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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, September 25, 2017****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 207-18(2):
UPDATE ON NWT CLIMATE CHANGE
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, climate change is an issue of serious concern for this government and the people of the Northwest Territories. Our government has made a commitment in its mandate to develop a territorial climate change strategic framework. I am pleased to provide Members with an update on the development of this framework, intended to guide our efforts on climate change from 2018 to 2030.

Since my last Minister's statement on this topic in March, the department has been working hard to develop a draft NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework.

In April, a very successful three days of climate change education took place in Yellowknife called "Earth to Sky." The event was a collaborative effort between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Government of the Northwest Territories. NASA scientists and Environment and Natural Resources staff delivered courses and presentations related to data-gathering, impacts, and the importance of traditional knowledge to support research on climate change.

Further, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Department of Infrastructure coordinated six joint regional engagement workshops on energy and climate change issues and undertook a public survey.

Workshops were held in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, and Hay River. All workshops were well attended, and the feedback received has been positive.

Mr. Speaker, at these workshops we heard that NWT residents want better planning, community funding, and communication around climate change, renewable energy systems, and energy efficiency.

Residents raised concerns about a carbon tax and the cost of living. There was acceptance of a carbon pricing scheme if some revenues were allocated to improving energy efficiency in communities.

Residents expressed support for increased research and monitoring, and traditional knowledge was highlighted as an important tool in understanding and adapting to climate change. A Joint Engagement Report has been posted on the Environment and Natural Resources website which summarizes what we heard. Summaries of the workshops and written submissions gathered during the engagement period are also posted online.

Mr. Speaker, traditional knowledge has played an important part in the development of the Climate Change Strategic Framework, and monitoring is an important component. The draft NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework rests on three pillars: knowledge; resilience and adaptation; and emissions mitigation. The department is working closely with the Department of Infrastructure to ensure the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework and the NWT Energy Strategy are aligned.

The draft framework identifies three goals towards which the NWT must make significant progress by 2030. These goals are:

- transition to a strong, healthy economy that is less reliant on fossil fuel use;
- improve knowledge of the climate change impacts occurring in the NWT; and
- build resilience and adapt to a changing climate.

Proposed priorities and actions for each goal are detailed in the draft framework. Mr. Speaker, the draft NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework is now going through internal reviews and is expected to be released in late October for public review and comment. We will also be engaging with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment on the strategic framework. Tabling of the final NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework in the Legislative Assembly is planned for February 2018.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government is expected to announce several new funding programs as part of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. As federal funding programs for climate change become available, there will be significant opportunities for our government to work together with the federal government, Aboriginal and community governments, industry, and other stakeholders to take numerous actions on climate change. In particular, these actions need to focus on adaptation to ensure our communities are healthy and resilient in the face of serious impacts of climate change.

We continue to look forward to working in partnership to protect our communities, our residents, and our economy by increasing our resilience to, and mitigating, the effects of climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 208-18(2):
INVESTING IN DIVERSITY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, we are investing in an economy that will give the Northwest Territories residents and their families the opportunity to prosper, and give the government the financial means to pay for programs and services our territory and its people need.

This work is important to both sides of this House. Regular Members have played an important role to help move the work of this government, and with that collaboration we are able to support better diversification of our economy. Our residents deserve the opportunity to achieve economic self-determination, and this House can be proud of the work it has accomplished to provide better opportunities for our residents.

Our economy gains strength as it grows more diverse, and our government is doing its part to promote, contribute, and invest in progress across all sectors of our economy. Tourism is by far the strongest of these sectors. Our extraordinary landscapes and vibrant cultures attract visitors from around the globe to our spectacular home.

Numbers released today confirm this was the case for more people than ever before.

The 2016-2017 fiscal year saw nearly 110,000 visitors reach the Northwest Territories, the first time visitor numbers have broken 100,000. This is a 16 per cent improvement over 2015-2016, and the latest cap on nearly a decade of consistent growth in visitors choosing to visit the Northwest Territories.

These visitors spent enough during their visits to set new spending records for our tourism industry. For the first time, the value of our industry topped \$200 million, a 21 per cent increase over 2015-2016.

Mr. Speaker, while there are reasons to be proud of these successes, our work is far from over. The investments we have made in product development, world-class facilities, and marketing are just a few of the goals set out in Tourism 2020, the five-year strategic investment plan that is opening our spectacular home to the world.

We fully intend on following through on this strategy through the duration of our four-year mandate to help build on a more diverse economy and bring even more opportunity for NWT residents.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy is another long-term plan which is guiding our ongoing investments in renewable resource-based sectors.

A number of major initiatives identified under this strategy are in progress. The department has developed the NWT's first-ever agricultural strategy, investing in local greenhouses; agricultural programming, including the NWT's agricultural development conference; community gardens; and experimental farming. We have also created an agricultural analyst position to help implement this strategy out of Hay River, the agricultural capital of the NWT.

The commercial fishing revitalization strategy will capitalize on the bounty offered by our world-class fish stock. To implement this strategy, we are working with our partners at the NWT Fishermen's Federation. We have committed funds to re-establish a fish processing plant in Hay River and are helping to train the next generation of commercial fishers.

A manufacturing strategy is being developed to guide our approach to locally manufactured products. A discussion paper is currently in development, with public engagement in-person, online, by e-mail, phone, and mail slated to begin in the coming months.

Our film sector is advancing, with investments in innovative marketing approaches, training initiatives, and new opportunities for local producers. We have seen these initiatives pay off with increasing international exposure for this budding industry.

We continue to build the profile of the Northwest Territories' traditional artists and their products through the Northwest Territories Arts brand. Our profile at airports has increased with significant northern traffic, including exhibits at the Edmonton and Calgary Airports. We continue to improve and modernize the Northwest Territories Arts website to connect more people with NWT-made art than ever before.

Finally, our investments in the traditional economy are paying off with a rebound in Northwest Territories wild fur sales under the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand and greater use of our fur and procurement program by traditional artists across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, while we have made many strides, we are still a long way from the broader economic horizons we want to reach. We are committed to continuing our pursuit of the Northwest Territories with the opportunities from mine site to the silver screen for the rest of the government's mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 209-18(2):
2017 WILDLAND FIRE SEASON

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, 2017 was an above-average fire season. This year, 249 wildland fires were reported, affecting over one million hectares. That makes this the seventh worst year for area burned by forest fires since Environment and Natural Resources began keeping records in 1975. As a comparison, in 2016 there were 188 fires that burned 229,000 hectares, a below-average year. In 2014, 385 fires and 3.4 million hectares burned. In a regular year, the Northwest Territories experiences about 213 fires, affecting just over 500,000 hectares of land.

This year, in addition to the 136 fire fighters who made up 34 four-person crews, ENR hired 378 extra fire fighters across the NWT for training or in support of wildland fire operations. These crews were critical in managing the 2017 wildland fire situation.

ENR fire crews continue to provide a professional level of service to the residents of the NWT. This was especially demonstrated this summer by the great work that crews did to protect communities

when fires encroached on Fort Good Hope, Nahanni Butte, Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic.

In addition to actioning fires and protecting values at risk, fires crews in all regions assisted communities with thinning and pruning projects to increase community protection.

As a government, it is important for us that we are able to provide assistance to other Canadian jurisdictions, as many of them helped us in our time of need during previous wildland fire seasons.

This season, with the extreme burning conditions in western provinces, we assisted British Columbia by providing 80 crew members, 24 overhead personnel, and equipment. In addition, the GNWT assisted Alberta and Parks Canada, specifically Wood Buffalo National Park, with a total of 14 air tanker missions for fires in their areas.

Mr. Speaker, every resident has a responsibility to help prevent fires in the NWT. Despite ongoing public awareness campaigns on fire safety, of the 249 fires this year, 17 fires are suspected to be person-caused. I cannot stress enough the value and importance of our FireSmart Program. It is everyone's responsibility to FireSmart their home and cabin, and promote the FireSmart Program in their community. Property owners and communities should be using FireSmart tools to reduce their risk of loss from wildland fire.

In cooperation with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources continues to lead an initiative to review, update, and integrate community wildland fire protection plans into existing GNWT emergency management processes. This will ensure communities have a more complete understanding of their role in FireSmart and what is required to mitigate community risks of a wildland fire. Information about the FireSmart program and the community protection plans is available on the ENR website and at local ENR offices.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources remains committed to working with NWT residents and communities to finalize community wildland fire protection plans and develop and propose amendments to modernize forest protection legislation. Over the next year, we will remain vigilant in working with property owners across the North and all NWT residents to reduce the risk of wildland fires, and to prepare for a potentially extreme fire response in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to note that the GNWT employed the new group of 802 Fire Boss aircrafts on fires in all regions this summer. These aircrafts proved highly successful in initial and sustained

attack. The 802 air tanker group was also exported to Ontario to help with fires, and also actioned several fires for our friends in Alberta and Wood Buffalo National Park. Feedback from fire crews and air attack officers this summer indicated they are both impressed and pleased with the group's performance. Turbine aircrafts with the ability to use both foam and retardant and have access to more water sources are proving to be a sound investment for the people of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our fire personnel. From the fire crews out on the fire line, to our radio operators, logistics, planning, air attack officers, and everyone who worked hard this summer to protect our residents and communities and our neighbours to the south, your commitment and efforts are greatly appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to people in the gallery. We have with us Mr. David Ramsay, former Member of 15th, 16th, 17th Legislative Assemblies and a former Minister as well. Welcome. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROJECT ASSESSMENT POLICY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Cabinet approved the Project Assessment Policy on April 13, 2017, after a review by standing committee. The policy applies to all GNWT departments, boards, and agencies and establishes the administrative procedure for assessing any "seismic surveys, exploration, extraction and/or production of natural resources, development of infrastructure, or remediation of past resource or infrastructure activity that might have environmental impacts within the Northwest Territories."

Although it was improved as a result of standing committee review, it is still not a good policy. It makes no reference to the rights of Indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent for resource development as recognized in Article 19 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was unanimously endorsed by this House on February 18, 2008.

The policy is established on the principle that the GNWT "should support resource management board processes and carry out project assessment in a manner that is transparent and accountable". Yet the operational direction is that "any technical advice and evidence provided to boards by their respective staff is in line with legislation, Cabinet direction, and ministerial policies".

Some may say that this sort of approach may lead to the muzzling of scientists and withholding of information that Cabinet does not agree with or that this policy could lead to policy-based evidence making. I'll give a concrete example. Cabinet has already endorsed and is actively seeking funds for an all-weather road into the Slave Geological Province. Will technical advice and evidence about the state of the Bathurst caribou herd, no matter how bad it is, be brought forward by our government if and when an environmental assessment is held on the proposed road?

The way this policy could operate is not at all consistent with evidence-based decision-making and transparency principles that it contains. The policy does not honour the spirit of reconciliation and recognize the rights of communities to free, prior, and informed consent. This policy is not why Northerners fought hard for devolution, and it's time to send it back. I will have questions for the Minister of Lands on how this policy is to be implemented and whether there is any appetite for greater transparency. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment delivered a Minister's statement about the Aurora College foundational review and later tabled a letter written by the Standing Committee on Social Development. Both concerned the planned review. The Minister also said, and I quote from the unedited Hansard: "I appreciate committee's advice about the timelines and have decided to extend the timeline."

I am wary of arguing who said what. Nevertheless, as a member of this committee, I must object. As the Member for Yellowknife Centre has already said, we're not interested in further delay. Quite the opposite. We're concerned with expense, staff and student wellbeing, project scope, and college stability, tensions colouring this project from the start.

Mr. Speaker, without concerted effort from Regular Members, ECE would have already eliminated the Teacher Education Program and the Social Work Diploma Program, programs treasured by students, teachers, alumni, and the college board, not to mention critical to meeting labour needs.

The board's own minutes show its unease at how ECE made major budget decisions without consulting them, before they were fired altogether.

Now the department plans to spend nearly \$400,000 reviewing the college? Teacher and social worker intake is frozen and the board is gone. What about their experiences? Yes, the committee was able to review and comment on the RFP before it went out, and to give credit where credit is due, the department adopted some of our recommendations. Then, Mr. Speaker, months went by until the RFP was awarded to a company specializing in "accounting, consulting, and tax." Is that what's best for our only college?

One of my biggest challenges with the review was that ECE planned to run it out of sync with the budgeting cycle, leaving programs in limbo while next year's budget was planned without the insight the review would supposedly bring. Well, guess what? Extending the timeline doesn't solve that problem. The teacher and social work programs, and the college itself, remain trapped in limbo for another year. Will these programs wither on the vine? What can current and prospective students plan for?

The Minister said that, when it came to college programming, "there was little agreement on what to do." Well, Mr. Speaker, at least we can agree on that. I'll have questions later for the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HUMAN RESOURCES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [translation not provided].

Mr. Speaker due to reductions, the layoff of staff has created real issues for people of the NWT. Several people working for the GNWT were told the GNWT no longer needs their service. Meanwhile, the GNWT continues to fill jobs. Mr. Speaker, as a hypothetical example, the GNWT places more value on hiring a young engineer from Toronto than keeping a young mother from the North in their job. This young mother serves as a key to the entire extended family. She uses her income to help her extended family. Mr. Speaker, the layoff of employees has a negative effect on more people than just the immediate family and the employee.

Mr. Speaker, the person relocates outside the NWT with four members of their family for 80 per cent of their salary for one year to go to school. What are they going to do after that? They can't become an engineer, and the job at the GNWT is no longer needed. Mr. Speaker, the government will have assurances that a bridge or a highway will be completed a year earlier. Don't get me wrong, Mr.

Speaker; it is good that we have young, bright engineers working for us, but it should not be at the expense of our families in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT does not have the socio-economic analyses of the impact of this type of decision. When we make decisions to lay off people, we must be fully aware of what those decisions do to our families and the NWT in general. Mr. Speaker, under this scenario the government would save \$90,000 in salary but give up about \$130,000 in federal transfer payments, plus will carry the full costs of financing for the people who are left behind, the extended family that was getting assistance from this young mother as the main income earner. Do this a few times and we will have to hire a few income support officers, social workers, housing officers, and nurses to support the families. Mr. Speaker, in addition the entire family could be lost in the system down south.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, each time the GNWT decides to lay a person off, this scenario has the potential of repeating itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF GAHCHO KUE
MINE

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, as all honourable Members of this House know, I have been a consistent advocate of natural resources development and mineral exploration since I was elected almost two years ago. It is the life blood of our economy, representing almost 40 per cent of our GDP, and an important part of our heritage and the key to our future prosperity. Mr. Speaker, Northerners look optimistically towards the opportunities that future mining projects will create for our communities. Although we are all hoping for that next big discovery and see new projects at the scale of the Ekati or Daivik mines, today I would like to recognize the great success of the Northwest Territories' newest diamond mine: Gahcho Kue.

On September 20, the Gahcho Kue diamond mine has just celebrated its one-year anniversary since operations began. A joint venture between De Beers Canada and Mountain Province Diamonds, Gahcho Kue is the world's largest mine to open in the last 13 years, located at Kennady Lake, approximately 280 km northeast of Yellowknife and

80 km southeast of De Beers' Snap Lake Mine. This open-pit operation will employ about 530 workers and will produce almost 54 million carats of rough diamonds from an estimated 35 million tonnes of ore during its approximately 12-year lifespan.

Mr. Speaker, those are big numbers, but they translate into an even larger number for our economy: \$5.3 billion in gross value added output. That means jobs for Northerners and proves the incredible potential of resource development industry and the future it holds for us all.

Mr. Speaker, it is projects like these that keep our territory from being dominated by public sector spending. It is projects like these that create real economic growth that benefits northern communities and northern businesses. It is projects like these that make the North what it is today, a place of opportunity, hard work, and limitless potential.

Mr. Speaker I offer my sincere congratulations to De Beers Canada, Mountain Province Diamonds, and the workers who have made the Gahcho Kue mine such a grand success, and I thank them for investing in the North and its peoples. I wish them only continued success for the future and hope that we see more mining success stories as we continue to support a prosperous future for our Northwest Territories. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL SMALL BUSINESS TAX CHANGES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some numbers I want to share; 97 per cent, that is the percentage of Canada's economy made up of small business; 70 per cent, that is the percentage of labour force made up of small business; 30 per cent, that is the percentage of Canadians who have started their own business; and a number that I find most interesting, Mr. Speaker, 68 per cent, the percentage of Canadians who want to start their own business and be their own boss someday.

These stats may not be the same in the North, but they certainly indicate the potential for opportunity. However, these numbers are being threatened, Mr. Speaker. The federal government is proposing new tax revisions to small business. These revisions are being termed as corrections to "loopholes." The federal government suggests that these revisions are necessary and will balance the tax contributions between middle-income earners and what the feds term as wealthy business owners. Now, while these measures might be seen as fair by some, the fact is

we are a very small jurisdiction in the North. Those tax changes will apply to our small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, by and large small businesses in the NWT are not wealthy, and they certainly do not get sick days, maternity and paternity leave, health benefits, or unemployment insurance. Honestly, the struggle of a small business owner today is trying to squeeze a living into the margin somewhere between income and expenses. In the North we have a higher cost of doing business, higher transportation costs, higher utilities, higher labour rates, and now a new federal carbon tax coming. With all these factors narrowing that margin, the ability to earn an actual living as a small business owner is becoming more and more difficult.

Our government has been doing good work to support small business and, as we continue to broaden, diversify, and invest in our economy, small businesses will become more and more important and necessary. In most of our small communities, small businesses offer one of the only ways to create jobs and keep communities sustainable and vibrant.

Mr. Speaker, this new federal tax regime brings a lot of apprehension and concern to small business in the North. We cannot continue to sit on our hands with this matter. We need to stand behind the small business community. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LANDS INTEGRATED RISK-BASED STRATEGIC PLAN

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last summer I attended the NWT and Commissioners Lands Act engagement meeting in Norman Wells, one of many consultation sessions on land regulatory reform.

Mr. Speaker, after negotiations, the GNWT assumed responsibilities as identified within the provisions of devolution. There are a number of concerns on the whole issue of lands; for example, the status of Municipalities. We have communities registered as cities, towns, villages, and chartered arrangements. Mr. Speaker, there is a large number of stakeholders with interests in the direction our government is taking. The Department of Lands is conducting a comprehensive review of its dual land administration systems, legislative and regulatory scheme, and policy suite to allow the department to better tailor its existing policies in an effective manner.

In maximizing time management, Mr. Speaker, the stakeholders have encouraged better use of time, with the somewhat industry slowdown, to address reform on land systems and regulation on post-devolution maturity as administrators of public lands. Mr. Speaker, community Indigenous landowners and stakeholders consultation is fundamental to the success. Views of this are under way in the current consultations on the new Mineral Resources Act engagements.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act legislated in 1998 by the federal government provides an opportunity under devolution to assume additional authorities.

As a demonstration of our strategy and hard work to success, rewards of additional responsibilities would none other than bring our independence. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Lands on these actions to independence. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER RESERVE HOUSING ISSUES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [no translation provided].

Mr. Speaker, those who have housing are worried about overcrowding and its impact on family relationships, unmanageable arrears, debts carried over from family members who have passed away, and the difficulty getting repairs and maintenance done.

Those who cannot get housing wonder why vacant houses on the reserve have not been put to good use. Young people who want to live on their own have no choice but to live with their parents or leave the community. If they choose to leave, families are separated and traditional ways of life are threatened. If they choose to stay, they have to deal with endless waiting lists and bureaucracy.

Because of these long-standing and serious problems, it was good news earlier this year when the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation advised this House that the Housing Corporation was working on making 16 units available for people on the Hay River Reserve.

There can be no question, Mr. Speaker, that federal jurisdiction for reserve lands makes it challenging for the GNWT to address the problems of those living on the reserve. I was encouraged by the Minister's news that they had managed to negotiate and successfully obtain land tenure for 10 of the

units and that they were entering a tender process to repair those houses.

Now that autumn has arrived, I am concerned whether these units will be available for access before the cold weather arrives. I am also wondering what progress has been made on land tenure for the remaining six units. Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that the day is coming when I no longer need to speak about inadequate housing on the Hay River Reserve. We are finally beginning the dialogue about strategies, proposals, and actions that will make adequate housing available for the people of the K'atlodeeche First Nation. I believe we can keep up the positive momentum, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SAFE HOUSES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, housing is one of the core critical challenges facing the 18th Legislative Assembly. Homelessness plagues our communities, whether rural and remote or our regional centres. Public housing tenants face lengthy wait lists. We do not yet have enough long-term care beds for our seniors and elders.

Today I want to talk about a housing issue more likely to be hidden, but no less likely to be harmful and costly: the housing needs of women and children escaping family violence. Research into women's homelessness in Canada's North, including our territory, is sobering. The Homeless Hub found that women's security is often taken out of their control, dependent on their partners' behaviour and circumstances. A study from the YWCA found that domestic violence was a major determinant in women's homelessness. You must know, Mr. Speaker, that the NWT, with Nunavut, has the highest rate of family violence in Canada.

In spite of this, we have only five family violence shelters in all regional centres. That means that women and children in many of our small communities, often our most vulnerable communities, cannot have local access to a safe place to stay, not to mention victim services or the RCMP. Yes, it is true that the government will help families travel to the nearest shelter, but can you imagine the disruption of not only leaving your home, but also your community? What happens in an emergency?

This is an area that needs greater resources, Mr. Speaker, but the mandate of the government authorities addresses only the status quo. Mr.

Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous content granted

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, continuing support for these five shelters, that is certainly critical, but what about all the other women? In my riding, the communities of Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic want to establish a local safe house, a place where the community can support some of its most vulnerable residents. Provided a location could be secured, such a place could be managed by the local organizations, like the band, with the government's support.

A safe house is exactly that, Mr. Speaker, a safe place where a woman and her children may find shelter, access government services, receive counselling and advice, and simply rest, knowing that they are secure. Women who leave violent partners and unsafe homes are acting with incredible courage, and they need more support from us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PHYSICAL LITERACY THEME FOR 2017 NWT LITERACY WEEK

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week is Literacy Week here in the Northwest Territories. While most of us think first about reading, the NWT Literacy Council is exploring a different dimension of literacy.

The theme for this year's annual event is Physical Literacy - Life in Motion. Physical literacy is a new term that encompasses the basic knowledge, skills, and motivation we all need to be physically active for life. We can look at physical literacy in a variety of ways. Each of us needs to know our body and its needs so that we can keep that body working for a long time, get things done, and enjoy our lives. Physical literacy stresses the need for good nutrition and sleep, which are vital to our physical, mental, and emotional health. Mr. Speaker, traditional Indigenous life demanded high levels of physical literacy so that people could be safe and successful on the land as they travelled and hunted. Physical literacy is for everyone, no matter their age or ability. It is critical to counteract the sedentary lifestyles encouraged by our digital world. Knowing what that involves and building it into our lives is what physical literacy is all about.

The NWT Literacy Council has developed and distributed NWT-themed learning and activity

resources that people can use to promote and develop physical literacy. There is a how-to kit, and the council has offered community organizations funding of up to \$300 to stage a community event. In keeping with the council's belief that learning often comes through play, the resources help people engage themselves, their families, and their communities in fun activities that strengthen physical literacy. The council's literacy coordinator has also promoted the link between physical literacy and reconciliation, including ideas about how we can incorporate cultural activities like dancing and games into physical literacy activities in communities.

All around the NWT this week, people are gathering for these community events celebrating personal and community development through literacy. Join me in saluting the NWT Literacy Council for its leadership and support, and for all the people who are joining in for Literacy Week this week. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR ABORIGINAL SPORT AND ATHLETES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been said that "youth sports are the ultimate classroom." Kids learn the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, perseverance, respect for authority and rules, and how to win with class and lose with dignity. It gives our youth a positive way to channel their energy, to learn about cooperation and team dynamics, and to build self-esteem, all while having fun.

Youth sport also contributes to health and wellness by encouraging kids to be active and increasing their levels of physical fitness. This in turn helps reduce rates of obesity and diabetes in young people and helps instill fitness habits that last a lifetime.

All of these benefits are magnified for Aboriginal youth, especially those living in smaller, more remote communities, and those whose lives are touched by poverty, addictions, and poor nutrition. For this reason, it is important that the GNWT provide as much support as possible to sporting events such as the North American Indigenous Games or NAIG, as they call it. Mr. Speaker, NAIG is recognized as an important vehicle to promote Indigenous sport development and recreation in Canada. It also provides an important opportunity to showcase and celebrate Indigenous culture across North America.

This event is so significant that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has included it in its Calls to Action. Call to Action Number 88 reads: "We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel."

Mr. Speaker, I am told that the GNWT contributed \$663,000 this year to the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Northwest Territories to fund the NAIG games. It is critical that our young people have proper training, more training time, and the continued opportunity to participate in these games. I want to encourage the GNWT to meet or exceed this funding in its next budget and to keep up the good work.

This summer, the North American Indigenous Games were held in Toronto. Athletes from the Northwest Territories brought home 28 medals, 5 gold, 13 silver, and 10 bronze, in an array of activities, including archery, track and field, canoe, kayak, golf, rifle shooting, and swimming. Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues in this Assembly will join me today in congratulating the medal winners and acknowledging the hard work and competitive spirit of all athletes, coaches, and mission staff from the Northwest Territories who participated in this event. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. 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, I would like draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. We have with us Julia Naedzo from Behchoko. Welcome to our Assembly, one of the Aurora College students. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to recognize three of the nursing and social work students from my riding, in the gallery: Jennifer Pitt, Meagan Shuparski, and Samantha Heatherington. I would also like to recognize two dear friends and former residents of the Northwest Territories, Chris O'Brien and Deborah Molvasie, who are joining us in the gallery, as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Ms. Krista Schauerte, Ms. Lindsay Paul, and Ms. Samantha Brissette. They are all

Aurora College nursing and social work students. I would also like to recognize Ms. Prudence Kalnay-Watson, who is only four but is joining us today in the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Nadine MacDonald from Thebacha, Fort Smith. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize two constituents of mine, Kristen Tanche and, of course, my daughter Jenny Thompson, who are both part of the social work program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize two of the nursing and social work students from the Range Lake riding, Ms. Kathie Pender and Ms. Shenel Cruz. I just want to say that nursing and social work are two very honourable fields. One of them is myself, a social work degree; it's about caring for people, and I give my humblest respect for all of the students. Thank you.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize nursing and social work student Shelly Pierrot. Mahsi.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome and recognize all the students in the nursing program, as well as the social work program; in particular, Amber-Joy Gruben, who is from Inuvik and is taking the nursing program. Welcome, and I hope you guys had a good visit to the Legislative Assembly and had a good tour. Thank you, Mahsi.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the nursing and social work students who are from Yellowknife Centre, including Cindy Villeneuve, Diana Lubansa, Jonah Gordon, Megan McDougall, Rick Miller, Shelby Clarke, Shelley Hessdorfer, Toby Siziba, and Vivian Nyika. I would like to welcome them to the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize in the gallery today we have Dr. Rob Gordon, Vice-President of Research and Professor in Geography and Environmental Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University. They just opened an office here in Yellowknife this morning, and we are pleased with the partnership that we have with them. I would also like to recognize Joel Peters, who is in external affairs with Wilfrid Laurier University, and also with them from ENR is Mr. Andrew Applejohn. Welcome to the gallery. Welcome, gentlemen.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to recognize all of the students who are joining us today, but in particular from the Yellowknife North riding, I would like to welcome Ana Strbac, Chantele Fage, Kiana Moosavi-Karimi, Sandra Richardson, Susan Fitzky, and Tammy Badari. I would also like to, at this time, welcome Yellowknife North constituent Mike Kalnay; and I would like to recognize former Minister and MLA who is a Yellowknife North constituent, Dave Ramsay. Thank you, and welcome everyone to the House.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize all the students who are here today, in particular, Maurissa Antle, a constituent from Yellowknife South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I, too, would like to welcome all the students who are here with us today. Good luck with your studies. Make us proud. Also, to those who we may not have mentioned today, welcome. It is always nice to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Member for Sahtu.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGMENT 28-18(2): PASSING OF GORDON LENNIE

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to acknowledge the late Gordon Lennie, who passed on at the age of 69 on the September 9th day of this year.

Gordon did not take nature for granted; he worked to make sure his passion was being protected. Gordon was involved politically with the NWT Metis

Association and the Metis Heritage. He also co-authored a book called *The Fiddle and the Sash: A history of the Metis of the NWT*. Mr. Speaker, his most important love was his children. Gordon was a well-respected bush man who will always be remembered. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the family as well, and also to the region. Acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 866-18(2): NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about North American Indigenous Games, and my questions are for the Minister of MACA. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: can the Minister advise how the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the NWT uses the funding it receives from the GNWT for the North American Indigenous Games? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Sports Circle receives \$663,000. That money was to support Team NWT at NAG. Most of the money actually was spent for team travel. It is expensive to send people from the northern communities and pay for their accommodations while they are down there. Some of the money was used for territorial sports organizations. They were provided grants so that they could complete the selection of their teams for the games, and that is how the money was utilized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the clarification. Mr. Speaker, my next question is: for the next North American Indigenous Games, how will the department support and improve long-term planning in athlete development?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The next Northern Indigenous Games are actually in Winnipeg in 2020, so in the meantime, we are actually doing a sector-wide strategy with all of the stakeholders, sports and recreation organizations to look at gaps, to look at areas that we are duplicating, to look at areas that we could improve. Part of that is looking at how to get more participation for all residents of the Northwest Territories. The other thing that we are doing within that strategy is we will also be implementing the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations surrounding sports, as well.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It is good to see that long-term planning is getting under way. I know the year before, the planning was maybe about three or four months ahead. I think long-term planning for Indigenous youth and participation will help youth in remote communities. Mr. Speaker, my final question is: in what other ways does Municipal and Community Affairs support their participation of Indigenous youth in sports?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs recognizes that physical literacy, physical activity, is actually something that we need to be promoting with youth from the very beginning until actually when people pass on. There are a number of ways that we actually support, specifically for Indigenous children and youth. We support the Aboriginal Sport Circle, which was stated with nearly \$1 million for sports programming. That includes the traditional Indigenous Games, including the annual school championships that they do. We support them with canoeing, lacrosse, and archery, snowshoe making, the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships, and an annual awards program. These programs are specifically for Indigenous youth, but we also have programs that are offered for all youth, and all youth includes Indigenous youth, too. Like I said, that starts from the very young. Things like the After-School Physical Activity Program that gives funding for schools to support their things. We give things right from there to our high-performance athletic grants that we provide.

We also do things that often people don't see as related to promoting youth in sports, but we do. The Youth Ambassador Program and the NWT Youth Leadership Strategy are all about role modelling, and role modelling health living, and part of healthy living is to actually take part in physical activities. We support activities from birth till the end, and we will continue to do so.

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

QUESTION 867-18(2):
AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on my Member's statement, and I have some questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, I must be very honest with you, I'm gravely concerned that the teachers and the social work programs are in peril no matter what the review process or the outcome is. The Minister has repeatedly stated that the programs have limited success but great expense and that they're not having the intended results, but I'd like further clarification. Mr. Speaker, what issues did the

department expressly identify in these programs and when did they do so? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we've gone through this discussion over time, at our last session as well, that decisions were made and we're moving forward in the best interests of students, in the best interests of education in the Northwest Territories and post-secondary. We continue to support our students here in the North at Aurora College programming, the two programs in particular that were discussed. We continue to support the students from our department as well as through Aurora College to make sure that the students who are in those two programs will succeed, will become workers of the GNWT hopefully, and we continue to support them. I think we've had this discussion long enough that decisions were made and the fact that we're moving forward in the best interests of the students and our education in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his words. I don't know that he answered my question, but we'll move on to my next one. Mr. Speaker, I'm the kind of person who doesn't like to throw the baby out with the bathwater. If something isn't working, I try to fix it. What did the department and Aurora College do to address the issues identified in these programs before they proposed eliminating them altogether?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Aurora College and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment continue to work together on a regular basis to review programs that are offered at three of our campuses, as well as our community learning centres, and we continually work to support and improve programs and student outcomes throughout those three campuses as well as our community learning centres. I'm going to continue to do that work and work together to make sure that we have the best interests of our students and our education in the Northwest Territories.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his words. Again, he didn't answer the question, and I feel like it's going to be similar to what the rec leaders program did, was they kept on moving it and then they got rid of it, so I'll move on to my next set of questions.

Mr. Speaker, under the current timeframe the review will not be completed until March 31, 2018, and recommendations won't be addressed until next fall business plan for 2019. Students and other residents have asked me to help them find out what is going on. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise

the House what will happen to the teachers and social work program in the 2018-2019 school year and before the review results can be implemented?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I've stated earlier, we continue to support the students in the TEP program as well as the social work program. We will continue to commit to making sure that they have every opportunity to succeed here in the Northwest Territories at Aurora College, but also students who are getting an education down south. That we're going to commit to making sure that our students have every opportunity to succeed in whatever programs they're registered in, Mr. Speaker.

I can't speculate at this time what the review is going to say and what those recommendations are going to be, but when we do get those recommendations we will formulate a departmental response and we will share it with committee.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, I understand the department is also currently working on the funding and accountability framework for Aurora College. How can work on accountability framework proceed when potential fundamental changes to the college are being contemplated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Nationally there are standard performance measures such as number of enrolments, graduations, and student satisfaction that can be used for existing and future programs. I recognize that a new accountability framework will need to be informed by the foundational review, and that's where we are heading moving forward. In the interim, the department will continue to work with the college to advance this work, but also work with the college on how do we best serve our students in the Northwest Territories who decide to get educated here in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 868-18(2):

LANDS PROJECT ASSESSMENT POLICY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Lands, who is responsible for the implementation of the Project Assessment Policy. In 2008, this House unanimously endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I see that our government still supports the declaration, but it's not clear what we're actually doing to implement it.

Can the Minister tell me and this House whether there was any consultation or engagement with Indigenous governments in developing and refining the Project Assessment Policy, and if not, why not? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government did not consult with Indigenous organizations with respect to this policy. The policy creates the authority for the government to establish its own internal procedures to meet the requirements of the current legislative environment. Now, of course, ultimately when decisions are made we must and do follow and abide by our responsibility as under section 35 of the Constitution. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that information. Of course, I'm glad that section 35 rights, our government respects them, but we've also supported in this House the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Can the Minister commit to review the Project Assessment Policy to fully incorporate the concept and practice of free, prior and informed consent?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Of course, this policy has been reviewed, not only by Cabinet but by committee, and I think it's the first time we've heard of this specific concern. The government of course does realize and is guided by its obligations under section 35 of the Constitution, and as well our approach to engaging with Aboriginal governments as set out in the respect, recognition, and responsibility document.

Now, one of the issues regarding the UNRIP legislation, or rather the UNRIP UN Resolution, is that it may have an effect on a wide variety of policies. No, we don't incorporate it directly; we are aware of it, but there is also some uncertainty in academic circles as to what it actually means.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. Unfortunately, I didn't hear a commitment that they were going to be reviewing the policy even though he says that we still support the declaration. I'm not prepared to review the policy, but maybe I'll try a different slant here.

In my statement earlier today I pointed out the inconsistency between the lofty and courageous principles in the Project Assessment Policy and how a GNWT interdepartmental committee may operate in assembling technical advice and evidence.

I will just give an example here. If government scientific experts produce evidence that demonstrates a Slave Geological Province road will have an adverse and irreparable impact on the

Bathurst caribou herd, will that information be brought forward during an environmental assessment?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I think or I detect that behind this question is a concern that has been expressed with respect to some former governments, perhaps federal ones, that muzzled scientists. I can assure you that that will not happen with this government.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about muzzling, I guess, but I do not really feel a lot of reassurance by that response. I pointed out the inconsistencies between the principles of the policy and how it may operate in the future. Given those problems that I have pointed out in this House, can the Minister commit to bringing forward the policy to his Cabinet colleagues in an expedient fashion and consult with Indigenous governments to make revisions to ensure public confidence, transparency, and the spirit of reconciliation are maintained?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: This is, of course, an internal policy of the government, but I would like to point out again that it was reviewed thoroughly by committee, and they had certain suggestions. Now, I will say that of course, ultimately this government is guided by section 35 of the Constitution. I do not think we are contemplating another review of the policy. It was reviewed by Cabinet, reviewed by committee, and so the policy is now in place. Of course, if there can be improvements to it, we would always be open to hearing about those types of suggestions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 869-18(2):
FEDERAL SMALL BUSINESS TAX CHANGES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I spoke about the new federal tax regime on small business, and so my questions today are for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, Premiers from around the country are starting to voice their concerns to Ottawa about the proposed changes, and so I would like to ask the Premier: has our government had the opportunity yet to review the 65-page proposed changes, the consultation paper? If so, what is our government's position, or what are our views and thoughts on that consultation paper? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise that our Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Finance has reviewed the federal consultation paper, and we continue to monitor the national discussion. I can clarify that the Premier of Nova Scotia has been very careful about his comments on these tax changes; the Government of BC has expressed concern about the level of consultation; the Governments of Manitoba and Newfoundland have been critical of the federal government.

We as a government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, support small businesses. We recognize small businesses are a very important part of our economy and our population, and we want to ensure that a fair tax system continues across the country, including the Northwest Territories.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate the reply from the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the federal government is calling these "loopholes," and small business in fact are calling them laws, which in fact they are, that allow them to exist as businesses. Going forward, businesses are sharing a fear that these new laws will kind of tax them out of existence, or certainly not incentivize anyone to start a new business. My question for the Premier is: how has our government been communicating so far with small business on this issue? We just returned not long ago from Opportunities North. There were plenty of small businesses there sharing their opinion, so what are we doing to show small business that we support them and that we "have their back?"

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I want to reiterate that what we are talking about are federal tax changes, and the federal government has been consulting with Canada's business community. The federal government is not prone to sharing a lot of information with us on these national initiatives, but certainly as consultation is under way by the Government of Canada, we have not communicated with the business community at this time.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Well, I guess that supports, maybe, the case of my next question. Some governments, some provincial governments, are calling on Ottawa to not rush through this and to extend the consultative period. I am wondering, because we have not had the opportunity to reach out to small business here to date, can our government at least send a message to Ottawa, write a letter to the Prime Minister saying that we have put in some good work up here in the North; we are stimulating small business; we certainly do not want to see our efforts inhibited; and will they extend the consultative period and allow the federal government and the territorial government to collect

some input from small business so that they can have their voice be heard on this matter?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As the Member indicated, many of us were at Opportunities North in Edmonton. I was very pleased to see excellent representation from the North at that forum. We all heard the federal parliamentary secretary, who had just returned from federal Caucus meetings to say to all of those people that were there that they would be making changes, although, at the national stage, the Prime Minister had indicated they were not prepared to make changes. However, I can say that the Government of Canada has committed to share the outcomes of their consultations with provinces and territories.

All Premiers will be attending a First Ministers' Conference in the very near future, and several have indicated they would raise this issue because of the fact that there will be some discussions in that regard. Once we have the information and a clear understanding of where the federal government is going in tax reform, we will develop an appropriate response, including writing a letter. Certainly, when we talk about the economy, we have concerns as a government. We recognize small business is very important. We have stayed away from increasing a tax on small business, and we are quite prepared to work on behalf of small businesses in the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Premier for indicating that he will be raising the issue at upcoming First Ministers' Conferences. Certainly, any time that Ministers are meeting with their federal counterparts, I am going to certainly encourage them to raise this issue on behalf of small business in the North. Again, I appreciate that the Premier is inclusive of writing a letter to show and state our position of support for small business in the North.

However, if all fails and these laws come into enactment, what will our government be prepared to do? If we find that these laws are going to somehow have detrimental effects on the small business community in the North, as a government, what next steps are we prepared to do to maybe mitigate some of those impacts? We certainly do not want to see our small business community start to decline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Once we determine the impact of the new federal tax, recognizing that a federal election is coming in 2019 so I expect there will be something in 2018, once we know what the effect of this new federal tax will be on small businesses, the Government of the Northwest

Territories can look at what appropriate actions we can take.

As everybody knows, as a government, we already support small businesses through a number of economic development programs. We will continue to do so. If there are negative impacts, we will certainly prepare to look at them to see how we can continue to have small business flourish in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 870-18(2):
IMPACTS OF GNWT EMPLOYEE LAYOFFS

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I talked about the layoff of GNWT staff. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance a couple of questions. In this current year of 2017-2018, have the departments of the GNWT been directed to lay off staff for reduction purposes? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2018, the budget included 65 position reductions. Thirty-three employees received their layoff notice. Of the 33, five employees have elected to retire; one employee remains eligible to retire; 15 employees have been redeployed; three employees remain on affected status; and nine employees are on a layoff notice period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: The GNWT has policies to retain a priority status when they are recruiting employees to the GNWT. Does that same set of policies apply when there are layoffs being contemplated by the GNWT in I guess sort of in a reverse sense? Would the GNWT look at the Affirmative Action Policy to lay individuals off?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have a staff retention policy that applies to affected employees, and we take every opportunity to try and find other positions within the Government of Northwest Territories for these employees. The preference would be their home department, but if that is not the case, then we do work to try to find other positions for the employees.

MR. BEAULIEU: I am familiar with the staff retention policy. In fact, I mentioned one of the retention policies in my Member's statement; giving somebody 80 per cent of their salary for one year to go to school. My question is more: would the Affirmative Action Policy apply the same way when we hire individuals? We use a priority; priority one, priority two, and people who do not have a priority. I

am wondering if that policy would apply when you are contemplating layoffs.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: For staffing of positions, we do apply the Affirmative Action Policy for the layoff of employees. We have the Staff Retention Policy. It is just the layoffs; so it does not matter -- that is not the right way to put it. The affirmative action would not apply to layoffs as well.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is something that does not make me happy, but it is what it is, and I will move on to my next question. I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister can commit to doing a socioeconomic analysis of staff members when they are laid off. In my Member's statement, I talked about the loss of actual people to the Northwest Territories. If we lay someone off and they take their family and four of them go down south, we lose transfer payments, which could be potentially higher than the salary that we are saving by reducing that position. Again, my question is: would the Minister commit to applying socioeconomic analysis when they lay individuals off regardless of their status? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I am not willing to commit to something until I know more about it. We have 5,000 employees within the government system. We have had a number of people the last few years who have been affected. I am not sure where the Member is going with this, if they want us to apply what effect it might have on the family or whether we may lose people or not. I do not think that it's something that we currently do, and it is not something that I am willing to commit to do until I know more about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 871-18(2):
HAY RIVER RESERVE HOUSING ISSUES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, in my statement, I made an attempt to try to outline the progress of the housing issue on the Hay River reserve. A term that I use to describe the sense of despair that the constituents feel, in my language what it means is that there is a sense of futility, the acceptance that nothing will be done in regards to housing. That is how some people feel on the reserve. My question is today, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Minister: would the Minister advise the House on the progress that has been made on the 10 units on the Hay River reserve? Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the 10 units on the Hay River reserve were negotiated with the Hay River reserve and the federal government to get the units and the land leases that were held by the federal government. During this fiscal year, we actually will be doing renovations to the building, to some of the units. It will take some time. We currently have one person in those units who was in that unit when we took it over from the K'atlodeeche First Nation band. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I would like to thank the Minister for providing that update. The Minister had stated that there is one occupant one of several houses that had been focused on in terms of getting them ready for people to access them, and they are being renovated. Can the Minister advise what progress has been made on the remaining six homes? I understand there are six other homes as well.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The process to actually get the 10 units under the Housing Corporation has taken a few years, actually. It was a huge process trying to negotiate with the federal government to get the land turned over to the Housing Corporation, so we are still in the process of trying to get the other six units secured from the federal government. I cannot give a timeline. All I do know is it took quite a bit of time to get the initial 10 units, but we are working diligently with the federal government to try to get this done as soon as possible.

MR. NADLI: On the reserve, too, aside from the 10 houses that have been the focal point of this government and the federal government to try to get them to a point where they could be accessible and liveable by people from the reserve, there are other units on the reserve that are abandoned and unoccupied. At the same time, their existence is to the point where they are derelict. What is the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's plans for those houses?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Derelict buildings throughout the Northwest Territories are an issue for the Housing Corporation. Once they reach the stage of being derelict, they are no longer transferable to people. It is not appropriate to give them to people for home ownership, and the cost to renovate them is more substantial than actually to build new units. We are working very actively to address the derelict buildings within the communities. I believe we have over 33 in this fiscal year that we have taken off. We will, every year, be looking at demolishing the derelict buildings, but it is important to note that, every year when we do the housing assessment, more derelict buildings may

be identified. It will be an ongoing issue, but hopefully not to the extent that it is now.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the reserve, and like the whole of the NWT, there is a shortage of housing. How is the department working to address people who are waiting for housing? I understand, in some communities, the waiting list is pretty long. How is the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation addressing people who are seeking to get into housing off the waiting lists? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Earlier in today's session, the honourable MLA spoke about wanting to be able to reach a time that he would no longer have to say that housing on the Hay River Reserve was an issue. I would also like to reach a time that I can say housing within the Northwest Territories will never be an issue; however, I am not so sure that that will come during my term, but I can say that we are working diligently to address the issue of the wait list.

Housing is a major component of peoples' wellbeing. It's critical that people have a house. With the program renewal that we are currently in, there's a number of strategies that we will be implementing. I did speak earlier in this session about having a Minister's statement at the end of the last week of session, but if I keep getting the questions I might not get to do much of a statement. Some of the things that we are doing that we will be talking about is a lease-to-own program for people who are higher-income but still fall within the core needs, so that their units can actually be moved into home ownership, which will free up more space for public housing units. We have the Community Housing Support Program that we're working with Indigenous and/or municipal governments to see if we can work in partnership to address housing needs. We're looking at a brand new home design, which will accommodate larger families and also accommodate people with disabilities or seniors. In the market communities, we're looking at a different model of a rent supplement program that will be available to individuals, both through the government, the Housing Corporation, or else through non-government organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 872-(18)2:
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE
PERIMETER FENCING

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. During the last Capital Estimates, Members approved funds for an enhanced perimeter fence and security upgrades for the North Slave Correctional Centre. I'd like to know whether the work on this fence has been completed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, really there are two fences that we're talking about. There are the improvements that are needed as a result of the critical incident of August 2016, and a budget was approved for this work, but the bids came in a lot more than expected.

With respect to the perimeter fence, the tenders closed on August 29, 2017. I'm not sure whether the contract has been formally awarded yet, but I can find that information out and provide that to the Member opposite. Thank you

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister providing that information at his convenience. It's my understanding from a constituent who is at the jail often as a volunteer that the inmates aren't using the bigger fenced yard where the cultural program is available. Is that because of this fencing issue?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, it is a result of the incident that took place last year. Clearly, enhanced security was required and, as I say, a budget was approved, but the bids came in at far higher than expected. We are now going to a revised approach that hopefully will lead to an enhanced security so that the inmates will be able to use that area again, and hopefully this can be accomplished at a reasonable cost.

MS. GREEN: I wonder if the Minister could tell us when these improvements that were part of the RFP will be completed, when the inmates will be able to use that larger yard again.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that a tender can go out shortly. Again, I will provide information as I receive it.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and my thanks to the Minister. Are we looking at spending more money than we approved in the last Capital Estimates in order to upgrade this perimeter fence? Mahsi.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I would hope not, and that exactly was the problem, is that -- hope springs eternal -- the problem was, frankly, that the bids came in at far, far higher than we had expected. As I said last year, good fences make good

neighbours, but we have to keep costs in mind. We're hoping with respect to the critical incident response by improving the security in that area that a more modest yet appropriate security system can be set up so that the inmates can again use this area of the facility.

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

QUESTION 873-18(2):
SAFE HOUSES FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY
VIOLENCE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, what support and resources can the Department of Health and Social Services offer to communities seeking to establish safe houses for women and children experiencing family violence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services currently contributes about \$2.55 million to family violence shelters across the Northwest Territories. In addition, we make an additional \$200,000 available to help individuals who are in communities where there are no shelters with transport or to get themselves to communities where there are shelters.

In light of the Member's question, I have also taken the additional step of directing the Department of Health and Social Services to work closely with the Department of Infrastructure to explore some of the different federal infrastructure pots that have been identified and announced to see if any of those are dollars we might be able to use to support family violence shelters across the Northwest Territories moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: The Minister already answered my second question, so I'll ask the third. Mr. Speaker, if a woman needs to leave a violent partner and an unsafe home but there is no local safe house or shelter and no resident RCMP officer, what resources are available for her?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, we do have money in our budget to actually support individuals to get to communities where there are some family violence shelters, but also recognizing that the last thing we want to do is having individuals who are fleeing family violence end up homeless. I have had a number of conversations with the Minister responsible for Homelessness about how we can incorporate this particular issue

into our work on homelessness here in the Northwest Territories to see what we can do to support individuals who are fleeing family violence.

Mr. Speaker, there is currently a territorial Family Violence Shelter Network which is made up of the different family violence shelters in the Northwest Territories. I would strongly encourage the Member to talk to his community and have his community get in touch with that family Violence Network to see how they can work together to support those individuals who are fleeing family violence at a community level.

I have directed the department, and on September 18th staff from the department did meet with that network to begin the conversations of a formula funding arrangement to fund these shelters so that we can make sure to get the appropriate dollars to provide the valuable services that they do.

I think there's a good opportunity here for the community at a community level to work with that network to make sure that we're addressing the problem holistically rather than fragmented and individualized. I think there is great opportunity here, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: What kind of response can a family expect when calling for these services, especially on weekends?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As we've moved forward with the single system here in the Northwest Territories, we're focused on providing customer or client services that meet the needs of our residents. I would strongly encourage that the Member have individuals who are facing these challenges get in touch with social services who will hopefully be able to provide them with the guidance to help them get to family violence shelters around the Northwest Territories

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned that they are awaiting federal funding to see if there is anything that will fit these situations here. Can the Minister, in the near future, expect to have family violence shelters like a safe house in our smaller communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The first step is obviously for the Department of Health and Social Services to work with Infrastructure to review the different pots that have been made available by the federal government to see what, if anything, fits nicely that we can actually use towards this end.

Also, as I have already indicated, we are working with the NWT Housing Corporation and the Minister

responsible for Homelessness to make sure that we have opportunities or places where individuals could go when fleeing family violence. We do not know what pots necessarily might be able to cover this, but as this work gets done, I will certainly share the results with the Member and committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 874-18(2):

AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the honourable Member from Nahendeh talked about the fine work the Standing Committee on Social Development has done on the foundational review, and it makes me reconsider some of the Education Minister's comments from last week.

I wonder if he can answer this for me: what does he think the role of the standing committee is? From his statement, he seems to not address the fact that they are working on his timelines to provide the required advice. Further, he has gone on record saying that there was little agreement on what to do with the teacher education program and social work program. There was plenty of agreement on this side of the House: preserve the program and make it work. What is the role of the standing committee in this process, Mr. Speaker? Is it to blame it for delays, or is it to actually work with it to get results? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, there have been some delays in the correspondence back and forth, but we take all of committee's recommendations and suggestions seriously, and we do want to work with all Members in this Legislative Assembly. It is not us versus them. We should all be working together in the best interests of our residents, in the best interests of our students, and of the people that put us in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: We are trying to work with the Minister on this process. Everyone on this side of the House, when we get surprises like eliminating the Aurora College board, with delaying a mandate commitment that has been a mandate commitment from day one, there is a bit of consternation on this side of the House. The mandate makes a commitment, again from day one, to have a renewed strategic plan, some sort of plan for Aurora College. Will that work be done by the end of this term?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned, we are going to get this foundational review. We set a timeline for March 31, 2018, and from that review, we are going to create a departmental response. We are going to share it with committee, we are going to share it with all Members of this Legislative Assembly, and as I mentioned, we are going to be working on a strategic plan going forward for the next 10, 20 years.

MR. TESTART: I think the students expect more than just a plan. They want these programs to be retained, and also our own Skills 4 Success document wants these programs to be retained and effective. We need change now, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask if this contractor the Minister has hired has any experience with transforming educational institutions towards vocational skills, like taking a community college and turning it into a polytechnic or an institution of higher learning. Does this contractor have any experience with that, or are we just looking at an accounting review?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned earlier, as a government and as a department, we do support our students, whether they decided to get their education here in the Northwest Territories or outside the Northwest Territories. We want to make sure that all our students who are taking post-secondary education have that opportunity to succeed, and we are going to continue and commit to making sure that our students have that opportunity.

As we were discussing with our contractors, we are going to be working very closely with them. They will be working very closely with the college to ensure that, when the review is done, it is going to be something that is going to be in the best interests of not only the government, but our partners that we work with and residents of the Northwest Territories, to ensure that we have the best programs and best services in place to make sure that our students succeed. After all, it is about the students. It is about our residents.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is pretty clear it is question period, not answer period, because again, the Minister is not providing answers. My final question: I am going to ask if the Minister could take responsibility for these delays personally and back off the approach he took last week of blaming the standing committee for holding up the process. Will the Minister personally take responsibility for these delays and acknowledge that this work has been delayed since day one? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: This is a consensus government. We all have input into this in working together. If the committee has concerns, we can sit down and we can share some of these e-mails back and forth. If the Members of committee are concerned, we can also table some of our back-and-forth discussions just to make sure that the public understands the process of how we have been going about this foundational review and the timelines that we are trying to make and set. As I mentioned, this is consensus government. We all have a role to play in the decisions that are made in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 875-18(2):
LANDS INTEGRATED RISK-BASED STRATEGIC
PLAN

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned in my Member's statement, my question is to the Minister of Lands. On the issue of a lands integrated risk-based strategy and land framework planning, advancing our progress in the Land Administration Regulatory Forum, what action plans have the department developed in preparation for engagement with all stakeholders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government believes that regional land use plans are the primary instrument to define where certain activities can take place in a specific region or area, and the Member opposite will know that that is a commitment of this government, to attempt to advance that in collaboration with our Aboriginal governments and, in some cases, in collaboration with the federal government. We are attempting to advance land use planning. In some areas, there are defined land use plans that are legally binding. There has been progress; progress is slow, and we are still working on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: That leads me to my next question on settled claim areas. Are there joint planning meetings for the settled claim areas? Let us take the Sahtu for example. We have a settlement claim there with changes or proposed changes on the land regime. Are there regional planning workshops coming up in the near future or within the next 12 months?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I know that the government has approved contribution for land use capacity in the last several years: in 2017-2018, it was \$375,000; in 2016-2017, \$427,000; and in 2015-2016, \$459,000. There is a commitment backed up

with actual financial contribution to advance regional land claims.

Now, I do know also that the Department of Lands held its third annual Land Use Planning Forum in March 2017 to share information and perspective. We are committing both personnel and finances to this important subject.

MR. MCNEELY: Of those resources mentioned and the time frame mentioned, could the Minister elaborate a little bit more on what is being proposed as far as having a land workshop in the Sahtu, dates and times and places?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am uncertain as to what the next steps will be in the Sahtu region, but I can check into that and get back to the Member opposite.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is more of a comment. I look forward to that information, and if the Minister could agree with providing that before the cancellation of this session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I will take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 876-18(2):
SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT
PROGRAM

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week the honourable Member for Deh Cho asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment a series of questions about the Small Community Employment Support Program. I would like to follow up with some questions here today. Mr. Speaker, last session, the Minister said the department was reaching out to various organizations and business communities to see how the Small Community Employment Support Program could be improved. During the budget session, I made the recommendation that we use the new influx of money to do that as job creation because most of the communities I represent cannot afford the percentage points that they need to access the program. Can the Minister please tell us when the survey and study was completed and if the report has been done on the findings? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned last week, the new influx of dollars into the Small Community Employment Support Program came into effect April 1st. We are about six

months into this fiscal year, and we are still looking at how we can support our communities, support our partners so that we can utilize this program. I think it is a little too early on in this fiscal year to have any of that information, but I will make sure that our departments continue to work with our partners, our communities, to make sure that these dollars are being utilized to their full capacity.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. I will take his word that there is no report there, then. However, during the exchange with the Minister and the honourable Member for Deh Cho, we heard that previous funding which was allocated for small communities was not fully utilized. We made a significant increase, influx, of money to the program so that we could create employment and small programs. During the exchange, we heard the department is looking at communities such as Behchoko, Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, and Norman Wells to be allocated to apply for these funds. Can the Minister advise how these communities became "small communities?"

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As a government, we have a responsibility to ensure that all residents, all communities, in the Northwest Territories have an opportunity to access our programs, our services. Because of population sizes, we should not be discriminating or leaving people out. That program, back in the previous years, was not fully utilized. It was about \$1.24 million. We are trying to find ways, innovative and unique ways, to ensure that our communities, our partners in our smallest communities, have that opportunity to have job creation. However, as the government, I do not think that any community, regardless of size, should not be looked at as an opportunity to create jobs in their community. That is one of our mandates, is to create employment throughout the Northwest Territories.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that answer. I guess my next question to the Minister is: are we going to allow Yellowknife to apply for small community employment funds?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: When the new dollars came out, we made some changes within the program, itself, so that we can help all communities. As Members know, the economy has taken a downturn. In some of our regional centres, we have fewer jobs, fewer opportunities, and we want to help every community to be able to create some kind of economy, as well as create jobs in some of these communities. That is our goal. That is our focus. We are going to continue to do that.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. I guess my next question is: are we going to change this program, instead of calling it Small Community Employment Support Program, to "job creation" or "job support program for the Northwest Territories?" Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We are going to continue to stay focused on the Small Community Employment Support Program. As you know, this money came at the last budget. We are going to focus on making sure that those dollars get spent. We are going to take a review after this year on how the funding was allocated and spent this year and whether or not we fully utilized that budget, and we will make some recommendations in the next fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 12-18(2), Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning Report on the Progress Review of the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019; Minister's Statement 186-18(2), Update on the A New Day Program; Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019; Tabled Document 419-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 (Revised), with the Member for Mackenzie Delta in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Members. I call Committee of the Whole to order. Mr. Beaulieu, what is the wish of committee?

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019 with general comments, the Legislative Assembly, the Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs, Lands, Environment and Natural Resources, and Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. We will continue after a short recess. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):

Thank you, committee. I call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I have to do my remarks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): I thought you were going to continue.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am here to provide comments on the GNWT's Capital Estimates, 2018-2019.

The Capital Estimates, 2018-2019, total \$261 million, which includes \$27 million for community infrastructure investments and \$24 million for NWT Housing Corporation projects.

As in previous years, the Capital Estimates, 2018-2019 do not include appropriations for housing infrastructure proposed by the NWT Housing Corporation in 2018-2019. The appropriation for all these investments will be sought during the Legislative Assembly's review of the 2018-2019 Main Estimates. However, the NWT Housing Corporation's Capital Plan, 2018-2019 is included in the Capital Estimates as an information item.

Major highlights include:

- \$115 million for highways, winter roads, bridges, and culverts. This includes funding of \$67 million for the Tlicho all-season road project and \$30 million for Building Canada Plan projects;
- \$44 million for health facility replacements, renovations, and equipment, including funding of \$30.1 million for the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal project;
- \$27.2 million to continue to provide funding to community governments for their infrastructure needs;
- \$13.6 million for new and enhanced information technology functionality and upgrades;
- \$10.7 million for new education facilities and renovations to existing facilities; and

- \$8.8 million for deferred maintenance and energy upgrades to existing GNWT assets.

In addition to the capital funding provided to community governments from the GNWT, in 2018-2019 community governments will also be receiving \$16 million in Gas Tax funding and \$20.4 million from the Clean Water and Waste Water Fund.

Including the funding that is going to community governments, total infrastructure spending in the NWT for 2018-2019 is therefore estimated to be approximately \$349 million.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I would be pleased to answer any questions committee members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

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

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right I have Mr. David Stewart, who is the deputy minister of Finance, and to my left I have Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, deputy secretary to the FMB.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor to general comments. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. First off I'd like to thank the Minister of Finance and his staff for the work that has gone into the capital budget, but I do have some concerns.

I guess a couple of matters in terms of what's in, or what's perhaps not in, the budget. First off, I couldn't find any discussion about the fiscal responsibility policy in the document, and specifically there is a set of calculations that the department goes through to sort out what the envelope is that's available for capital expenditures, and I didn't see those calculations in here, either. I think this has been raised with the department in the past, but I think it would be appropriate to have a section in the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan that discusses how the budget complies with the Fiscal Responsibility Policy and shows us the calculations for what that envelope looks like. I understand that we may get some additional information on that before the conclusion of our consideration of the capital budget.

The second item that I want to raise is the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Now that the corporation has moved really from being more of an arm's-length body to something that is almost in-house, with the board of directors being deputy ministers, I think it is far more appropriate that the Power Corporation be considered in the capital budget, much the same way that the NWT Housing Corporation is, in that it is here as an information item, that there is additional information available to Members to better understand the capital projects that the corporation intends to undertake, and so on. I think that is just a more transparent way of proceeding, and certainly in line with the reorganization with the Power Corporation. I would request that the Minister include that sort of information in next year's capital budget and provide it to Members. In addition, for this year's budget, I would certainly like to see a lot more information about what the Power Corporation is doing and spending.

Now, I would like to move on, Mr. Chair, to some comments about the budget itself, the capital budget, and of course, budgets are always about setting priorities. I think there is no better place to see what a government's priorities are than to look at how it intends to spend its money.

The single largest expenditure in this budget is a \$67 million allocation for the Tlicho all-season road. Before anybody tries to say that I am for or against the road, that is not what this discussion is about. It is about spending priorities. If we are going to find that money within the capital budget, it has to come from somewhere, or something else is probably slipping off of the table somehow. I do have a number of questions that, as we work our way through the various departments, I will be seeking more information about to try to understand where the money was found to fund the \$67 million that will go towards the Tlicho all-season road in this year's capital budget.

As I understand, when I look at page 3 of the capital budget, there are some significant changes in the capital estimates for this year, even compared to the revised estimates for last year, particularly with three departments: Education, Culture and Employment, the spending has declined from \$29 million to \$11 million this year; Environment and Natural Resources, from around \$11 million last year to about \$3 million this year; Health and Social Services, about \$45 million down to about \$14 million. I am sure there are some good explanations for those changes in spending from one year to the next. That is the sort of thing I guess I want to key in on, and whether, indeed, any projects that these departments have been delayed or put off define money for the Tlicho road. I guess that is where I am going to be going with that, is to just understand if other matters have been delayed

or pushed back to provide money for that particular project.

I will also have some questions around the long-term care facilities that are proposed in the capital budget and why Hay River was chosen as a location in the South Slave, and where that might leave people who require long-term care in Fort Smith and perhaps other communities in the South Slave.

I will have some questions for the Department of Justice on the status of the ever-elusive resource centre. MACA provides a lot of funding to community governments for their own capital projects, and while last year we seem to have made some progress on the infrastructure gap for communities, I am not sure what the case is this year. Also, in terms of moving towards a different funding model that is based on communities' needs, I am not sure what progress we are making in that regard as well.

I also see that the NWT Housing Corporation spending is continuing to decline, and I will have some questions about that.

On the Department of Infrastructure budget, I will have some questions around progress on the Yellowknife Airport capital plan and the committees that the deputy minister is supposed to be setting up. I also have questions around whether there is any capital support for Yellowknife Visitor Services.

I believe those are all of the comments that I have to my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not sure if you want me to respond to each Member individually, or if you want me to just wait until the end of all of the general comments and then I can respond to them as a whole, but whatever committee wishes to do is fine by me.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): In that case, we could wait until the end. All right. Next we have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of my comments will be similar to my colleague's, the honourable Member from Frame Lake.

On the issue of the Power Corporation, the Power Corporation is now a de facto government entity, and I am not sure why. We have been told before, when this question has been probed, that the committee can make special arrangements to have the Northwest Territories Power Corporation appear

and present its capital estimates and speak to any specific projects.

I think this is additional work, given that this is not an arm's-length entity anymore. The board is now made up of deputy ministers. I believe the chairperson is here in the Chamber today, Mr. Chair, and the public accounts have also been changed to reflect that NTPC is now, in fact, part of the government's reporting entity. Given all these things, I think it is inappropriate to continue to insist that the Power Corporation be held to a different process. I encourage the Minister to make changes to future capital planning as long as the status of NTPC remains equivalent to the current conditions.

I also have concerns about the capital budget as a whole. I acknowledge that the capital planning cycle exists for a reason, but even given this, the House approves budgets and appropriates money for specific purposes as contained within those estimates. We are also bound to follow policy and legislation that indicates how those budgets are presented and how they are adhered to. In the case of capital, we adhere to the Fiscal Responsibility Policy to ensure that our capital expenditures are pegged to our operational surplus, but we approve capital budgets a year ahead of approving the budget that contains that operational surplus, which leaves us in a curious situation where we are approving capital budgets based on a Fiscal Responsibility Policy that limits our expenditure to those surpluses that are based on projections and not based on what the House appropriates. Again, the House appropriates money for specific purposes, and that is done through votes.

In approving this budget, which I am expecting we will do, perhaps not completely as it is listed today, it is based on a projection. It is not based on a concrete surplus. I think that creates challenges for what this Fiscal Responsibility Policy really means. It is not reported unclearly. If there is a difference between the two budgets that we will only find out until next year, the difference is made up through supplementary reserve spending and other fiscal authority.

Given that, what is the point of having it if we can make it work whenever we need to correct a deficiency within the Fiscal Responsibility Policy? This is just a paper policy. It's so complex that it obfuscates the work we do here, which is giving these budgets proper assessment and ensuring that money that is appropriated is appropriated for specific purposes and those purposes are met by the government. I think we need to take a look at this, a more detailed look, perhaps behind the scenes, but certainly it's worth mentioning now that we've had a couple of kicks at the can on capital estimates.

That being said, I support much of what is being suggested for appropriation here and I will have specific questions for departments, but those higher-level questions of what to make of the Power Corporation not being contained in these estimates; what to make of the Fiscal Responsibility Policy when it's not being clearly articulated, just exists in the background and it seems to be flexible when necessary and rigid when not. That policy also limits our capital expenditures, which means that we have a fixed amount of money to work with each time around.

There may be times when capital needs are required above and beyond operational expenditure, so it is in a way a policy that binds the Assembly in how it appropriates money. I would appreciate if the Minister and his witnesses, at the appropriate time, can speak to some of these concerns and make it clear for members of the public how this policy works and how it leads to not only the stated objective of fiscal responsibility but also how it supports transparency.

My final point on the introductory page in the Main Estimates, page 2, the introduction, the first bullet point of the priorities that this budget supports is "increasing transparency and accountability and strengthening consensus government." If the Minister could explain how this budget does that, I would be appreciative of that, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Next we have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My opening comment to the proposed capital budget at hand is minimal. Coming from a remote area of the Northwest Territories, we're quite drawn to the only industry in town, or the only industry in the area, which is the government itself, and without capital planning allowances for increase of commerce and employment and training opportunities in our area it becomes even more limited. With the departure of industry we are primarily focused on the projects our government is actually doing for the area to stimulate.

In the capital plan we have a facility going into one of the communities, and if we're going to draw and attract professional people in isolated, remote areas we need upgraded and up-to-date facilities for them to feel comfortable in a surrounding on the worksite, as well as living accommodations that are suitable to the needs of long hours he or she has worked in that profession.

Given those factors and the needs of our areas, I see this budget as modest. It's enhancing leverages at the federal level to maximize on capital availability. Last year, and again this year, we're

quite happy to see a number of minor -- some larger centres might call it minor, but in the community of Deline, which has really maximized their programs to fix their streets and roads is remarkable when you look at the end product and the distribution of benefits during the construction of that landmark.

I say to myself when I go there, you've got a nice dust-controlled road, and recap the individuals on the achievements that they've done. They don't see it from this side of the building, they see it from the end user at the community level, and they're quite happy with those smaller projects. It's a good feeling to see that there's a government that is really trying to accommodate the little, medium, and larger centres. Given consideration of those principles, I'm happy to go through the capital discussions with some questions, not any contentious ones. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Next we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I, too, want to start with thanking the Minister for the presentation on the capital plan that is before us. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate, in fact, the government on a couple of projects that were seen as very critical to the territory that we wrapped up in last year's capital plan, and that's the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, which is essentially pretty much done, and then also the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line. Two very important projects to our territory and to the vitality of our territory, and I want to congratulate the government for making those investments and completing those projects.

From a perspective of my own riding, I have to give some thanks to the government for ongoing commitments and investments in Highway No. 4, which is inclusive of Ingraham Trail, and a number of the improvements that they've made out there, as well as the improvements that they've made on the entrance coming in to the city for public safety concerns that I had raised over the past couple of years. Some of those improvements are still ongoing, and I look forward to seeing them completed.

Mr. Chair, by and large I look at capital budgets as a great opportunity to support our small communities. As we heard from my colleague from the Sahtu, it's an opportunity to create some stimulus within the smaller remote regions, it's an excellent opportunity for job creation, and, frankly, it's sustainable investment for the communities.

We know that this year's budget is all-inclusive of about \$350 million, but the challenges that we're looking at is that a lot of that is already committed money. A significant portion of that is carried-over

funding, so those are projects that are already under way.

Also another significant part of that is internal funding that is for the government itself to make improvements. An example is the IT investments and the functionality in IT, so it really it doesn't leave us much as it relates to new money being invested in projects that can help build job creation and sustainability in the communities.

If you look at it in that context, it's a little bit concerning. We would certainly want to see a lot more investment put into job opportunities and creating opportunities for small business and economic development in the smaller communities with capital projects.

The other concern I have when we don't have that much new money being invested is the ongoing discussion around our government's known infrastructure gap. It is very large and continually growing, and it seems to be that, with having limited new capital investment, we're not doing much as it relates to trying to overcome this infrastructure gap, so I am a little bit concerned on that level, again, that the infrastructure gap is just going to continue to grow and that we are not putting meaningful investment to trying to limit its growth and/or reduce it in any way, shape, or form.

Mr. Chair, one of the things that I will support, as previous colleagues spoke about and I have spoken about a number of times, is that it is just simply time for the Power Corporation to start to come and present to the Legislative Assembly and the Members of the Legislative Assembly through the annual business planning cycle, both the capital and the main estimates, to just come and start putting their business cases before us so that we do not have to put the lines of questioning that we have with regard to dissolving boards or whether it is increased power rates or whether it is delayed generators or the like. These are the kinds of things that can be done in camera, in a confidential setting, as are current plan reviews with all other departments. I would strongly suggest that this government support that approach and have the Power Corporation, once and for all, start to report its annual business planning to this government.

One of the other things that I have to raise is the federal government's commitment now that we are starting to see with regard to investing in Canada. It is going to be a fairly large and significant pot of money, \$570 million over an 11- or 12-year commitment, which is good. I mean, this is a good amount of money to see. It is going to come in a number of different pots. We will see public transit. We will see investments in green spending, in social spending, of course in rural and northern

communities, as well as just economic development investment.

It still has a lot of challenges. I guess it is not fully clear how we are going to get our hands on all of this at this point. Some of it might come in the form of regular transfer funding, some through application programs, some through the Canada Infrastructure Bank and these other means. I guess we will just have to see over time how we are going to be able to access these funds. However, along with it comes a little bit of uncertainty. We are challenged all the time in the North with regard to capacity to be able to deliver on a lot of our own projects and a lot of our own spending. We see a lot of our larger employers struggling with the same issues. You know, getting \$570 million over 11 years is going to be a challenge for this government, not only in finding capacity to deliver it, but it is going to be in finding the right O and M capacity to be able to support it thereafter.

I think lastly, Mr. Chair, if there is something that I might just want to add in the process, it is that, when we go through this process of planning capital, one thing that I think is a critical piece of information and a tool that is important for at least Regular Members to have is the five-year capital plan.

We do get to see the 20-year needs assessment kind of plan, but to be able to get our hands on the five-year capital plan so that we can narrow down exactly what it is that our government is looking to invest in is important for us in order to have full meaningful participation in the conversation, that we get our hands on the five-year capital plan so that we can contribute at a better level with regard to input on the capital projects that are forthcoming and being proposed. For now, Mr. Chair, those are really all of the introductory or general comments that I have with regard to the capital budget. I look forward to going through the process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next, we have Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a few general comments. We are glad to have some spending in my riding in the budget, but we are always hoping for more projects, large-scale projects like a new school, for example. I am a bit disappointed that, after six years of hearing Moose Kerr was going to be up for a major retrofit or replacement, all we have is a few repairs to the existing facility, hazmat portables removed, site planning for crush work and landscaping, and a new playground. That did really shock me when I saw this.

There is also a huge need, too: while our children are out playing during recess, there is no fencing

around the school. Our children are playing in the streets, Mr. Chair. It is really unsafe. It is an accident waiting to happen. I am not sure if it is too late to add something in there for fencing, but it has always been a challenge, especially with parking on the streets around the school. We have people, our teachers and visitors, who park right on the street, and it has always been a hazard. You never know when a child is in between those vehicles and could run out into the street into oncoming traffic. It is really unsafe and needs to be addressed.

It was supposed to be, as I mentioned, all the time that I have been here, in the six years, it has been flagged in the red flag list and it has been up for capital assessment. I am hoping next year that we could at least squeeze it in. To me, I am not sure if it is part of their reduction plan or what is going on, but, as I mentioned, I was disappointed.

Also, we have a new facility that will be coming in at James Creek, and I am glad to see that. Hopefully, we could negotiate with the Gwich'in. You know, it has always been common practice that our government usually provides a list to the Gwich'in Tribal Council let them know what is available in the coming year to possibly negotiate. You know, it has always been common practice in all my time sitting on the board of directors. Hopefully, that continues.

Also, all the work to the Dempster, even the Minister was telling me he is getting a lot of compliments about the Dempster. Compared to the Yukon section of the highway, it is like night and day. As I always mention, we have really good crews that maintain our road, even though it is a gravel road.

I thought about it this summer; I know there has been a lot of concern about the highway here, and how much it has changed over the years. It is the same as the section between Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik. If you look at the Dempster with a set of binoculars, you could see the same slumpage we have on this highway coming out of Yellowknife, but you just do not notice it because you are on gravel. I do know that, coming next year, we will have the widening starting from Tsiigehtchic towards Inuvik, so I am sure in the next few years we will straighten that road out, as well.

Just comparing each riding to another, we are always here for the best interests of our constituents and the territory as a whole. I am looking forward to the day that we announce full construction of the Mackenzie Valley highway. It has always been brought up at my constituency meetings that we need to be connected, as well, from Inuvik. I know a few years back the focus was more to Norman Wells, but we have to start thinking ahead of here and connecting up to Inuvik.

I always compare our territory to other territories and provinces. A good example is in the Yukon. Almost all of their communities are connected. It is great for tourism. They even have hydro right from Dawson to Whitehorse, which is over 500 kilometres. Those are the possibilities that we have here in the territory, and we have to start taking advantage of that. Bringing down the cost of living as well. We will not see all the positive things once that investment is made, because right now, you might not realize it in the South, but living out in our region, and because I am in Tsiigehtchic, I see all the traffic that goes to Whitehorse, especially during Christmas and during the summer when people go on holidays. All that money that is going to the Yukon, it could be staying here in our territory. We have people, whether it is buying boats, skidoos, and trucks; all that is going to a different territory, here.

I think it is time that we hopefully secure that funding through the federal government, and start that road as soon as possible here. It will only bring good things to the territory and open up our other resources that we have throughout the territories, as well.

That is some of the comments that I had here. I could write a book here, but I will just leave it at that. Thank you.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, I think during this review I need to touch on a few of the projects. I think they are in the books. I think they are moving forward, and I think we have some of them on record. My objective, I think, is to give comfort to individuals in the communities that have been asking for the various items that do not appear in this year's capital plan, but there is some planning going on that advance some of these projects.

I am looking, for sure, for one of the big items that is not in the capital plan except possibly a study which does not really secure the capital plan, I have discovered, but the Kaw Tay Whee School in. It is something that I think, when the department comes up, I would like to explore. I think the Minister has made a commitment to do the planning study, but I am going to just drill down a little bit more on a project such as that.

A very similar situation with the health centre in Lutselk'e. I know that, again, the community themselves had asked for the project, the school could be advanced ahead of the health centre, and all of that was occurring over the last few years. Now again I want to give comfort to the community that, once this big project of rebuilding the schools

is done, the workers and all the training they have done in there will have another project, at least another project to work on.

I think there is a lot of work being done by the department working with the Detah education authority to look at providing a gym for their school, a proper gym for their school, and that is something, again, I would like to discuss more when the department comes up, and also an adult learning centre.

I think that we need to look at the more contribution type of funding in capital. The capital infrastructure does not have any money for contribution. I always felt that the Community Access Road Program was something that was very valuable to the community in many, many ways. I know that 10 years ago, when I started as MLA, I was campaigning when people were telling me that one of the things that I should really be talking to the government about should I be elected was an all-season road to a place called Austin Lake out of Lutselk'e. I have talked about it quite a few times, and I think there is money flowing in there now. Now, we need to figure out the time frame in which we would like to bring this project in. It is also on the way by Snowdrift River, which is I think a river that has great potential for hydro, mini hydro. That is, I think, something we need to hash out and give assurances to people that these things are still something that we are working on a government.

I think, when we do spend our capital money, we need to do that so that the majority of the benefits start to flow to local and northern businesses. Recently, there have been businesses right here in Yellowknife that indicated they are taking losses in projects that have been delivered by the government, our government, and it appears as though we have gone so far into the deal that there is nothing we could do to, no leverage, I should say, because of legal matters or whatever matters that stand in the way of trying to resolve issues for local businesses who are big employers of individuals in the community. Of course, by community, I am talking about Yellowknife in this instance.

It has not just occurred once. This occurs frequently, where our businesses establish long-term businesses established in the NWT, go into work for companies that are working on behalf of the GNWT building infrastructure. They end up, at the end of the day, some of the businesses take losses, and when they turn to the only place they know, the only reason they got into business is because it appeared to be a government project, we then turn around and tell them that we are not in a position legally, contractually, or whatever the reasons, not in the business to help them.

I think that, as we launch into this next round of capital starting sometime in the next fiscal year, we put some safeguards in there for our people. I think it is important if we can build a huge piece of infrastructure that benefits whichever community that we are building it in, but on the way there, we knock off a couple of our own companies that are here in the North. That leaves a sour taste in people's mouths on getting into GNWT funding projects. I think that should be something we should try to safeguard against.

Finally I want to talk a bit about the highway going into Fort Resolution. I was driving into Fort Resolution on the way in there. I ran into an individual in Fort Providence, and he said to me, "Have you driven that highway since they started sealing the latter sections of it?" I said "I hadn't. That was my first time in there in a couple of months." He called it a "super highway." It is interesting because, when you drive that highway, it is like a super highway. That really good work. I believe that was a negotiated contract with a company that was employing the majority of the people out of Fort Resolution as operators and drivers and everything. That is probably the best highway I have driven on within the NWT.

I think that we have to continue to look at negotiated contracts and find a way that we can do that. This kept the money in the NWT, it kept the money in the community, and it produced a beautiful product. I do not think that this government can just say no all the time to negotiated contracts, and that we are not in a position to negotiate contracts. There are a lot of benefits to negotiated contracts. The people know it, and the community knows that there is a lot of benefit to it.

I think that is something, again, that we need to start looking at. I think the Minister, when he answered a couple of questions from me, said that this negotiated contract may have been something that had been dealt with before this government. I do not know. I think it was during this government, but there is a really good procurement method. For me, I thought that that was the way to go. There are a lot of benefits to it and a really, really good product. I thought that was something that the government should consider moving forward when we are rebuilding highways. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wanted to highlight just a couple of perspectives in terms of thoughts on the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan for this year.

The riding that I represent, of course, is four communities, and mostly small communities that are situated in the southern NWT. We realize that, people who come up here by vehicle during their summer holidays, we are the first communities that they see and visit. At the same time, when people travel up here, we are the first government infrastructure that they see.

It is very important that the government ensures that the facilities and infrastructures that we house for people that come up here is very professional and, at the same time, well-kept. That is including the highways, of course, and ensuring that the infrastructure for tourism is good in a way that people want to come back. Those are a few futures that I think the riding that I represent prides itself in.

That is not to say that we are really reliant on capital projects for four communities. At this point in the NWT, we do not see any large industrial natural resource development projects such as what north of Yellowknife enjoys. For those purposes, infrastructure projects like roads, housing, building schools, come at a time of need when those are allocated and determined in communities' plans within perhaps maybe one or two years. That brings a lot of employment opportunities and business spinoffs to our small little communities that sometimes are sidelined for larger regional centres.

We rely on, of course, government services not only to upkeep our communities, but at the same time ensuring that vital information is flowing and there is communication back and forth. We understand that, in this exercise, in terms of coming up with the capital plan for this year, there has to be a level of expectation of cooperation between the local government bodies plus departments. For example, tourism: we need to ensure that there's a consistent exchange of information between a host community, like a small community with perhaps IT or ITI, in terms of ensuring that we have proper tourism facilities operating.

On that point, we seem to accept the reality that our tourism season is from May to maybe the end of August and then all of the campgrounds are closed. There is still the expectation from the travelling public, especially from southern Canada, that want to come up here during the off-season, but they do not have anywhere to stay in terms of parks. On that same matter, too, we have some world-class potential sites for fishing or other outdoor activities that we could build upon, but perhaps there is just maybe the thinking that it cannot be done. Maybe some people in communities are interested in maybe trying to build upon that. I think governments should be able to listen and try to work with those communities.

The other point that I wanted to make is that I think the last major capital project that we saw in our riding was the building of the Fort Providence health centre, and that was about two years ago. We have not really seen any major infrastructure for the riding, and again, I encourage this government and local leaders to try to come together to ensure that projects such as the building of the health centre or else maybe a community hall in Kakisa comes in a timely manner so that people will benefit from the employment and business opportunities that could arise from it.

Another point that I wanted to highlight is, and I think my colleague had expressed the idea for our reliance on infrastructure projects, including highways, we have to remind ourselves that, with the dawn of the completion of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway, there is still a real need for the Mackenzie Valley highway. It is a given that it will probably open the doors for maybe at some point eventually, if the petroleum industry picks up again, that at least that baseline infrastructure is there. Industry could travel up and down the Mackenzie Valley if there is a highway, and we need to prepare for that eventuality. We cannot dismiss the idea of a Mackenzie Valley highway. More than any other time in the history of the NWT, I think it is needed.

Those are just some comments that I wanted to highlight, and I look forward to the detailed discussions that will happen at a later time. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Next we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, would like to thank the Minister and his staff for making presentations to us during committee meetings and to answer some questions. I am going to talk about a few things about what is not in here, but what needs to be in here.

We talked about junior kindergarten and upgrades, especially the playground fencing on the work sites. I understand that the department has developed a priority with washrooms and that. However, we are talking about safety. We are talking about young kids, and if they have access to these other playgrounds, the potential situation of - I have worked in the field a number of times, and I have heard and seen tragedies out there, unfortunately. Therefore, I wish the department and the government would look at that and actually put investment into that area.

I would like to thank the government for the Samba K'e Health Centre, and it is great to see it is in the plan. However, there is a little bit of an issue in that the health centre used to be one of the community's sources of income, and unfortunately

the Departments of Infrastructure and Health were not able to connect with the communities to get the communities to build this project.

I am not going to talk about that one, but I would like to see, with the Jean Marie Health Centre, the two departments to start working with the communities, the community of Jean Marie, to start looking at what they need to do so they can build it themselves, and they can be leased back to the government. I would like to see this started sooner than later, because this gives an opportunity for the community to have some income and to provide a needed service in the community.

The other issue with Health and Social Services is that in Fort Liard there is a need for a morgue, and right now the body ends up either having to be shipped to Fort Nelson, up to Fort Simpson, or, for whatever reason, they end up in a garage. That is not being very respectful. I know the Department of Health and Social Services is working on it, but I do not see it in the capital plan, and I think it needs to be addressed.

ENR and their communication towers, I see that in the capital plan. I think it is a really good step. However, I have one in Nahanni Butte that we had a little bit of an issue with. I have to give full credit to the department. They did a great job. The Department of MACA did a really good job. I am hoping to be able to do a Member's statement on what they did, but the communication, once they are on the other side of the river, does not work. Presently, Blackstone River has a tower there. An antenna could be put up there that could reach the Fort Liard crossing and area. It could actually address that safety issue, and it would help people on the road, as well, so I would hope that the department would look at this. I know we are looking at a capital plan, and that is probably one of the problems I have, when we see these issues that come up, sometimes we cannot address them through the capital plan process, so I would hope that we are able to address that.

The ITI, I thank the department. They have actually been able to work with the community, and they are going to do a pavilion there, which is great. However, it is not the same type of pavilion that is offered at the Alberta border, the Alberta-territorial border, nor is it the same as the one that is offered in Dawson City; it is manned, and it has an opportunity for employment. I would have hoped that that pavilion would have been built a little bit bigger so that we would have a person there who would be able to promote not just the Nahendeh region and Fort Liard, but the whole territories. A lot of people are looking at that, and that was a concern from them.

I would like to thank the Department of Infrastructure for putting money into Highway No. 7. We have heard in previous Assemblies that it has been a challenge, and it is getting better. It is getting improved, and I would like to thank them for that. However, Highway No. 1, there are some concerns, and I will have some questions for the Minister throughout the rest of the session. There is a section of road from 205 to 220, I believe it is, which was chipsealed, and we have had problems with it. It continues to be a challenge, so I will be asking some questions of the Minister there.

The other part is the Wrigley road. I unfortunately got to travel 1,155 kilometers this year on the southern roads. The only road I did not get to go on was from Fort Resolution Junction to Fort Resolution, and the Wrigley road was probably the most interesting one. We did have some pretty interesting bumps and roller-coaster rides, as some of my constituents say. I would be hoping that the department would be working on it and fixing it up.

I have two last comments. One is about the Housing Corporation. I appreciate the work that the Housing Corporation is doing, but I would like to see the Housing Corporation start looking at tiny homes and getting them into these smaller communities because, unfortunately for me and some of my communities, I have 10 to 12 people in some of the homes and three generations. People like young adults who are looking at trying to get their own homes, into their own places, I think tiny homes would be a solution.

The NWT Power Corporation, I honestly believe it is time, as my other colleagues have mentioned here, for it to be brought into the capital plan. It is no different than the Housing Corporation. The Housing Corporation used to be outside, to my understanding, and now they are brought into it and it is brought here so we can look at it. If it needs to be in camera and done that way, I think we can work it out, but I think it has to be brought forth that way.

Overall, most of my concerns through this budget, I would have to say that the majority of it I am very happy with. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Next, we have Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just want to start by thanking the Minister for bringing this out. Looking at the plans in the four communities, let me start with housing. I know that, no matter how much housing we put into the Northwest Territories, there will still remain a shortage, and I know that all these retrofits that are coming up are definitely helping. I will not say much more on that part.

On the health part, aging in place is important for people, especially in the smaller communities. I see that having more beds in a regional centre, for now, is a good solution to start, but we need to start looking ahead in the future to having more elders age in their homes.

Looking at my region of the Northwest Territories and opening the Northwest Passage, there are no deep sea ports; there are no dock infrastructures in my region to help support whatever may come in the future. We had quite a number of cruise ships pass by our region and stop, and the lack of infrastructure definitely eliminates tourism and infrastructure as well as our sovereignty. I think we need to start to look at that infrastructure. We have been working on highways, and I think we need to become a little bit more diverse and look at the waterways, as well. That is one area where we definitely need to beef up our expertise and start to do more studies and looking at what possibilities lie within having infrastructure along the rivers, lakes, and oceans.

Another thing is airports in my region. I know a lot of airports in the territory are mostly gravel surface. In a sense, that eliminates larger planes with bigger loads where they cannot apply their brakes, especially in my region, where the runways are short. Looking down the road, maybe the possibility of chipsealing or paving one or two of them where they may be tactical to work with the federal government and the Armed Forces in case we need to have a presence, a larger presence, in the Arctic.

Other than that, Mr. Chair, I did not have much to add. I will not take up too much of committee's time, so I just want to say thanks, and I look for to going through the process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. I have no further people on the list, so I will go to the Minister for his response.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank committee. I appreciate committee's input and some of their thoughts on the capital plan. I am just going to touch on a few of the high-level concerns that were raised, and then there was a lot of detailed information that was requested by committee. I think they will have an opportunity to question the appropriate Minister when the time comes. I am not going to try to respond on the department's behalf, but I will touch on a couple.

The Fiscal Responsibility Policy, we can commit to provide the information when we are doing the plan reviewing, and we will also provide detail during the business plan review.

The Power Corporation, that is one we are going to have to have a look at. We are willing to look at the

best way to get information to Members, and we will have to go back and have a look at that. Committee has mentioned it a couple of times. You are well aware of the fact that you can ask for a briefing, an in camera briefing, with the Power Corporation. I think you are aware of that, but then, again, we will look at the best way to try to get Members information.

Tlicho road, the Tlicho project is a P3 project, and we will keep Members informed as the process unfolds. I just want to reassure Members that there were no projects that were stopped to do the Tlicho all-season road because it is a P3 project. That is something that we are looking at as we go forward. I think P3s sometimes are the best way to get best value for the dollar, so I think there is an opportunity there.

Federal investment, and this is a tough one because we do want to get the information to Members as to what the federal investment is going to be and what the criteria is, but it's hard to relay information to Members that we don't have. We're still trying to work with the federal government to get some of the parameters and the criteria around some of the programs they have.

We have to remember, I think one Member mentioned that it is over 11 years, so we need to make sure that we have the capacity to do it. We like to be able to think that we have the capacity to do it and we have the capacity to do it here in the Northwest Territories. I think it was the Member from Tu Nedhe who talked about some of the work that goes to locally owned business, and he spoke specifically to that highway. I mean, there's a classic example of a negotiated contract that was actually done, done well, done on time, done locally.

If we had more opportunities like that, there are countless cases of this government going above and beyond the call of duty to try and help local business, but sometimes they need to be able to do the work and deliver a quality product. If they do that, such as the highway there, then their chances of securing work in the future are improved, and we've seen many cases of that.

There were a couple of comments on the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I, too, would like to see the Mackenzie Valley highway because we know the economic benefits of highway work; I mean, we've seen that with ITH, the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway. We've seen the benefit of having the work.

Because of the economy in the Northwest Territories, the GNWT is starting to be the only game in town, and so we have to ensure that we try and get as much of this work out to local people as

possible. I think with the investments in a highway there's a lot of opportunity there to get a lot of local people working, we've seen that firsthand, and then that should ease our burden in some of our other programs that we have. There's also been a demonstration of that.

I mean, I'm all about trying to get as much work as I can for the people in the NWT, but then we have to ensure that because we're spending taxpayers' money that we get a quality product, and at the end of the day I think if they deliver a quality product then their chances of securing further work improve.

I think that's pretty well it for the high-level stuff. There was one concern about the first bullet on page 2 of the document: increasing transparency and accountability and strengthening consensus government. I mean, that all comes with the process that we go through. We share our O and M budget; we share our capital budget with committee, we get committee's feedback. We're held accountable for that; if we don't deliver a quality product to committee or to this Legislative Assembly or to the Northwest Territories, then we may not be sitting in these seats much longer.

Strengthening consensus government, that goes without saying. I mean, because we share information with Members and get feedback from Members I think it's strengthening our consensus government system that we've been using for a long time, but at the end of the day, I mean, what I want to see and I think what many Members in this room want to see is putting our people to work, and I think it's the most important thing. We'll cross all the t's and dot all the i's when we get them. At the end of the day, it should be about trying to get people in the NWT to work, earn a living, and be less of a burden on the O and M budget of this territorial government.

I'll stop there, Mr. Chair. I mean, I could write a book on my response and I could write a book on everything that the Member for Mackenzie Delta is going to write a book on, but I'll stop there. As we get into detail with the specific departments, I'm sure they'll be able to respond to a lot of his questions. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. It sounded like a novel to me. Seeing no further general comments, we will proceed to a review of the capital estimates by department.

The committee has agreed to begin the review with the Legislative Assembly. I will now open the floor to general comments. Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms; please excuse the witnesses. Thank you,

committee. A little mix-up here, but does committee agree to begin with the Legislative Assembly?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Mr. Speaker, do you have witnesses you'd like to bring into the Chamber?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sergeant-at-Arms, please bring in the witnesses. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Chair. To my right is the clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Tim Mercer, and to my left is Darin Ouellette, director of corporate services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee, we will start on page 7. We will defer the Assembly total until after consideration of the activity summaries. Please turn to page 8. I will now open the floor to general comments. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the information technology projects side, I'm just wondering where the infrastructure support comes for the Legislative Assembly's role in communicating with citizens. Is it through this budget or is it through the technological service centre, which would be a later issue to discuss infrastructure? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Ouellette.

MR. OUELLETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Typically, that type of service and structure is through the operations budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Ouellette. Anything further, Mr. Testart?

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If there is a requirement for new telecommunications equipment or new hardware that goes into broadcasting technology, the microphones that we're using today, am I correct that that is therefore all handled by the O and M budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Ouellette.

MR. OUELLETTE: That would be true under the operations budget up to a certain limit, then it would qualify as capital. Sometimes the projects that we work on we work with the TSC, but for many of the videoconferencing, for instance, those types of projects, they would be typically through our operations budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Ouellette. No further questions from committee? I see none. Committee continues with the Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, infrastructure investment, 2018-2019, capital estimates for \$390,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. We will now turn to page 7. Legislative Assembly, activity, total capital estimates, 2018-2019, capital estimates for \$390,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that that concludes the Legislative Assembly?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you, committee. That concludes the Legislative Assembly. We will now return to Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister have opening comments?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: No opening comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Does the Minister wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Ms. Cochrane, thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce her witness?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my right is Eleanor Young. She is the deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. Committee, I will now open the floor to general comments. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions about when we are likely to see investments in two areas that we have discussed previously. The first is whether there is a requirement for capital investment in the 911 service and, if so, when we will expect to see that in the capital estimates. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. You will not see any capital investments in the 911 during this fiscal year. It will be coming within the next fiscal year. We are still doing the work that needs to take place, such as mapping out communities, figuring out receiving calls, receiving in the communities, et cetera. The actual investment in capital will be in the next fiscal year, if we need any at that time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Office of the Auditor General reviewed the MACA operations and released a report earlier this year, and there were some recommendations that seemed to indicate increased investment, especially in fire safety. Could the Minister tell us whether there are any investments in this capital plan that address the recommendations in that report and, if not, when we are going to see them? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this present moment we actually provide the funding to the communities, and then the communities are responsible for expending any capital in that regard at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it is my understanding that the Office of the Auditor General found that the investment was not adequate to the need, and so there is a need for increased investment. How is the Minister planning to respond to that recommendation? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is just in the middle of developing a strategy that will be finalized in the fall of this year, and at that point we will identify areas that we need to move further on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not sure what strategy the Minister has in mind here, but the Office of the Auditor General was clear that the firefighting capacity in the communities was inadequate. At what point will investments be made

in improving firefighting, that is to say residential or commercial firefighting, in the communities? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, on the recommendations of the Auditor General, we are actually in the process of doing kind of an asset management strategy with all of the communities to assess what assets they have in regards to fire protection; identifying what they have, what they are missing, and the condition of each asset. Until that is done, then we will not know exactly what financial assistance each community will need to address the emergency fire services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am not getting a sense of priority or urgency on this matter from the Minister. Of course, the Office of the Auditor General report was released about six months ago, and the department was well aware of the items that were in the report before it was released. I am looking for a concrete answer as to when the department is going to invest in additional firefighting capacity into the communities. Thank you.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the action plan for the Office of the Auditor General, the work that we are doing with each community is to develop a fire protection strategy for each community. The investments that you would be speaking to would be in the communities, O and M and capital plans primarily, for investment in equipment. That would be either funded out of the funding we provide through here, as you see in the capital, or through other sources of funding that they would get for either infrastructure or O and M. As you are aware, we do have a funding gap that we are trying to address, and that is the strategy that the Minister mentioned earlier. That is part of the overall funding strategy that we are working on with our partners.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer. The money ultimately has to come from somewhere, and as the deputy minister has already pointed out, there is a significant underfunding of the communities, which has been quantified and it is well understood. In addition to the strategy being

developed and produced this fall, when might we see the investment to close that gap? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The strategy to address the funding gap will be done in the fall of this year. However, it will take some time. In the meantime, we are trying to leverage capital infrastructure money for the communities through the federal investments in infrastructure. At that point, when we get that money, we are prioritizing the communities that have a deficit. We are trying to address it through that means, but we will not actually know a timeline and when it will totally be addressed until we have finished developing our plan to address the funding gap, which will be here this fall. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Those are all of my questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next, we have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to talk more about this funding gap. Out of this \$27 million contribution to infrastructure, what is missing? What does the gap represent for, I believe it is called, CPI? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this time, it is approximately \$23 million a year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. I just want to follow up on some of the line of questioning that my honourable friend from Yellowknife Centre made. The Minister made a comment that some of these emergency service needs, such as fire prevention, are going to be addressed by federal infrastructure programs. My understanding is that Infrastructure Canada does not have funding for emergency services infrastructure. Can the Minister address how that is being addressed if it is not through the federal funding programs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we are still in the process of negotiating with the federal government for the new

infrastructure money. Currently, the National Disaster Mitigation Program only funds for flood zones, but we are hoping that they will extend that into other areas of emergency services. At this point, until we finish negotiations with the federal government, we cannot say whether they will be looking at emergency equipment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If they do not, what then? How do we support our communities that have been identified as being in need through the most recent Auditor General Report? If that does not work, what are we going to do? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am hopeful that the federal government will understand that there are more emergency needs besides just flooding, but, if not, then it will be addressed when we look at our plan. Every community has to do a capital plan every year, and so, within that capital planning process, we try to assist them in identifying what their priorities are. When we finish the defining of all the assets, what they have, and their needs within their fire departments, then we will actually look at prioritizing on their capital asset planning process. At that time, then the communities would be responsible for putting aside the money or getting more revenues to purchase those equipment needs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to comment on that approach, it is a prudent solution. However, there may be other infrastructure projects that local communities are focusing on, and, by the department encouraging them to prioritize certain things, it may take away from other stuff that is being planned. If there is any way we could provide the funding directly to them for this specific purpose, I think that would be a more equitable solution than potentially forcing communities to give up on other infrastructure projects that they have been planning for some time, but I will leave that with the Minister.

This funding gap, I have heard we are trying to address it. We have been trying to address it for a long time. The current estimates have flat funding for CPI, and I wonder if the Minister can let me know if the next capital planning cycle will see an

increase to that, or are we going to maintain flat funding until this strategy is tabled? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The difficulty for all departments, including Municipal and Community Affairs, is we are working within the fiscal framework and the economy is not that great. We have to make sure that all of the departments access the funding that they need to be able to provide critical services, so, at this point, we will not be addressing that at this current time.

Like I say, we are looking at the assets that each community has, where we will be trying to prioritize based on that assessment with the communities. It is really sad if communities do want to put in a skating rink or a swimming pool and they have to make a decision between a swimming pool and fire equipment. It is a hard choice to make, but I do believe that most communities make very educated decisions when they look at their capital planning process, and we support them in their decision making. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate what the Minister is saying, but, with all due respect to the Minister, I do not think they should have to make that decision when we have identified a \$23-million gap. I know it is tough economic times, but \$23 million injected into local infrastructure projects is going to make an impact on local economies and help spur the economy. That has been the approach of the federal government, and we are looking at historic growth across Canada. I would encourage the Minister to look at ways to achieve equivalent growth through infrastructure spending in local communities where it can be felt directly, and it should start with a \$23 million investment. Nothing further, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is important to note that not all communities are actually in a deficit position. Some communities are actually in a surplus position. However, any new revenues that we get, we try to focus on the communities that do have the deficit and within the needs-based model that we have developed to assess communities' financial standings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I want to follow up on some of the questions that my colleagues have asked. First off, on 911, did I hear the Minister say then that the capital costs associated with that are not going to happen until 2018-2019? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. At this point, we have not finalized the implementation plan. Before we spend capital money on equipment, et cetera, for 911, like I said, we need to do a lot of work with communities. There are some communities within the Northwest Territories that do not even have street addresses. It is a matter of we cannot send a 911 service and say, "It's the red block behind Charlie's house," you know, so we have work to do before we are ready to develop an NWT-wide 911 service.

Some of the communities, like Yellowknife, for example, are more advanced in that way, but we need to get all communities up to speed before we can implement the plan because we want to avoid confusion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Look, I understand the Minister is committed to 911 and I commend her for doing that and making that step. That's a very strong political commitment that was made in this House. I know that the fall started yesterday, so are we looking at before Christmas we're going to get a present with this plan for a 911? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Just a reminder, all Members it's capital needs, it's not O and M, but I'll bring it over to Minister Cochrane. Thanks.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You will see a strategy before Christmas. I will not be giving Christmas presents to everybody, though. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank Madam Scrooge. She is going to bring the plan forward and it will contain the capital needs for 911, that's great. Is the Minister prepared to look at a supplementary appropriation to get this work started in 2018-2019 rather than wait for 2019-2020? Thanks, Mr. Chair

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a little bit ahead of the game to actually say that. We will have the plan developed before Christmas; after that, once we've developed the plan and identified exactly what we'll need if we need to go for a supplementary appropriation, then we will look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I hope that satisfies Mrs. Claus' comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I sort of feel like Prancer now. I'll be prancing more once we get the plan and a supplementary appropriation, but I encourage the Minister to keep working on this really hard and I respect her efforts on that.

I want to turn to municipal funding, capital funding now, and I recall that the NWTAC worked closely with communities and the department to carry out a municipal funding review and that, rather than just a straight formula, it was going to be much more of a needs-based approach. Does this capital spending move us any closer to that new arrangement? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had made a commitment previously to not change the funding that is given out currently, even though we did do the funding review and found that some communities had surpluses and some communities had deficits. This funding is actually based on the old model. But, like I said, all new monies that come in are based on the newer model where we do address the communities and deficit first before the communities that have a surplus or their needs are met. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that. I understood that there was going to be an action plan developed to move us towards the new model, and of course that new model does not leave any of the small communities behind; they're going to be protected in that, and that's what the municipal funding review concluded and everybody accepted. When are we going to see that action plan move us towards the new model? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated earlier, the action plan will be developed. We're looking at it now and it will be developed and ready to share with standing committee in the fall, prior to Christmas. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't have to bother the Minister anymore then about that one with Christmas analogies. I'm sorry; I didn't really follow the discussion about what level of funding is actually contained in here. There's been no increases whatsoever for the municipal capital funding in this budget over last year; is that what I heard?

Because in last year's budget, as I recall, I think there was a small, maybe it was a 2 per cent increase or something, but there was a gain for municipal governments in the capital budget last year, so this is the exact same funding they got last year or has there been an increase for CPI? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The honourable Member is incorrect. Actually, last year's funding did not have any increase for capital; it was only for operating and maintenance. This year is the same, so we have been trying to leverage the funding through the federal government to address the capital needs at this point.

I think it should be noted, though, at this point the capital for the next two years, the gas tax went up 2 per cent last year, was what he was talking about. With the federal infrastructure money the communities are actually fine for the two years because of the federal infrastructure monies for capital. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just to follow up with one question. There has been no CPI increase in this year's money over last year? I want to confirm that because when I look at the money -- yes, we'll start with that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: The CPI budget has not changed since capital funding was first introduced. In fact, if you look at your year-over-year you'll notice a decrease because we pulled Deline's capital funding out and we now block fund them through

their self-government agreement, so that's the change you notice in the capital budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Young. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't have any further questions. I want to thank the Minister and her witness for answering all my questions really well. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We try our best to answer the questions very well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Anything further, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks, Mr. Chair. My time is up. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next we have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, just along the same line, that has always been a bit of point of contention for me, actually, the capital project money going into the municipalities hasn't changed since the new deal, I think. I think the money has been \$28 million, and then now it's decreased for Deline, but that's actually not really a decrease because that's just a transfer.

I think the Minister's answer is trying to live within the economic realities of today, but I personally see it the opposite way. If you increase the money going into the communities, I think that it would save money. Like money being spent, actual money being spent in the communities, has proven to save money in social spending. If we look at one of the things that they've done a model on was the National Guardianship Program and similar programs like that, where leveraging \$1 was reducing social spending in Australia, as an example, by \$3.70, and the money spent with the Nihat'ni Dene in Lutselk'e was saving \$2.50 per dollar spent in the project.

My feeling is that we should not use that reason for not increasing the budget, because when you spend money, you reduce a lot of -- plus there are all kinds of other benefits, too, to GNWT spending money at the community level. I think that the department should take a serious look at increasing that budget at some point down the road. Like I said, no change. There are quite a few departments that have spent quite a few dollars during those 10 years or 12 years since the new deal has been signed. I do not know the exact year, but I know in 2007 when I became an MLA, there was a new

deal then. There is no change in that money. I guess I cannot ask the Minister to increase the budget now. As a committee, we did not discuss that, so I am not going to ask the Minister on the floor to contemplate that, but for the future, I think that we should consider moving this money up. This is really good spending at the community level, and I think that it is important.

Also, with the same pot of money, I guess my question is that it is at \$27 million some-odd dollars going into the communities. Some have surplus. There is an indication that the reason to have surpluses is they are having some difficulty spending the money. There have been legislation or policies put into effect that will allow the community to use this money to borrow money privately in order to do projects.

I want to ask the Minister if they have any sort of structure that would support the communities who wish to carry out their projects or advance their community projects using this money. I do not know if that is really clear, but that is my question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You look totally different now. It kind of caught me off guard. Yes, the communities actually can use their capital funding to actually borrow money. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs does have guidelines around how that can be utilized, though. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, is that applicable to Aboriginal community governments as well? I recognize that this would be standard for the hamlets and others elected among the entire population, like the town councils and so on. Would that also be applicable, when you have Aboriginal governments that have an agreement with the department to have this money, for spending this money? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. With the Aboriginal governments' designated authorities, they can also use their capital funding to leverage it to borrow monies. Again, they have to agree, and they have to ideally use our guidelines to do that. We have done that with the Yellowknives Dene. We have done that just recently; so it is an option that they can use as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no more questions. Thank you.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just going to the formula funding, I know I remember when this was called the new deal, and I remember that because it was when I first got into leadership. Comparing that to the way things used to operate before that, this is the 10th year that we are operating like this, and I am always hopeful that it continues because of the opportunities we give the communities.

I have seen the benefits first-hand. If you go to all the communities, now there are projects happening all over the place. It creates a lot of employment, as well. I am just hopeful that we could keep this program continuing the way it does. It puts a lot of power into the community and council as well, because the council is the one that does know what the community needs. They all work together with the community to ensure that they have the capital projects in the communities. We have seen the Hamlet of Fort McPherson build a new building a few years back and possibly looking into an arena and other things that the communities need. It is great to see all the residents really thankful for that as well.

I just want to always remind the government of all of the positive things that this fund does. I would not want to see this structure come to an end. I will always make it a habit of encouraging our government to stay the course on this and make it a long-term project. Hopefully it lasts another 10 years or more. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to acknowledge that, yes, it has been 10 years, actually, since we have done the new deal. It is almost time to call it an old deal, but I do not want to bring the connotations with that. Until we actually look at how we are going to address the funding gap, then I can commit that things will stay status quo until we have a solid plan of how we are going to address it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Anything further, Mr. Blake?

MR. BLAKE: That did not sound too promising. You know, as I mentioned, it is a positive program that we have here. The longer we could keep this going, the better it is for our communities. As the

Minister visits around, she, too, will notice. She opened a facility in Fort McPherson, I believe it was last year, and a new shop that they built on budget. That is the main thing, and hopefully projects like this continue through the years. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like we said, we are looking at leveraging the federal monies for infrastructure and then addressing the communities with deficits in them. I do want to stress that Municipal and Community Affairs is about community development and self-determination. The new deal, actually, whatever Minister put that in 10 years ago, in my opinion, did a great job. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a few quick questions. The department accepts annual capital plans from each of the communities, and I am sure that in some instances, the department is very hands-on in helping provide assistance to help them build those capital plans.

First of all, these might be a little bit technical in nature, but along with building and developing those capital plans, are each of the communities responsible for developing an asset management plan so that they can track the life cycle costing of the investments that their capital plan is making? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it is important for all of the communities to actually do the Asset Management Strategy. It is a requirement under the Federal Gas Tax Fund. We are right now piloting 10 communities with the Asset Management Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is that 10 in addition to a number of them that do this already? How many communities in total do we have that provide asset management plans? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The federal government actually gave money to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to develop an Asset Management Strategy

checklist for communities. The 10 that we're doing is total 10 for this time. We're just starting that, so each year we'll be doing more, but our goal is to have all communities implement it because it is a requirement from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's positive news; I'm happy to hear that. I know it's a critical tool to help communities identify their infrastructure gaps, so that leads me to my next question: having a number of these communities not have asset management plans, are we aware of each community's actual infrastructure gap? If we are, how have we determined that without an asset management plan? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll let the deputy minister, Eleanor Young, address that answer.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of the funding review that we did in partnership with the NWT Association of Communities, we developed a 25-year needs assessment on all core infrastructure for all communities and looked at working with their insurance program. We also looked at when all of that infrastructure would require key investments, replacement, or retrofit, and that was how we developed the current estimate of the \$23 million a year shortfall currently. Again, that's not counting the phase 1 infrastructure funding, but that is how that number was developed, was we used core infrastructure for all communities where its investment was required and then developed that infrastructure deficit analysis.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: That's great. Thank you for that information in reply to that question; that's insightful. I guess I'll stem off of the capital plan to ask about communities' energy plans.

Every community energy plan has an infrastructure component to it. My question is: are any of the communities' energy plans included in their annual capital plan needs? For example, if they've identified that their community government office needs to replace their traditional boiler with a pellet boiler, is that identified as part of their capital plan? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, starting this year we're -- I should backtrack for a second. Every year when we get a community's capital plan we do what's called a peer review, and that is how we've been feeding information back to the community about energy considerations, climate change considerations, and things of that nature. Starting this year, we've actually changed it so that we have a checklist that as we do the capital plan review with the community we will check the discussion on each of those items off as we go through the capital plan review so that it's done as they develop the capital plan instead of feedback after they've developed the capital plan. That's how we intend to address that starting this year, moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and again thank you for the explanation. That sounds like an efficient thing to do on a go-forward basis.

Next question is we're aware now of significant federal funding that's going to be available and there has been some line of questioning earlier about how we might be able to access some of those new funds. We're aware that some of it will not be eligible for things like housing infrastructure, emergency services infrastructure, et cetera, but we just talked about community energy plans. There is going to be significant amount of funding available for green investment. There's a rural and northern communities component. How much of this \$570 million over 11 years is going to actually get into, well, I don't know if it would be MACA's hands, but how much of it is actually going to get down into the community level? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point actually I can't give you a figure because we're still in the process of negotiations with the federal government, so until the federal government has signed off and agreed where we can use the infrastructure monies, then I can't say where that money will be going. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think, just as a general comment, what we're hearing from the government, and now we're probably going to hear this department-by-department, is that there's still a lot of uncertainty around these federal funds. I

don't know what to say about that in terms of do your best I suppose, and I know we are, in terms of trying to solidify how we will get accessibility to these funds so that we can start making commitments and provide certainty to our communities. I'll just close with that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I should note that, yes, although we don't have finalized on where the Phase 2 of the Invest in Canada Plan funding will go, we do have still 29 communities that are still working on their infrastructure plans or projects from the Phase 1, so the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund, which was almost \$52 million, and then the Public Transit Infrastructure money, which was \$320,000. Those projects are supposed to be done at the end of March 2018, so some communities are still working on those. That's just a note. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Next we have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to add to my previous colleague's comments on access and capital from the national programs, is it the department's intention to review community-by-community on their capital improvement needs? Say, for example, taking an old boiler, a diesel-heated fire boiler, from one of the facilities and turning it into something a little bit more greener such as biomass, for example? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, every community is expected to do a capital plan on an annual basis within that. That capital planning process looks at not only what communities need, but also the infrastructure that's in place and how long they're serviceable for, when they will need to be restructured, climate change, addressing climate change, addressing energy conservation, so all that is taken into consideration during the community's capital planning process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Noting the clock, committee members, I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister Cochrane, and thank you to your witness. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness from the Chambers. Thank you.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, your Committee has been considering Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019, and would like to report progress. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do we have a seconder? The Member for Deh Cho. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Mahsi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
12. Petitions
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

- Committee Report 12-18(2), Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning Report on the Progress Review of the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019
- Minister's Statement 186-18(2), Update on the A New Day Program
- Tabled Document 416-18(2), GNWT Capital Estimates 2018-2019
- Tabled Document 419-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 (Revised)

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 Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned 6:04 p.m.