housing or rental housing in that community, we do not at this moment have a local housing organization.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, often we are asked this question. I will field this question to the Minister, as we were often asked, you know, ask the Minister on behalf of our constituents that live in public housing, whether it's in Kakisa or the 33 other communities that we have in the NWT. What will she do about it? This, of course, referenced the need for after-hours service. Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: It is concerning if the Member has identified that he's heard that in other communities that they're not sure about how to reach emergency responses with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. It does tell me that we need to do a better job of communicating our services. Communications of our programs and our supports was identified within the survey, hugely stating that we need to do better on that. We will be doing a much better job of communicating the programs, the supports that we have in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 748-18(2):
BUSING FOR JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN
STUDENTS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, information provided by the department indicates that busing for JK is not mandatory. Could I just confirm with the Minister that this information is correct? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know our discussions with education authorities, we did have those discussions that it's not mandatory and that education authorities have the discretion to reallocate some of the funding that the department provides to them to offset some of the costs that are associated with busing, so that will be up to the district education authorities as well as the education councils. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I'd like to ask the Minister why busing is mandatory for other grades, but it's not mandatory for JK.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: It's not mandatory for any grades. As I've mentioned, it is at the discretion of the education authorities and councils to decide if they are going to reallocate for busing to provide busing services to their students. It is not mandatory for any grades at this point. However, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that our department is committed and continues to work with education authorities to address the busing situation when it comes to junior kindergarten students.

MS. GREEN: We are talking about a great deal of money here in terms of busing in Yellowknife. We are talking about a combined total of \$500,000 for Yellowknife Catholic Schools and YK1. This is not a small portion of anyone's budget. What is the Minister going to do to offset that cost?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I am not sure where the Member is getting her numbers from. We still have to wait and see how many junior kindergarten students, four-year-olds, are going into the school program, and then we can continue to work with the education authorities to find a solution and find ways that we can cover the costs once those numbers are established.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to advise the Minister that the figures come from the school boards. That is where they come from. What I cannot get my head around is, if JK is a universal program, how can the Minister opt out of paying for it? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: In all respect, I believe the Member is mistaken. The department is committed to covering those costs once we find those costs, and we are going to continue working with the education authorities and councils to get those exact numbers, and we will be committed to covering the cost when we get those exact figures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 749-18(2):
AGING IN PLACE STRATEGIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to ask questions of the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation on aging in place. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that aging in place is important. I think we also recognize that aging in place for individuals in our housing is important. I would like to ask the Minister if there have been any discussions or plans put in place for having individuals age in place in their own home, in their own communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is absolutely correct. There is a huge need for having support so that our seniors can age in place within their communities. The Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics has shown that, although our population is slowly increasing, our seniors' aging is increasing substantially. It is a huge priority for this whole government. We are working in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services to provide the best care possible for our elders. Some of the things that we are doing with the Housing Corporation, we have care and mobility. We have programs specifically to deal with that, to help seniors so that they can stay in their homes as long as possible. We have actually just put in an extra \$500,000 specifically for senior supports. We are looking at a different housing design to support elders to be able to stay with their family members. We are looking at a host of areas that we can support seniors to age in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: One of the main obstacles to individuals applying for and getting loans to improve their homes, making their homes barrier-free or seniors friendly, is the land that the units sit on. I was wondering if there has been any discussion aside from the Minister speaking to Health and Social Services. Have there been any discussions with the municipalities or the lands division on how individuals can access more than just a basic amount of money in order to improve their homes by dealing with the land issue?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As was said many times in this House, when we finish getting the results from these surveys, we would be doing a full program review. Some of the issues would be very simple to deal with, some would be a little bit more difficult, and some would be tough. Land tenure is still one of those issues that we are still struggling

with to figure out how to do in an equitable manner. However, in saying that, we are working with municipalities and Aboriginal governments. We are rolling out a new program that will support them, to be able to provide homeownership programs within their communities as well, areas such as if they provide the land, then we would provide the material. We are looking at other options so that we can access more land and provide more housing within our communities.

MR. BEAULIEU: I am more or less talking about individuals who already own their homes. What type of direct action has occurred between NWT Housing Corporation and perhaps the communities and regions, whatever way the money will flow, to try to get something going this construction year? We're moving into the construction season quickly here. I would like to know if there are going to be any units in the fall term, any units where a senior can say, "I think I have a home here that I can stay an extra 10 years," as an example.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, all new housing homes that we are building currently and over the past few years are what they call visitor-accessible. They already have wider entrances, accessible bathrooms on the ground floor, and again, we have programs to assist seniors to be able to access as many supports as they need to be able to maintain their residence or obtain residence so that they can age in place within their communities as long as possible.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I see this as a fairly simple process. Has the NWT Housing Corporation identified individuals that could be candidates for the program to allow them to age in place? I have said many times in the House that this is essential. It is essential to government. If we can keep a senior in their own home, we are saving \$140,000 not having them in long-term care. I would like to know if the NWT Housing Corporation has actually identified people this year, not next year, because then we'll be in our third year of planning. This year, if there are going to be any units on the ground that are going to be improved to barrier-free so that individual seniors can remain in their homes. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, within this fiscal year, we will have a new housing design that accommodates seniors so that they can live with their families. We currently use the application process where, within the application, people are identified as seniors. Their

needs are taken into consideration. Seniors can apply for programs to assist them in other ways, and we are also looking at a new program that actually looks at the co-payment, to lower the amount of co-payments for lower-income people and families so that we provide better services, more appropriate services, to seniors and low-income families within our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 750-18(2):
RESIDENT POLICE SUPPORT FOR
TSIIGEHTCHIC

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister: is the Minister aware of requests from Tsiigehtchic and other communities to have resident RCMP officers during times of break-up and freeze-up? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, providing policing services to the smaller communities remains a priority for the Department of Justice and the government. I know in Tsiigehtchic specifically, over the last year, Housing has installed accommodations so that the RCMP can do patrols overnight, and I understand in the period from January 1st to March 31st, there were 11 overnight patrols. Clearly coverage has improved and increased in the last year. I have not heard the specific request regarding the time of break-up that has been brought forth by the Member opposite, but I will take that up with the RCMP. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the community is very happy with the services that have improved over the last year here, but in the government's mandate, the department has committed to supporting the developing of policing action plans for each community. Is the Minister aware of how the need for resident RCMP officers is reflected in Tsiigehtchic's 2017-2018 community policing action plan?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: No, I have not reviewed the plan of late. As I mentioned, the police now are spending more time in the community. Tsiigehtchic is 60 kilometres or so from Fort McPherson, and I do realize, obviously, it takes some time for the RCMP to reach the community, but I understand that to be about 30 to 45 minutes during most of the year; and during freeze-up or break-up, if there is an emergency, they can arrange to get there very quickly. I will review the plan that has been

mentioned by the Member opposite with the RCMP. I do not think we can commit to having a year-round detachment in the communities, and I believe that the improvements that we have made have improved coverage.

MR. BLAKE: I am not asking for year-round coverage. The RCMP do come around every other weekend, but I would like to ask the Minister: what other actions will the Minister take to work with the RCMP to advance public safety goals in Tsiigehtchic, particularly having resident RCMP officers during times of break-up and freeze-up as of the fall of 2017?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am afraid I cannot commit to having the RCMP there during those specific times. As I mentioned earlier, they are able to go to the community now and spend the night there since housing has now been provided by the NWT Housing Corporation. Coverage has improved. I cannot commit to having them there specifically during break-up and freeze-up for that entire period.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister at least speak to the RCMP "G" Division to see if they would be open to providing this service in the spring and fall as the community requested? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The Department of Justice continues to work with the RCMP to address the concerns of the small communities. I will bring this concern to the RCMP, but I certainly can't guarantee that the coverage requested could be provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 751-18(2):
FOREST FIRE PREPAREDNESS AND
PREVENTION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the unpopular forest fire season is upon us, and my questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I spoke earlier today about how in the riding of Yellowknife North, which includes the Ingraham Trail, there are over 500 "assets" or "values at risk," including many of our own GNWT parks. I am wondering if the Minister could start by maybe informing us what his department is doing in terms of working with other departments, such as Lands and MACA, with regard to identifying values at risk and in communications internally, within those departments, in advance of a fire or emergency situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we all recognize the importance of proper communication during the upcoming forest fire season and forest fire seasons of the past. We are working with Lands on a data-sharing process so that all departments are aware of the good values on the land, and we are also working with MACA through their emergency measures officer on emergency preparedness. We communicate daily with the EMO during extreme fire seasons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. I am happy to hear that internal communications are a priority for our government during these times of necessity for emergency preparedness. Let's take it a step further. I would like to ask the Minister: what is the department doing with regard to communicating to the property owners who own these assets of value?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are working on establishing contact information with all property owners. That is why we stress the importance of all property owners to let us know where they are, let the departments know where they are and, more importantly, give us some contact information so we are able to contact them in the event of an emergency. We talk of properties and values, but our most important value is the people who are out there. We need to know who is out there so, in the event of a forest fire that is moving very quickly, we can react to that.

We are looking at different communication methods. I think the Member said in his Member's statement about the use of Twitter during the last fire, so we are looking at different communication methods that would communicate or improve our communication with folks who are out there. I stress again the importance of folks out there letting us know where they are, so we can have that information at our disposal.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. I have to commend some residents on the Ingraham Trail recently for working hard to actually collect a lot of property owner information, so that they can share it with their respective departments within government. That will be forthcoming, if it hasn't already.

One of the things that we have done, and it is very commendable work in recent years, is the fire smarting program. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the department has just engaged with the public on Ingraham Trail with regard to fire smarting during a public barbecue. I am just wondering if the Minister can elaborate a little bit

more on how many more workshops there are that they want to put on for fire smarting, and more importantly, what are we actually doing to measure the effectiveness of these fire smarting workshops?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are planning a workshop in every region during this fire season. We have had one that was conducted in North Slave already, and that may be the one Member we spoke of. We have had two conducted in South Slave already so far this year. We are planning a FireSmart representative workshop this fall, so that all the regions will be able to conduct their own workshops in the future. We continue to work with individual value-at-risk owners in communities to protect their values at risk from lowland fire. We also have identified four communities that could be at extreme risk this coming fire season, so we are working with those communities to see if there are opportunities for us to assist them or do some fire smarting breaks with them, which will have another impact on providing some work to some local people. We are working with those four communities and we will work with them to see what we can do to help them with the fire breaks and the fire smarting around their communities.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister might have partially answered some of this. It is one thing to educate folks on the fire smarting aspects, in terms of what they can do to put a degree of barrier around their property in the instance of a fire. We know that, even when resources are active and on the ground, help may not arrive, so I guess my question to the Minister is: what are we doing to educate the public about how fast a wildfire can spread, and how the onus is on the owners to protect their properties? What we can do to support them in protecting those properties? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I think the Member said it well when he said that part of the onus is on the property owners to take steps to ensure that their properties are protected. As far as educating the public about how fast a wildfire is, well, it is hard for us to predict. We can help them to try and be prepared in the event that there is a very fast wildfire that is moving. I think the wildfire will educate us more than we can educate the public. We have to be prepared for it, and we will communicate through our websites and other social media.

Again, as I said before, Mr. Speaker, I stress the importance of folks who are out there to let us know where they are so we can be prepared to protect the values at risk, all people, and that is what, at the

end of the day, the ultimate goal should be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 752-18(2):
STATUS OF HAY RIVER HEALTH AUTHORITY

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, last year Health and Social Services authorities amalgamated into the NWT Health and Social Services Authority. The rationale for this move was to improve coordination, communication, and the use of resources, including staff, among the regions. The Hay River health authority was one of the two that were left out of the amalgamation because it was engaging negotiations, but the primary reason appears to me, anyway, to be the costs associated with bringing it on board, due to their underperforming pension plan.

This pension issue has been going on for over a decade, and the price tag is growing. Every time I bring it up, it is a different number: \$20 million, \$15 million, \$25 million. I am bringing it up again because I see the negative effects of being excluded from the NWT Health and Social Services Authority in relation to issues like medical travel, staffing, and mental health. I want to see if we can bring some sort of conclusion to this issue. My first question to the Minister of Health is: how much would it cost to bring the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority into the NWT Health and Social Services Authority? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know. I know that when we looked at bringing the health authority in during the last Assembly, the cost estimates were about \$20 million. Things have changed since then. We have put in 12 new positions in Hay River. There have been some other changes. There has been staff turnover. The bottom line is: I can't tell you what the number is today, but it is likely still around that number, maybe slightly higher. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I can add "I don't know" to the number of responses I have gotten to how much it is going to cost. I know every year that the department tops up this pension plan, and I was wondering if the Minister has the numbers about how much the department has already put into this pension plan over the past 10 or 12 years, however long it has been going on.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In 2005, when I actually worked for the Government of Northwest

Territories, we were looking at bringing in the Hay River health and social services into the public service at that time, and I was actually working on that file. At that time, it was estimated to be around \$5 million to bring the Hay River authority into the public service. Since then, because it was decided not to move forward at the time because of the cost, we have had to top up their pension every year. Last year, the top-up on the pension was about \$872,000 and, for this year, we have an early estimate that suggests we're going to have to top up their pension \$1.2 million. All in all, it's about a million a year average since 2005. If you do the math, Mr. Speaker, we're talking \$12, \$14, \$15 million just to keep that pension alive in Hay River.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister is making my case for me. Clearly something needs to be done. I mean the government is just throwing good money after bad here. What's being done right now to make this happen? What's in progress?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Late in the life of the last government, it was decided to move the Hay River authority into the public service because there were unknown things at play. There was no finalized collective agreement with the UNW for GNWT employees. There was also no finalized collective agreement with the Hay River employees. It left a lot of questions up in the air as far as what exists in one body, what exists in the other, and how do we make those come across seamlessly so that we don't adversely affect the employees. At that time, I accepted that logic because we didn't know those things, but I also believed at that time that it was going to happen much faster than it has as far as reaching some terms on collective agreements.

I've had an opportunity to travel to Hay River. I've seen the challenges that the Member has raised and I agree wholeheartedly with what the Member is saying. I've made commitments to Hay River in the past in the previous Assembly and again in this Assembly, but this is something that we must do. Rather than waiting for the collective agreements to be done, I've already directed the department to do an updated analysis on what it would cost but also to develop a plan on how we can move forward prior to having these agreements concluded so that we can move forward to find a way to bring health units in the Hay River into the public service. This is something that I'd like to see happen. This is something that many of us would like to see happen, but we have to be cognizant of the fact that it is going to cost a large amount of money. We're going to have to work together to find that money if we intend to move forward with Hay River.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like there's a lot of work on that. That's great to hear. The Minister says it must be done, and so I just want to ask the Minister: now that the 17th Assembly has been dealing with it, can we get a commitment that the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority would be brought into the NWT Health and Social Services Authority before the end of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I badly want to say yes, but I recognize that any financial hit is going to have to be considered in line with all other costs that this government is faced with. We need to do the business case.

I'm looking forward to working with the Member. I'm looking forward to working with all my colleagues on both sides of this House to find a way. Recognizing that, if it has a significant cost, I will not commit to have it done in the life of this government, but I commit to making significant progress by working together to find a way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 753-18(2):
PORTABLE ULTRASOUND MACHINE FOR FORT
SIMPSON HEALTH CENTRE

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, after last sitting, I was informed by the Minister that we would not be purchasing a portable ultrasound machine for the Fort Simpson Health Centre. This was a little frustrating because the existing ultrasound is not working properly. Can the Minister explain why the portable ultrasound machine was deemed unnecessary for the Fort Simpson Health Centre? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first off, I have to apologize. There was clearly some confusion and there have been some changes. The existing portable ultrasound in the Fort Simpson Health Centre is out-dated, as the Member has identified, and is actually scheduled to be replaced with a new portable ultrasound machine this summer. We're hoping that we'll have one in place by the end of June 2017, barring any unforeseen challenges with purchase and delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that answer. That's great to hear, but I was understanding that the portable ultrasound machine

was not being purchased and the existing ultrasound wasn't working. Can the Minister clarify: do we have a portable ultrasound machine and a standard ultrasound machine in the centre?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I've already indicated, the existing portable ultrasound in the Fort Simpson Health Centre is out-dated and needs to be replaced. It will be replaced. We're hoping to have that portable ultrasound on-site by the end of June, barring any challenges with delivery and/or purchasing.

MR. THOMPSON: During my constituency term and in my conversations with expectant mothers, it has been brought to my attention that the health centre doesn't actually use the ultrasound machine. They actually have to send them to Yellowknife. Can the Minister make a commitment or work with myself and the regional authority to get the staff trained so that we can actually have these ultrasound machines in place so that we can save some money and save time for the residents?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There does seem to be some continued confusion and I'm happy to sit down with the Member to talk, but I'd like to clarify for the Member that the ultrasound machine at Fort Simpson is not the kind used by sonographers to perform diagnostic tests. Rather, the machine at Simpson, the portable ultrasound machine, is the kind that is used by doctors and nurse practitioners and midwives at the bedside to help them make immediate decisions about patient care; things such as checking someone in an accident has internal bleeding or to check to see if a baby is in breach. Establishing a full diagnostic ultrasound service in a new site is a very complex undertaking with issues across the board.

As background, Mr. Speaker, sonographers have been identified as one of the leading health and social services positions that are hard to recruit. It's almost impossible to find these individuals who can do the full diagnostic using the full ultrasound machines. We continue to struggle to find sonographers at the two locations where we do have full ultrasound machines. However, with the more established NWT Health and Social Services Authority, we have the opportunity to make sure that we're using our resources and diagnostic services in areas such as ultrasound to their full capacity, and that means reviewing the care that is being provided to see if there's any opportunity.

Can I commit that we'll have a full ultrasound machine in Simpson? I can't. We would need to do an analysis on demand. If you're going to hire a sonographer, you want them working basically full-time on providing those deep diagnostic tests, which is not something that is available in Simpson. The demand is not high enough to justify a full

sonographer, which is a hard-to-recruit position. I will commit to looking at it at a territorial level and seeing if there are any opportunities for other places where demand might be higher to see what opportunities exist for rolling out a greater range of sonography services across the territory.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his answer. That's reassuring because, when we talked about the new boards and the new authorities, we're talking about utilizing positions, transferring them around. Can the Minister make a commitment, and he's already made a commitment, but to the year cost analysis to show us that what would it cost to bring a machine into the community regional centres so we don't have to ship our people to Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As the territorial authority looks at expanding services at any point in the Northwest Territories, we would have to build a business case and justify any decisions which are being made, which will obviously include costs analyses and those types of things. I just do not want to set any false impressions.

At this point, a sonography machine, an ultrasound machine for deep exams, things like hearts and deep analysis, is a very expensive piece of machinery that can only be operated by a sonographer. If we are to put these very expensive machines in communities and then only use them occasionally because of demand, we would be losing money or we would be spending money poorly and not to maximum benefit. That does not mean that what you are suggesting is impossible, but we would have to do the business case, we would have to do the work.

With a single authority, we are positioned to do that with some exceptions. I mean, Hay River, as previously described, is a challenge because they have not moved into the single-authority model, and we have work that we need to do there, as well. There is lots of work that still needs to be done, but, with the single authority, we have the mechanism to do this work to better and improve the quality of care for residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 19-18(2): POSITION VACANCY AND OVERTIME STATISTICS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. O'Reilly on February 14, 2017, regarding position vacancy and overtime statistics.

The Department of Finance has gathered the requested information and later today at the appropriate time I will table the spreadsheets that detail the information that the Member requested.

The spreadsheets that I will be tabling in the House identify:

1. The number of vacant, full-time indeterminate positions in the public service by department and agency, except for those positions in the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation on June 30, 2016; September 30, 2016; November 30, 2016; and January 31, 2017. These are the months where the data is available within the requested time period, as this information was previously collected quarterly and is now collected bi-monthly.
2. The number of job openings that were active within the Human Resource Information System, commonly known as PeopleSoft, to fill vacant positions for each month from April 1, 2016, to February 14, 2017.
3. The total number of hours entered into PeopleSoft as overtime and the related costs, by month from April 1, 2016, to February 14, 2017.
4. The total number of overtime hours entered into PeopleSoft, and the related costs in each month from April 1, 2016, to February 14, 2017, to employees whose positions are designated as continuous. Continuous positions are defined as those that must remain operational/open during the shut-down period. Examples of common continuous positions include, but are not limited to, corrections officers, highway maintenance officers, home support workers, social workers, resident care aides, and wildland fire crew members.
5. The total number of work hours entered as sick leave in PeopleSoft from April 2016 until February 14, 2017 by employees whose positions are designated as continuous. Providing work hours rather than workdays

provides more accurate information as not all employees work standard workdays.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Returns to written questions. Minister of Justice.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 21-18(2):
COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT
CLASSIFIED BY RCMP AS UNFOUNDED

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to the Written Question asked by Ms. Green on February 23, 2017, regarding complaints of sexual assault classified by RCMP as unfounded.

Mr. Speaker, in order to address the specific questions, I provide the House with the following detailed information related to the overall effort of the RCMP to address these concerns.

RCMP Training on Sexual Assault Investigations

RCMP officers receive in-depth investigative instruction as part of their 24-week Cadet Training Program, or CTP in Regina, Saskatchewan. There are 36 classes of instruction in the CTP dedicated to investigating sexual assault. There are a further four classes specifically related to child sexual abuse. The curriculum takes an integrated approach, but some of the topics relevant to sexual assault investigation include:

- Ethics in sexual assault investigations
- Victim services
- Assault investigation
- Five stage role play involving a sexual assault investigation
- Major crime scenario exercise i.e. sexual assault investigation
- Practical aspects of obtaining bodily substances from suspects for DNA analysis
- Sexual Assault Investigation Kit usage
- Completing Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System reports
- Suspect interviews
- Scenario-based exercises
- Using the media to assist in major investigations

- Processing exhibits to be sent to the forensic laboratory
- Conducting a structured interview
- Preparing for court
- Presenting testimony at trial

The RCMP provides additional training for members to improve their interviewing skills as investigators. This additional training includes topics such as establishing a rapport with the victim and/or witness, steps in obtaining a pure version statement, ethical and legal considerations, and professionalism. Pure version statements, in particular, are considered key in complex investigations such as sexual assault complaints. This technique has the benefit of being considerate to a witness' experience by allowing them to answer open-ended questions without interruption, but also providing investigators the best information from the witness. Of the approximately 186 RCMP members staffed as of April 2017 in "G" Division, 119 officers have completed the specialized investigative interview training. Priority for this training is given to front-line officers who are responsible for these investigations, and who work directly with victims of crime.

Within "G" Division, 24 members have completed additional training specific to child sexual abuse investigation, with 18 completing this training as recently as January 2017. Many of the skills and investigative steps used in child sexual abuse investigations are applicable to sexual assault investigations involving adult victims. Part of this training is focused on recognizing and responding to drug facilitated sexual assaults. This training was provided by Mr. Craig Smith, a private consultant with years of experience as a sexual assault and homicide investigator. "G" Division provides specialized child sexual assault investigation training each year through Mr. Smith or other similarly qualified instructors.

Analysis of "G" Division Complaints Classified as Unfounded, 2010 to 2016

Mr. Speaker, in order to discuss the analysis and review of complaints coded as unfounded by "G" Division RCMP, it is important to explain the basic data collection requirements. The Uniform Crime Reporting Survey's national data standards require that police services code all reportable incidents in order to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society, and the characteristics of crime. According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, incidents are to be coded as unsubstantiated or equivalent, founded or unfounded, and statistical information

about incidents coded as founded are sent to Statistics Canada. The definitions of these classifications are:

1. Unsubstantiated or equivalent internal code: After investigation, it cannot be determined whether or not a violation of the Criminal Code or other federal statute took place at that time or location.
2. Unfounded: It has been determined through police investigation that the offence reported did not occur, nor was it attempted and therefore no violations of the Criminal Code or other federal statute took place at that time or location.
3. Founded: After police investigation it has been determined that a Criminal Code or other federal statute violation has occurred even if the charged/suspect chargeable is unknown.

Mr. Speaker, it was deeply concerning that The Globe and Mail investigative report revealed that such a high percentage of sexual assault complaints were deemed to be unfounded by police. The Commanding Officer of "G" Division, Chief Superintendent Jamie Zettler, was equally concerned when I spoke with him. As a result of the report, he immediately initiated an in-depth review of every complaint classified as unfounded in the Northwest Territories between 2010 and 2016.

The Globe and Mail report indicated that 30 per cent of sexual assault complaints in the NWT during that time period were closed as unfounded. The RCMP's detailed review and analysis adjusted the unfounded number of sexual assault complaints to 18.7 per cent. This was because they found that a number of cases classified as unfounded were done so in error due to a coding issue, and not an investigative conclusion. Of the 18.7 per cent unfounded cases, 42 per cent were third-party complaints that were not reported by the victim, but by someone else who had seen or been told something which led them to believe a sexual assault has occurred. The third party then reports it to the RCMP so an investigation can be completed to determine whether or not there has been a sexual assault. It's important to know that a complaint classified as unfounded does not mean that a thorough investigation did not take place, but rather after an investigation, the police were able to determine that the offence reported did not actually occur.

Chief Superintendent Zettler has assured me that they have taken steps to ensure RCMP members are provided with everything they need to investigate allegations of sexual assault thoroughly, while remaining considerate and sensitive to the

experience of the person coming forward. This includes appropriate training available for members to support current sexual assault investigation techniques, and the supervision of each of these matters by a senior RCMP member.

Sexual Assault Specialized Unit

Mr. Speaker, some provinces or municipalities have established sexual assault units within their police services to investigate all sexual assault complaints in their jurisdiction, as they have determined that this operational model is the best fit for police to provide this service for communities.

Yukon, for example, established a specialized unit in 2013 to investigate domestic violence, sexual assault, and child welfare matters. This model for police operations makes sense in the Yukon where over 75 per cent of the population resides in Whitehorse, and all but one of the 17 communities are accessible by road. A specialized unit is a better fit for a predominantly urban population like that of Yukon.

In the NWT, the geographic reality of having 33 communities, most of which do not have all season road access, makes a specialized investigation model less appropriate. More than half the population of the NWT is spread among communities outside of Yellowknife, and an investigator's responsiveness to complainants would potentially depend on the weather and available travel options for some of our remote communities. The RCMP advises that these communities are best served by ensuring the general duty RCMP officers stationed at their local detachment have all of the tools available to them to investigate allegations of sexual assault thoroughly, remaining sensitive to the experience of the person coming forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. 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, report of committees on the review of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Report of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 17:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee of Government Operations has reviewed Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, and wishes to report that Bill 17 as amended and reprinted is now ready for

consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Report of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Infrastructure.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 336-18(2):
GNWT RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE REPORT 6-18(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 7: AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 337-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 317-18(2): INVESTMENTS IN SMALL BUSINESS

TABLED DOCUMENT 338-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 513-18(2): SALE OF MACTUNG MINING PROPERTY

TABLED DOCUMENT 339-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 516-18(2): SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 340-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 546-18(2): PROMOTING TOURISM IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 341-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 584-18(2): SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 342-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTIONS 585-18(2) AND 591-18(2): ICE ROAD MAINTENANCE

TABLED DOCUMENT 343-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 593-18(2): YELLOWKNIFE AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

TABLED DOCUMENT 344-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTIONS 612-18(2) AND 635-18(2): OVERFLOW ISSUES ON MACKENZIE DELTA HIGHWAYS

TABLED DOCUMENT 345-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTIONS 692-18(2): PUBLIC SAFETY ON THE INGRAHAM TRAIL

TABLED DOCUMENT 346-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 703-18(2): FORT PROVIDENCE TOURIST CAMP PROJECT

TABLED DOCUMENT 347-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 704-18(2): COMMITMENT TO THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following 12 documents entitled "GNWT Response to Committee Report 6-18(2) Report on the Review of Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act"; "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 513-18(2): Sale of Mactung Mining Property;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 516-18(2): Small Business Supports;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 546-18(2): Promoting Tourism in Small Communities;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 584-18(2): Socio-Economic Agreements;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Questions 585-18(2) and 591-18(2): Ice Road Maintenance;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 593-18(2): Yellowknife Airport Infrastructure Funding;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Questions 612-18(2) and 635-18(2): Overflow Issues on Mackenzie Delta Highways;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Questions 692-18(2): Public Safety on the Ingraham Trail;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 703-18(2): Fort Providence Tourist Camp Project;" and "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 704-18(2): Commitment to the Manufacturing Industry." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 348-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 651-18(2): ARSENIC LEVELS IN KAM LAKE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 651-18(2): Arsenic Levels in Kam Lake." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 349-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
571-18(2): TERRITORIAL ELECTRICAL POWER
GENERATION ASSET EXPANSION AND
REPLACEMENT

TABLED DOCUMENT 350-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
611-18(2): STATUS OF GNWT OPEN
GOVERNMENT POLICY

TABLED DOCUMENT 351-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
620-18(2): SAHTU LAND USE PLANNING

TABLED DOCUMENT 352-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
717-18(2): LAND LEASE ASSESSMENTS AND
CONSULTATIONS

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following four documents entitled "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 571-18(2): Territorial Electrical Power Generation Asset Expansion and Replacement;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 611-18(2): Status of GNWT Open Government Policy;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 620-18(2): Sahtu Land Use Planning"; and "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 717-18(2): Land Lease Assessments and Consultations." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs.

TABLED DOCUMENT 353-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
347-18(2): 911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE
SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 354-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
359-18(2): UPDATING THE FIRE PREVENTION
ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 355-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
385-18(2): CHANGES TO THE CITIES, TOWNS
AND VILLAGES ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 356-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
410-18(2): AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON
MUNICIPAL SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 357-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
411-18(2): GROUND AMBULANCE AND
HIGHWAY RESCUE SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 358-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
462-18(2): SPORT, RECREATION AND
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 359-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
470-18(2): CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 360-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
472-18(2) AND 483-18(2): STATUS OF REGIONAL
YOUTH AND VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 361-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
481-18(2): ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY OF
RIVERBANK EROSION

TABLED DOCUMENT 362-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
640-18(2): IMPROVING CONSUMER
PROTECTION

TABLED DOCUMENT 363-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
721-18(2): FORT PROVIDENCE YOUTH CENTRE
PROPOSAL

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following 11 documents entitled "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 347-18(2): 911 Emergency Telephone Services;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 359-18(2): Updating the Fire Prevention Act;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 385-18(2): Changes to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 410-18(2): Auditor General's Report on Municipal Services;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 411-18(2): Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue Services;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 462-18(2): Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Review Final Report;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 470-18(2): City of Yellowknife Legislative Priorities;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 472-18(2) and 483-18(2): Status of Regional Youth and Volunteer Positions;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 481-18(2): Environmental Liability of Riverbank Erosion;" "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 640-18(2): Improving Consumer Protection;" and "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 721-18(2): Fort Providence Youth Centre Proposal." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 364-18(2):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR FOLLOW-UP
LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 606-18(2):
STATUS OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER
MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 365-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
650-18(2): HIRING CANDIDATES UNDER THE
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

TABLED DOCUMENT 366-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
676-18(2): DIAMOND MINE ENVIRONMENTAL
AGREEMENTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 367-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
680-18(2): GIANT MINE OVERSIGHT BOARD
RESEARCH FUNDING

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents entitled "Additional Information for Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 606-18(2): Status of Transboundary Water Management Agreements;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 650-18(2): Hiring Candidates under the Affirmative Action Policy;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 676-18(2): Diamond Mine Environmental Agreements;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 680-18(2): Giant Mine Oversight Board Research Funding." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

TABLED DOCUMENT 368-18(2):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 5-18(2): FUNDING
FOR AURORA COLLEGE

TABLED DOCUMENT 369-18(2):
RESPONSE TO PETITION 7-18(2): FUNDING
FOR JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN AND OTHER
OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in response to a petition tabled by the Member for Kam Lake on February 21, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a response to a petition provided by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in response to a petition tabled by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on March 9, 2017. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 24:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE CORONER'S ACT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 29, 2017, I will move that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Coroner's Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 25:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL
TENANCIES ACT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 29, 2017, I will move that Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Infrastructure.

BILL 26:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS
ACT, NO. 2

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 29, 2017, I will move that Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, reports of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, 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 Friday, May 26, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, May 26, 2017, 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:42 p.m.