



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**18<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2018**

Pages 3261 – 3304

**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

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*Minister Responsible for Seniors*  
*Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities*  
*Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

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(Sahtu)

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*Minister Responsible for Youth*

**Mr. Michael Nadli**

(Deh Cho)

**Mr. Herbert Nakimayak**

(Nunakput)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

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(Hay River North)

**Mr. Kieron Testart**

(Kam Lake)

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(Nahendeh)

**Mr. Cory Vanthuynne**

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 20, 2018****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 30-18(3):  
WASTE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories committed in its mandate to develop a strategy to manage the resources and potential economic and environmental benefits derived from household, commercial, and industrial garbage from private sector sources in our municipalities.

As part of fulfilling this commitment, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is currently engaging residents of the Northwest Territories on the development of a Waste Resource Management Strategy. We have already seen success with removing recyclables and electronics from our landfills. More than 24 million beverage containers were returned for recycling across the NWT in 2016-2017, and more than 112 tonnes of electronics were collected through the Electronics Recycling Program. On top of that, an estimated 6.6 million single-use retail bags were kept out of landfills and off the land.

A Waste Resource Management Strategy for the NWT will continue the work that we and our partners have accomplished together to protect our environment. Meetings have been taking place in communities across the territory over the past several weeks to hear from Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments, residents, and businesses on how we can best manage waste in the NWT. Residents can also provide feedback through an online survey until February 28 by visiting the ENR website.

The Waste Resource Management Strategy will serve as our 10-year roadmap to reduce waste generated and disposed of in the NWT, extend the

life of our landfills, and help to prevent waste from contaminating our environment. It will also set the stage to reduce our government's long-term liabilities and the costs associated with the clean-up of hazardous waste. In addition, Mr. Speaker, good recycling programs reduce the energy needed to make new products, and proper composting reduces the emission of methane, both of which will help us in the reduction of greenhouse gases for the NWT.

The strategy will guide us toward building a greener economy by exploring opportunities for businesses to specialize in waste management. Throughout this process, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will continue to work with our partners and NWT residents to identify potential areas of economic benefit and demonstrate how sound waste diversion programs can contribute to a sustainable NWT economy.

Mr. Speaker, a Waste Resource Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories has the potential to benefit our economy while improving the lives of residents by keeping communities and the environment safe and healthy. Our government greatly appreciates the input of our residents and stakeholders to help shape the future of sustainable waste management in the Northwest Territories. The strategy and its implementation plan are expected to be completed by spring 2019. I look forward to sharing the outcomes of our public engagements once they are finalized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 31-18(3):  
CANADA'S OUTSTANDING PRINCIPALS AWARD**

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Kate Powell, principal of Deninu School in Fort Resolution, on being recognized as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2018. Principals who receive this award are nominated by their colleagues, school staff, and community members. She is the 14<sup>th</sup> principal in the Northwest Territories to receive this honour.

Ms. Powell is a committed educator who is always searching for new educational experiences for the students and staff of her school. In the past, Deninu School has had attendance issues, students were alienated and disengaged, and there was high staff turnover. Her collaborative approach to education and ability to lead by example has changed the school into a vibrant hub of activity, learning, and interaction.

Kate Powell began working as a literacy coach at Deninu School 10 years ago. In 2012, Ms. Powell was part of the Deninu School team who received the Premier's Award for Excellence. She herself received the Ministerial Literacy Award in the educator category, jointly with a colleague. That year, she became the principal of Deninu School.

In 2014, under her leadership, the students of her school were awarded the Ministerial Literacy Award for their efforts in revitalizing the Chipewyan language in their community. While she was doing all of this, she also earned her Master's degree in Education in 2015, specializing in curriculum and instruction.

Most of the students at Deninu School are Indigenous. Ms. Powell has worked tirelessly to include art, sports, language, and activities reflecting the culture and traditions of the community. Dene elders are honoured and welcomed into the school, and the new Government of the Northwest Territories Our Languages curriculum is being implemented.

Mr. Speaker, as Deninu School moves towards fully Indigenous education, Ms. Powell actively promotes the Dene laws and established the Dene Peacekeepers, a group of staff and community partners who encourage young people to take responsibility for their behaviour through justice circles and restitution. She encourages all her staff to learn the Chipewyan language, facilitates the community Interagency Committee, supports the Deninu Jiggers club, and established an annual Dene Hand Games Tournament.

Ms. Powell promotes heritage fairs and brought the annual Canada-Wide Science Fair to the South Slave. Her students have consistently won awards at this fair. At the national level, her students were recognized for their research project on the impact of alcohol in the community. Participation in these fairs has resulted in Deninu students bringing home national medals and university scholarships two years in a row.

Ms. Powell secured funding to construct a welding shop in the school, expanded elective courses, and encouraged exchange visits from students in other parts of the country. She promotes courses available to her students through the Northern

Distance Learning program. One recent Indigenous graduate of this program is now transitioning into medical school. Kate Powell has worked very hard to build a strong and dedicated team focused on student success. She has welcomed the District Education Authority, Deninu Kue First Nation, partner agencies, and parents to Community Education Planning days to provide input into priorities for school improvement. Student achievement has improved significantly.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to review the award nomination documents. Words like fearless, strategic, committed, inclusive, innovation, warmth, and leadership were threaded through all of these documents. An excerpt from one of them reads, "Kate is an example to our children, a mentor to our teachers, a champion for our traditional medicines and healing, and a friend to everyone. I am merely one of the lives that she has influenced throughout her daily efforts. She is an inspiration and continues to succeed in spite of considerable odds."

Ms. Powell was a member of the Northwest Territories Education Renewal and Innovation Committee. She has truly embraced the principles behind education renewal. Her ground-breaking approaches to teaching and learning, and her commitment to her students, community, and excellence in education, make Ms. Powell a shining example of the impact one educator can have on the lives of others. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Education Week in the Northwest Territories, please join me in congratulating Ms. Kate Powell on her well-deserved award as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 32-18(3):  
UPDATE ON THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
DISABILITY FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to ensure that effective supports and programs are available for persons with disabilities. In March 2016, our government initiated the Disability Program Review and Renewal Project to identify the status of current services, gaps in services, and opportunities for improvements through the development of a new strategic framework and five-year action plan.

The development of this framework has been the product of a partnership between the Government of the NWT and our disability partners from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind Alberta – NWT Office; the Hay River Persons with Disabilities Committee; the NWT Disabilities Council; the Yellowknife Association of Community Living; the

NWT Seniors Society; the Foster Family Coalition of the NWT; and the NWT Association of Communities. The perspectives, knowledge, and commitment of these organizations were instrumental in the creation of the framework, which we are publicly releasing today. The framework is based on the fundamental belief that every person with a disability has the right to full citizenship and opportunity. It outlines our shared vision, values, principles, and goals, and sets direction for our future actions.

The framework is founded on four interconnected goals that represent and give meaning to our shared vision and commitment. These goals support outcomes that are person- and family-centred; that facilitate inclusion and accessibility; that contribute to changing attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding disabilities through awareness, education, and training; and that ensure a whole-of-government approach through coordination, evaluation, and reporting. These goals will shape and guide our priority objectives and associated actions in the Disability Action Plan that is currently being developed.

Along with the framework, we are releasing a companion document, Disability Matters, which provides a short summary of the direction we will be undertaking. Mr. Speaker, disability influences all of us, directly or indirectly. Programs and services for persons with disabilities mean many different things to many different people. Each individual accesses different services based on their wants and needs. Sometimes, the largest barrier is knowing where to start when trying to access disability programming and supports. This is why we are also releasing today the GNWT Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities Inventory.

The inventory is a resource that outlines programs and services that are available to persons with disabilities through GNWT departments, agencies, and those delivered through non-government organizations throughout the Northwest Territories. The inventory will be updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is current and responsive.

We are also finalizing a five-year Disabilities Action Plan that builds on the goals established within the framework and focuses on existing strengths in our system. It looks at improving communication and collaboration, increasing access to disability-related programs and services, while addressing the social determinants of health. This action plan will be released in the near future. Mr. Speaker, achieving our vision will require continued collaboration with our partners in the disability sector. It is only through continuing engagement that we can create programs and services that promote equity, participation, accessibility, and inclusion for all NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I move, pursuant to rule 36(3), seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that the Minister's statement just delivered be moved into the Committee of the Whole for discussion. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The Minister's statement on NWT Disability Framework and Action Plan has been moved to Committee of the Whole for further discussion. Masi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FAMILY PLANNING SUPPORT AND BENEFITS

**MS. GREEN:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about a situation in which universal health coverage is not universal in the NWT. This government perpetuates a two-tier service for family planning. The women who are losing out on birth control and medical abortion live on low income or have no income of their own. This vulnerable group is non-Indigenous and they are often new Canadians. Our health system is failing them.

The Non-Insured Health Benefits program gives Indigenous women access to birth control of all kinds and pregnancy termination services at no charge, but women who don't have work-related health benefits of their own or through their partner are not covered. In fact, Extended Health Benefits specifically excludes these costs. A non-Indigenous woman with no benefits has to cover the cost of birth control at her own expense, and it is expensive. For example, an IUD is about \$400. The new abortion pill is about \$425.

This two-tier approach came to my attention last month when I read that the abortion pill, Mifegymiso, is part of the suite of reproductive health choices offered on a universal basis in five provinces. The drug has been available in the NWT since last spring. Doctors at the Yellowknife-based Northern Options for Women program may prescribe the pill to a woman who wants to terminate a very early-stage pregnancy. A doctor or midwife supervises the use of the medication. This pill has become a preferred alternative for women rather than invasive surgical terminations. The

medication also provides women with a choice of treatment in a regional center, provided that there is a doctor or midwife present. Treatment closer to home is obviously preferred by women and is less expensive for the health authority to provide.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is unacceptable, inconsistent, and it does not make sense. Women have universal access to surgical termination of pregnancies, but there is no universal access to pregnancy prevention or the less expensive and invasive medical forms of pregnancy termination. Canadians pride themselves on having access to universal health care, but what we are offering in the NWT is not universal. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi. What we're offering in the NWT is not universal. It leaves a group of vulnerable, low, and no-income women without birth control and without reproduction choice. I will have questions for the Minister of Health. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CULTURAL EXPO

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to call attention to a national event that will take place in Edmonton, Alberta, this fall from September 28<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>. It's called the National Indigenous Cultural Expo, or NICE for short.

Mr. Speaker, the event is a spin-off from last year's National Gathering of Elders. About 5,000 people attended this as elders discussed reconciliation, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, climate change, and then many other topics important to Indigenous people. A special aspect of the gathering is that they've included First Nations, Metis, and Inuit elders.

This year's gathering is not so heavy. It's more a celebration of the culture and arts, with a national fashion show, a pow-wow, fiddling, jigging, throat singing, Arctic sports, hand games, and drum competitions. There will also be a national dialogue on child and family aspects between First Nation, Metis, and Inuit participants, a youth and elder's forum, as well as a trade show. Organizers are anticipating attendance of about 10,000 people. They are planning "the biggest and most dynamic cultural expo that Canada has ever seen."

Mr. Speaker, many national elders will be invited, from the National Inuit leader, the National Metis

leader, and also the event chief, as well as the Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, the cost of such a gathering is substantial and the budget for the event is about \$1.7 million. Fundraising is expected to supply about 40 per cent of the amount, with the rest coming from sponsors.

Mr. Speaker, the event is being planned by a committee of the representatives from Treaty 6, 7, and 9 First Nations, as well as Metis and Inuit of Canada. Mr. Speaker, gatherings like this signal that reconciliation is happening in Canada despite the extremely disheartening events that justifiably become big news. In my grandparents' time, an event like the National Indigenous Cultural Expo would simply be a dream. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANNABIS LEGISLATION

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada's legislation is moving forward in almost every other jurisdiction, and even though we are moving slower than some, we finally have a "way forward." Public engagement was an important step in understanding the concerns of residents before developing legislation for the Northwest Territories. I don't take issue with that, but it would seem that it was less about engaging our constituents on their opinions and more about legitimizing the government-administered framework for cannabis regulation and retail operation instead of a true, grassroots-based consultation.

Cannabis should still be legal by June, but with re-tailed purchasing still being pushed back to at least August, there is still time to get this right, Mr. Speaker. With the cannabis legislation in the Northwest Territories "what we heard" report clearly indicating a split down the middle on how cannabis should be sold, we can all agree that we must provide a safe and secure retail regime for the adult purchase of cannabis in principle, even if we are somewhat split on how that rolls out operationally.

If we intend to provide for real, true, local options to establish cannabis distribution, a private sector solution must be considered. Either that or a real partnership with local people. This framework will benefit Northerners, and not just enrich the government's coffers. Directly south of us, Albertans have two options for purchasing retail recreational cannabis; privately run retail stores, and government-operated online sales.

Mr. Speaker, this model has the best of both worlds, establishing a whole new private industry while also allowing the government to still directly benefit from a retail operation. More, too, it will

ensure that all sales remain local, and the current model will have a large amount of mail order sales being made outside our jurisdiction and possibly allow us the ability to tax those purchases.

Cannabis cafes and lounges in Alberta will not be permitted until July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the legislation does give the authority to regulate these forms of establishments should the government decide to bring them forward at a later date. This is something we should consider. As well, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has agreed to give the provinces and territories a 75 per cent share of tax revenues on the sale of legalized marijuana, but we have yet to come to a revenue sharing agreement with either Indigenous governments or municipal governments.

I look forward to seeing this long-promised legislation shortly in this sitting of the House and the work with committees to improve upon this legislation and establish clear rules of the retail of cannabis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROCUREMENT POLICIES AND IMPACTS ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, without question, non-governmental organization, or NGOs, provide essential and cost-effective services to the people of the Northwest Territories. These NGOs are sometimes a product of community-minded individuals who care about giving back to their fellow citizens, while other NGOs are creations of specialized services. What these NGOs contribute in taxpayer savings is hard to qualify, but it's sufficient to say that they can do much more with less than the GNWT can on any given day.

Mr. Speaker, last week in the House there was a heated exchange of questions around the GNWT procurement practices and the Business Incentive Policy. What was not mentioned, but is equally important, is the growing concern NGOs have with the current procurement policies and our BIP process. Touted as a "grey area" in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, questions brought up went unanswered. Today, years later, the concept that NGOs are unable to apply for BIP status, thus excluding them from competitively applying in the GNWT procurement process, has gone unresolved.

Mr. Speaker, the government of the day claimed publicly that, because NGOs don't pay taxes and because some receive funding or non-cash incentives, NGOs are excluded from registering for BIP. They were told then, as they are today, that in

order to survive in this competitive world they would have to create a commercial business arm of their mandate; incorporate; keep a separate set of books; and essentially, Mr. Speaker, forgo potential contribution programs or other governmental-based incentives. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the Business Incentive Policy was on political shaky ground back in 2008 and for almost 10 years now has not been fully reviewed to keep up with the times. Furthermore, this policy is now in contravention of the Societies Act, where section 4 of this act clearly states the registrar can issue a certificate stating that the society is incorporated. Mr. Speaker, this act clearly demonstrates that a society or NGO can be deemed incorporated, yet our rigid and unfair Business Incentive Policy registration procedures doesn't recognize this law.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the NGOs are not looking for exclusivity in our procurement BIP policy process. They are merely looking for fair and competitive opportunity.

Mr. Speaker I will have questions later today for the Minister responsible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FUNDING FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ARTS STRATEGY

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like other Dene communities in the Northwest Territories, the Sahtu Dene display great artistic abilities and traditionally created sewn items from tanned hides.

Mr. Speaker, supports for arts in general can be seen throughout the Northwest Territories. The 2014-2015 fiscal year was a very busy one. ITI contributed through the SEED program to the Sahtu and to the NWT Arts registered database seen 84 local artists. Examples of displayed art can be seen at every Sahtu Air terminal building in the region. The art products are unique and attractive.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Territories Arts Strategy is a joint initiative of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. This initiative is producing authentic arts and crafts. Examples can be displayed and sold at the Inuvik Great Northern Arts Festival.

Arts and crafts are a vibrant part of our Northwest Territories economy, and advertising our northern image and cultural heritage must be built on. What we have, restructuring through changes to the Western Lottery reviews would only rearrange

capital. It should be viewed as maximum program returns and preservation of the unique industry. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, imagine a young woman in a small community who takes an online code-writing program and then develops an app to teach people her traditional language. That app may cost \$5 to download on any smartphone, tablet, or computer around the world.

Mr. Speaker, here is a number that will boggle your mind. The total number of app downloads in 2017 was 197 billion. So, let's say a traditional language app could get a thousand downloads. Mr. Speaker, at \$5 per download, that young woman's creative idea has earned her \$5,000.

Now, imagine a young man who learns from the traditional knowledge of the elders about how to build a teepee. From that knowledge, he is inspired to help his community overcome housing challenges. Eventually, he dreams of becoming an architect. Maybe through online education and mentoring from a northern engineer he goes on to develop housing that satisfies modern housing needs and also allows Indigenous people to live a more traditional lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about economic diversification through developing a knowledge-based economy. That is an economy in which growth comes from quantity, quality, and accessibility of information instead of means of production. Like the examples I provided, it is innovative and it produces intellectual products, knowledge, and information, which in turn can be sold.

Mr. Speaker, innovation and technology does not discriminate against industry. The NWT is unique. In this uniqueness, we have opportunities to develop innovation. Climate change is impacting our people, our communities, and our infrastructure more than most jurisdictions on earth. We need to be at the centre of solutions that mitigate these impacts. We need to develop creative and environmentally safe ways to extract our world-class resources. Agriculture is now a science. Milder temperatures will allow new seeds and soil conditions to be developed, extending our growing seasons here in the North.

Mr. Speaker, these are home-grown challenges. They can be met by exposing Northerners of all ages to information, knowledge, and tools that will build creative minds and skills needed to overcome them. Let's look for ways to build our people's knowledge and creativity and the tools that the modern world offers. Future generations and our growing diversified economy stand to benefit greatly from the business of knowledge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT PROVIDENCE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The term "aging infrastructure" is one we hear a lot in this Assembly, but very rarely is it linked to the needs of small communities. Most do not have a lot of infrastructure. Much of what small communities do have is aging and will need to be replaced.

Exhibit A today is the water intake and treatment plant in Fort Providence, operated and maintained by the Hamlet of Fort Providence. The plant was built in the 1970s. It is located at the end of the Providence Narrows, where the current of the Mackenzie is fastest and strongest. The water line into the treatment plant has caused problems for some time. It was installed in 1976 and is still in use after a replacement intake in 2004 failed and had to be abandoned. Low water levels and ice have both caused problems.

From the treatment plant, water is trucked to households and businesses. Of course, the size of each water tank limits water use, especially for doing laundry and taking showers or baths. It is far from a modern system. The water system is frustrating for the hamlet. The study was done and a decision was made to replace the intake. Further studies are ongoing to assess river hydrology and geotechnical issues. This work is partially funded by the community's infrastructure fund. The intake project is likely to be the first step in a long process of bringing the water and sewer systems to current standards and improve its reliability. There is a great deal of work to be done, and I am concerned about how long it might take. Alternative sites for a water treatment plant are being considered, as is a reservoir system. There are many demands on the Community Infrastructure Fund, and water projects may tax its capacity.

Mr. Speaker, we live on one of the greatest rivers in the world, a watershed that serves one fifth of Canada, and yet Fort Providence lacks a reliable system for getting water for the community. There

is something wrong with this picture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
AMENDMENTS TO THE CITIES, TOWNS AND  
VILLAGES ACT FOR A HOTEL TAX LEVY**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Last weekend the NWT Association of Communities met in Hay River for its annual general meeting. A resolution calling on the territorial government to pass amendments to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act that would empower tax-based communities to collect a levy was passed in 2010. That is eight years, or two Legislative Assemblies, ago.

The City of Yellowknife has requested this change countless times. In October 2016 council passed a motion calling for the change and wrote the MACA Minister to strongly request action. What we are really talking about here, Mr. Speaker, is a small addition to the list of legislative powers found in section 70(1) of the act, to give the tax-based communities the ability to bring in a hotel levy and to administer the funding.

The MACA Minister said in this House that a bill to amend the CTV Act is expected in the May-June session. That would put passage of a law down to October at the earliest. The Minister has said that the delay is needed to consult with stakeholders, including the hotel sector. Consultations with the hotel industry have been going on since at least 2010.

With the closure of the Northern Frontier Visitors' Centre last fall, the city stepped up to open a tourism information centre. The city runs this with \$161,000 in territorial funding, and they top it up themselves, as well.

That is nowhere near enough to meet the expense of a visitors' centre here in Yellowknife. ITI spends \$227,000 a year for three seasonal staff plus operating expenses in Dawson City, Yukon, but the NWT community with the most tourism has to top up revenues itself and would like to top them up even further with a hotel levy, with CTV Act amendments, if that happens soon enough.

We have given authority to our local governments. When they need this authority improved or amended, it is our responsibility to act, and promptly. This responsibility has been made even more acute by our government's withdrawal from tourism visitors' services, downloading the financial burden on the city.

October is too long to wait to create the ability to raise needed funds to respond and promote tourism. We need a bill soon, and hopefully before the end of this sitting, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs later today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my disability statement, I would like to acknowledge visitors in the gallery who were able to take time out of their busy schedules to be with us here today. First off, I would like to recognize Denise McKee, who is the executive director of the NWT Disabilities Council, as well as members of the board Cornelius Van Dyke, who is vice chair, and Judy Sharp, who is treasurer. I would also like to recognize Ben Russo, who is the vice chairperson of the Yellowknife Association for Community Living, as well as Lynn Elkin from the association. I would like to recognize Laurie McLean, who is the facilitator with the NWT MS Society; Barb Hood, who is the executive director from the NWT Seniors Society; and Tammy Roberts, who is the executive director of the Foster Family Association. I thank them all for their hard work and commitment to developing the disability framework and other documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Kate Powell, principal from Deninu School in Fort Resolution. I would also like to recognize my new CA, Pascal Erasmus, who is in the gallery today. I would like to recognize Mero Sundberg, interpreter from Detah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize one of Hay River's entrepreneurs and a Hay River North constituent, Mr. Jeff Griffiths.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to recognize Barb Hood, resident of Yellowknife North and the executive director of the NWT Seniors Society. Welcome.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity once again to recognize Kate Powell, principal of Deninu School, and congratulations on being recognized as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals. You are doing a great job for our students and our staff. Thanks for that.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognize a former resident of Inuvik, Mr. Martin Carroll -- welcome to Yellowknife and to the Legislative Assembly -- and his wife, Ruth Carroll, who is interpreting for us this week. Mahsi cho.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome Lynn Elkin, the executive director of the Yellowknife Association for Community Living, and Ben Russo, the vice chair of the Board, to the House. They are my constituents, and I would like to thank them for the work they do on behalf of disabled clients. Mahsi.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a couple of Pages here today from Helen Kalvak School in Ulukhaktok, Albert Okheena and Chris Haoga, along with their chaperone, Brandon Okheena. Mr. Speaker, the Helen Kalvak School in the Northwest Territories is very strong culturally, along with their language and on-the-land programs, and I would just like to welcome the students here today. 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 am going to break protocol for a minute. I want to make a recognition of Ms. Judith Sharpe, who was instrumental in helping me get elected, was on my campaign team, and I owe a great deal of gratitude to her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to recognize and welcome three constituents in the gallery today: Judy Sharp, I believe she is with the NWT Council for the Disabled; Romeo Berube, who is with Northland Utilities; and Miles Welsh, who chairs Yellowknife Catholic Schools. I would like to welcome them and thank them for their work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to our Chambers. It is always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 122-18(3): PROCUREMENT POLICIES AND IMPACTS ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to my Member's statement, we clearly see a disconnect within our government's mandate in regard to supporting diversity and capacity building in our territory. By preventing NGOs from registering under the Business Incentive Policy, a policy, I must add, that has not been reviewed in over a decade, and as I pointed out in my statement earlier today, Mr. Speaker, the policy is a legal contravention of the Societies Act.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Infrastructure indicate to the House when and by what process has the Business Incentive Policy ever been reviewed regarding NGOs purposely being excluded from registering under BIP? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier stated in this House last week, the BIP policy is probably one of the best policies this government has ever created; so I am going to start there. The thing about BIP is that BIP was created for for-profit business-related activities, and it is there to help entrepreneurial-based businesses. Competing with NGOs is a tough business, because they do not pay any income tax; they get other sources of government funding, a number of them; they get a lot of stuff in kind for rent and different things as such from various people and stakeholders and Government of the Northwest Territories, in some cases. It makes it tough for an entrepreneurial-based business to compete with this, and that is why it is in the clause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for his answer. I am not arguing that it is the best in the world, but we have some problems with it. Let's be honest here. We heard last week that we had problems, and this week we are bringing problems here again, Mr. Speaker.

To be clear, under our current GNWT procurement process, NGOs are excluded from our BIP process. Mr. Speaker, I can certainly see how this can be

seen as a level playing field. Can the Minister indicate by what process or methodology do NGOs compete fairly versus a private business in our RFP procurement process?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** In the procurement process departments, we typically use the standard tender and RFP templates, which would include the clause excluding non-profit entities from the competition. However, in the event departments wish to include non-profit entities in procurement, they must ensure to exclude the clause from the tender and RFP documents and the reason for doing so in the tender and RFP files.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, during the set of procurement policy oral questions with the Premier on February 14, 2018, the Premier stated that concerns around procurement are primarily due to difference of understanding and that, if Members were to provide a list of problems, a review could result. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister agree NGOs being excluded from registering under BIP is an issue, and will he commit with the Premier to finding a workable solution?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** We are continually working on the process to improve it moving forward, but as I have stated in this House last week, I added one more, so we are up to three on the procurement process. If Members have issues with NGOs around the procurement process and the BIP process, they need to come to me. They cannot sit on that side of the House and just say there is a problem with it. Show something to me in writing or bring something to me, but just to sit there and talk about it is not going to prove anything.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that long-winded answer about working with us on the other side of the table. You know, that hallway works both ways. You can actually walk down to our side, too, and when we bring it up, you can actually talk to us about it. I am a little concerned with your answer there, but I will go on to my next question.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to point out the NWT Societies Act has provisions that clearly articulate that an NGO can be deemed as a corporation by way of registration, yet the BIP application process does not recognize this law. Can the Minister inform the House why not, and will he investigate and fix this BIP registration oversight once and for all? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Here is a tangible question. I will look into it and get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 123-18(3):

#### CANNABIS DISTRIBUTION AND LEGISLATION

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance about what is being contemplated for the rollout and regulation of our cannabis products. How is our mail order system going to work? Is this something that is going to be licensed and regulated in the Northwest Territories, or are we relying on the federal government in other provinces to do that licensing? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Finance.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been doing a lot of work on the NWT side as to how we want to roll this out, and once the legislation passes, we will be able to have a product that is made in the NWT. As far as the mail order, I believe that they are going to be regulated by the federal government, but I will confirm that and have a discussion with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** We have a way forward document that lays out how the government plans to distribute cannabis products in the Northwest Territories, and mail order is an option for those communities that will not have access to cannabis stores. How are we going to tax mail order products? There have been concerns raised about lost revenue. How are we going to tax mail order cannabis?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We're still working out the details, but our plan is there is going to a tax on cannabis that's sold in the Northwest Territories. As far as products that are coming from outside the Northwest Territories, I would assume that they would be taxed at their point of sale. Again, I will confirm that. We are putting the details together. I do want to provide Members with the details once we get all our information together because the government has been doing a lot of work on this and recognizing the fact that it is coming down and we need to try and deal with it and mitigate the impact it's going to have on the Northwest Territories.

**MR. TESTART:** I do want to thank the Minister and acknowledge that he is opening the door for the collaboration on this issue. One thing I haven't seen addressed in any of the proposals going forward is a contemplation of cannabis co-ops or compassion clubs, or things along those lines. We've seen

models like that in the past, but has the government done any research into a cannabis co-op model? How will that be regulated? How would that be run? How would it happen safely in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Just off the top of my head, I'm not quite sure if we've done that work. Again, I will confirm that then and have a discussion with the Member. Again, I've made the offer before. That is we roll out our details and we gather more details. I'll be more than happy to sit down with Members and get their opinions and share that information with them.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, with the acknowledgment from the federal government that the deadline for the retail models of cannabis distribution have been pushed back, is the Minister open to working with stakeholders and with this side of the House to iron out some of these details to create more opportunities for private sector distribution, for mail order distribution, for co-op distribution, for production of cannabis in the Northwest Territories? Because we have more time to work on this legislation. Is the Minister more open to those discussions and potentially changing the way forward so it's more flexible, it's more innovative, and it's not limiting our economic advantage with cannabis? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Minister is not more open. The Minister is always open to having a discussion with the stakeholders and Regular Members because this is an issue that we need to make sure we get the work done and get it done properly. The fact that the date has been pushed back, as we kind of anticipated, we will continue to do our work, have the discussions with the appropriate stakeholders, and then, when the federal government does decide to roll this out, I will assure the Members, the public, and the Northwest Territories that the Government of the Northwest Territories will be ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 124-18(3):

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CULTURAL EXPO

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the National Indigenous Cultural Expo happening in Edmonton on September 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> this year. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Territories well-represented at the National Indigenous Cultural Expo and prominent on a Canada-wide stage. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering what our Department of Education, Culture and Employment will plan to do to ensure that this happens? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The event that the Member was mentioning in his statement was a gathering that took place in 2017. At that time, the department did sponsor the Inuvialuit drummers and dancers to attend the event. We do support artists and northern performers as well as cultural delegates through funding programs. As you know, we do have a pot of funding and that, if anyone wants to look at attending the event, they get their applications into the department sooner than later before the end of the fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate the response from the Minister. My second question is: what level of financial or other types of support does the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment expect to pledge to this event?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Every year the department allocates about \$100,000 for the support of northern performers and cultural delegates funding. As I mentioned earlier, I encourage anyone who wants to attend the event or any other events to submit a formal application to the department.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** That's good information for organizations to know. My final question, and also just a comment: I think that the Indigenous Cultural Expo for Northwest Territories might be a good way to raise awareness of our cultures, languages, traditions, and arts. It also has a great potential to support our growing tourism sector. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister look into the idea and report his findings back to the Assembly of some events like this in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Currently, the department supports a wide variety of events and programs that focus on our Indigenous cultures, languages, traditions, arts. To that, I can think right off the top of my head are the Great Northern Arts Festival, also the Metis Cultural Days that are in Hay River. Right across the parking lot here at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, we do that through exhibits and events throughout the year. We have over about 60,000 visits to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre on a yearly basis. We also continue to support heritage fairs in the schools, among many other things, but any other

suggestions or supports that we can do, we're gladly willing to look at them.

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

QUESTION 125-18(3):  
FUNCTIONING OF THE JURY SYSTEM IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, in light of longstanding concerns that have recently gained mainstream notoriety, the honourable Member for Kam Lake asked the Minister of Justice if he has taken any steps to review procedural fairness in our justice system. In his response, the Minister acknowledged that there has been a good deal of commentary about the justice system as of late and, according to unedited Hansard, stated, "I'm a little concerned that radical changes to the jury system would be ill-advised. This system has served us well for a thousand years."

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister who he meant when he said "us"?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Justice.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By "us," I meant that it had served the system well for a thousand years. Thank you.

**MR. SIMPSON:** So the Minister is part of the system, it sounds like. Given that half of the residents of this territory are Indigenous and that this justice system hasn't been here for a thousand years, I'd like to ask the Minister: considering that about 90 per cent of the people incarcerated in the territory are also Indigenous, would the Minister consider that this system has served our Indigenous population well?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Dealing first with the question specifically with respect to the jury system itself, yes, I think it has served the North well. The jurors are selected at random from the health card list, those who are eligible for health insurance. In my experiences, juries that I've dealt with, probably 20 or 30 jury trials, they do fairly represent the communities. I didn't always like the verdicts they delivered, but I always thought they were fair and that they represented the community.

**MR. SIMPSON:** I recognize that the North is different. I never want to import a southern solution to a northern issue, and this is a case where it may be what they are saying in the South doesn't apply. If the issue with the over-representation of Aboriginals in the justice system isn't with the jury system, what is the problem?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, the Department of Justice and the government as a whole are concerned about the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. We are doing things to ameliorate that situation, including restorative justice, specialized courts, corrections programming, court workers, and legal aid, to just list a few areas. As I say, there are problems in society and in the judicial system, but I do not think the jury system is part of the problem.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a problem when we incarcerate as many people per capita as the Americans do. We are the worst in Canada. My concern is that, as MLAs, we are only here for a limited amount of time and, if we do nothing but maintain the status quo, our time here is essentially a waste. I know the Minister's plate is quite full with cannabis legalization and other initiatives, but Justice seems a little light on strategies and frameworks when compared to the other departments, so I want to know: does the department have any strategies or frameworks in the pipeline to finally begin addressing this issue that has gone unaddressed for too long? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, as mentioned earlier, we do have various courts, DVTO court and wellness court, that are new to the system and are exciting and hopefully initiatives that will result in a change. We realize that there is an over-representation of Aboriginal people in the system and in the jail system, but particularly, as I mentioned, there are the specialized courts, there is corrections programming, court workers including legal aid and outreach, so we are making improvements. Hopefully, these many initiatives will lead to success. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 126-18(3):  
GAPS IN FAMILY PLANNING SUPPORT  
COVERAGE

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my Member's statement, I noted that there is a group of low- or no-income non-Indigenous women who do not qualify for birth control or the new abortion pill. Why not? Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Mifegymiso pill is

actually something that is prescribed by physicians in the Northwest Territories, so it can be prescribed. I think the difficulty that we have is that it is not covered by all of our insurance programs or supplementary health programs that we have out there.

We know in the Northwest Territories there is a gap of individuals who are not covered by our supplemental health programs and do not have insurance from their employer. All other individuals can get this covered. In that light, we are conducting an internal review of the supplementary health benefits program, and that work is happening right now with the view of addressing the coverage gaps that exist that I think this particular pill falls under. We are hoping to get that review done so that we can have some informed discussions with Members and the public on how we can work together to close that gap and in an equitable, affordable, and fair way.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the answer from the Minister. I am glad to hear that he is proactively reviewing gaps such as the one that I have highlighted today. I want to point out to him that it is not just the new abortion pill. It is also birth control. Birth control is specifically excluded. Is that being reviewed, as well?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Drugs that are covered under extended health benefits or non-insured health benefits that are covered by the federal government go through a lengthy process to determine whether they are covered. I am not sure why that particular medication is not covered, but I do know that it is covered by a large number of insurances, that it is covered by NIHB and other things, so it would be covered for a large number of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

What we are doing is a review of our supplemental health programs, which is going to focus in on the gap of individuals that are not covered, so low-income families who do not have insurance and what to cover for. We are going to get that work done so that we can all have an informed discussion in this House, in the public, about how we could have an affordable, equitable, fair supplemental health program for all residents of the Northwest Territories.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the Minister's answer, but he did not answer the question. We were talking about, on the one hand, the provision of medical abortion; on the other hand, birth control. Neither is covered for this vulnerable group of women. Is the Minister also looking at the birth control end of it?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I kind of feel like I did answer the question. Maybe the Member did not like it. The bottom line is we are doing a review of

the supplemental health program. If these things are covered under other insurances, like NIHB, we want to find a way to make sure that those low-income families without insurance are getting covered appropriately, and we need to make sure that it is done affordably, equitably, and fairly for all residents of the Northwest Territories. That includes all drugs, not just the ones that the Member is talking about today, that are covered under existing programs, that are not covered for this group.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that response. So, the new medical abortion pill, Mifegymiso, is available in Yellowknife. I am wondering when the government will make this pill available in regional centres that have doctors or midwives. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mifegymiso is actually provided through the Northern Options for Women program, which offers reproductive choices and abortion services for all women of reproductive age in the Northwest Territories, as well as the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut. This program is currently offered in Yellowknife, the Member is correct, as well as Inuvik when we have particular physicians who have the knowledge providing local coverage in that area.

Consideration is currently being given to support the NOW program, which is the Northern Options for Women program, in other regional centres of the Northwest Territories so that it is available in a wider range throughout the Northwest Territories. We are exploring those options now to try to determine the cost and make sure that it could be done in a fair, equitable, and affordable way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 127-18(3):  
ARTS ECONOMY IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. MCNEELY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In the whole community of sports, recreation, arts and crafts, my first question to the Minister of ITI is: what role does ITI play in supporting the arts in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that the arts play an important role in the creation of healthy and

vibrant communities. Traditional arts in particular, I would say, play a big role in that because they are a source of income and economic development in many of our small and remote communities. We want to advance and encourage that as part of our economy.

**MR. MCNEELY:** My next question, and I thank the Minister for that answer: does the Minister see the arts sector as one that can play a role in building our economy?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As I said, I see it as a source of income and economic development, but, in particular, I think where I see a role in the arts community playing a significant role is around how we represent and promote ourselves around tourism. That is a big part of it. A lot of these people come here and buy mementos and souvenirs before they go home, and this represents the traditional artists of the territory. With that, though, we also reach out to help these people in the small communities to get the right pricing and marketing for their communities. We have these regional sessions, workshops, to help them get the right value for their product.

**MR. MCNEELY:** In my statement earlier, I had mentioned both departments, ECE and ITI. My next question is: what joint funding initiatives are available for traditional artists in the Northwest Territories by a strategy that includes both departments?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Last year, ITI provided \$1.6 million for funding for artists in the Northwest Territories; \$250,000 of that was invested regionally to support specific arts and fine crafts. We also have the SEED program, which has huge uptake, to help support the arts program. We have a bunch of other stuff that we do. We support venues and events where artists can promote and sell their products, like the Great Northern Arts Festival and a number of music festivals in the Northwest Territories. Also, last year I had the opportunity and maybe a number of Members of the House did: we had a pop-up art show in Yellowknife, and we brought in regional artists from across the NWT to promote that.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am thanking the Minister for the information here so we can relate that back on to the leaders that I represent in five communities. My last question: what is the government doing to promote traditional arts in the area of, say, music and painting, for example? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I want to thank the Member for his question. We have the NWT Arts Program and the website that we established. On there, you can register your product or what you do, whether it is selling your CD or whatever, at no cost.

On that website, we also do the marketing campaigns and advertising for NWT artists through that web page. Also on there, we have a "where to buy NWT arts" page which will direct people who are looking for specific types of products to which NWT outlets they can purchase these types of things at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

QUESTION 128-18(3):  
FEDERAL CANNABIS LEGISLATION

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Finance on cannabis. I would like to ask the Minister: what is going to occur if the federal government is not able to pass legislation as of July 1<sup>st</sup>? It appears at this point like that is not going to be possible. I would like to know what the action plan for our government would be if that was to occur. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Finance.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the federal government does not pass legislation, the current laws will remain in place. There is not much we can do but continue our work to get ready to implement once they do pass legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I would like to ask the Minister what action his government would take, or this government would take, if the federal government recognized that they were not able to pass legislation and decided to decriminalize marijuana by July 1<sup>st</sup>?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Well, as I said, it is federal law that they are working on. If they decide that it is unable to be done by the time that they have specified, then we would just have to change direction and just continue to do the work that we can to sure that we are ready for implementation once the federal government does legalize cannabis.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I would like to ask the Minister what process, I guess, we would have to do if we decided that there was no way that we were going to be able to pass legislation within this time frame and then the federal government moves to decriminalize the legislation. If the federal

government continues on with that, at this point, would this government actually actively try to decriminalize marijuana, too? I am curious to know if that could something that could be done quickly or if that process would be just as slow as actually passing the legislation.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** My understanding is that the federal government has to pass legislation to legalize cannabis. I do not think we have the ability as a jurisdiction to do it on our own, because it is still illegal according to the Criminal Code, and that would have to be changed. I do not think we have the ability to enact this legislation on our own without the federal government passing their legislation to legalize cannabis.

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

QUESTION 129-18(3):  
FORT PROVIDENCE WATER TREATMENT  
PLANT

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I made a statement on the water treatment plant situation in Fort Providence and the problems with the intake line. Of course, the community of Fort Providence, through the hamlet council, has undertaken a study. My question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs: what is the department's role in updating the Fort Providence water and sewer system to modern and reliable standards? Mahsi.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The role of Municipal and Community Affairs is to support communities as best as possible. When it comes to water and waste water, we provide annual funding to the communities to develop it. We support them in developing their annual capital planning process. That planning process actually usually guides the communities to develop strategies for long-term projects such as a water treatment plant or big infrastructure projects. Then, once that has gone through that process, we will support the hamlets and communities in actually looking at what federal funding they can access to build their large infrastructure projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** Other communities are likely in the same situation where aging infrastructure from the 1970s more than likely served its purpose beyond its years. One common theme that has been suggested to communities is the idea of reservoirs. Can the Minister explain why a water reservoir may be one option for the community?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The purpose of the study from the hamlet conducted was to look at all options to provide clean water to the residents of the community. The reservoir was one of the options that the hamlet reviewed, so it was one of many options that the hamlet could look at. Then it is the process that the hamlet has to decide which of the options provided in that study would best meet the needs of their community.

**MR. NADLI:** MACA, of course, provides funding, as the Minister stated, infrastructure funding to community, and, of course, it is based on federal allocations. What priority does aging infrastructure, like the water treatment plant in Fort Providence, receive when considering community infrastructure funding allocations?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Every community has different needs. Every community has different infrastructure needs. Some of them are more up-to-date than others. During their capital planning process, that is the time that each community identifies which of their infrastructure projects are reaching the end of life and which ones we need to support, then, in obtaining federal infrastructure money so that they can meet the infrastructure needs within their individual communities.

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

QUESTION 130-18(3):  
KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance. I appreciate that the subject of a knowledge-based economy is a multi-department initiative, but I understand that the Minister is taking the lead.

I spoke earlier about a couple of examples; a young woman developing an app to promote education as it relates to her traditional language. I talked about the opportunity of a young man becoming an architect and having an impact on housing that supports Indigenous lifestyles. These are all things relevant to the knowledge-based economy. Mr. Speaker, if I can, I would like to ask the Minister if he can provide the House with an update on what the GNWT is doing to develop and promote the knowledge-based economy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Finance.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have committed in our renewed mandate to developing a knowledge economy.

First of all, we are going to focus on advancing access to knowledge in our agricultural sector, expanding our geoscience information and implementation of the NTGS Strategic Plan, and advancing public understanding of resource development in the NWT.

The examples that the Member gave, I think, are very good examples of an initiative going forward that would work to our knowledge-based economy, and as we've heard a number of times in the past talking about with the benefits of the fibre-optic line and possibly doing a knowledge-based up in Beau-Del, I think there are some opportunities there. There are a number of issues that we are looking at, and we do recognize that going forward, it is very important that we cultivate our knowledge base to take advantage of the options that might be out there.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for the reply, and the extensive reply. I really appreciate that. He did touch on reaching out as it related to opportunities that might be had with regard to certain industries. I talked earlier today about the challenges that we're facing with regard to climate change that are affecting us on our doorstep here, day in and day out. I also talked about mining resource extraction and challenges that they faced in protecting the environment. I also talked about the agriculture sector in the innovation and how it's affecting it. I'm wondering: can the Minister let us know if he's been reaching out as a government to those industries and to those sectors, asking them what their challenges and how innovation and technology might help them overcome those challenges?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We're always reaching out to folks out there to get their input on how they're affected by a number of different issues that are facing the Northwest Territories, such as climate change. We actually don't even have to reach out to them. They reach out to us and point out some of the challenges that they're facing, too. I think it's critically important that we continue to work with them, hear what they talk about, the challenges that they face, and then we'll have a discussion with them on some of our options and some of the things we're working on going forward, because it is a critical issue and I think now is the time to start trying to deal with the impacts of climate change and everything else on business and people across the Northwest Territories.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** My final question to the Minister -- and I appreciate the previous reply. It's really good to hear that we're reaching out to industry and others to help them overcome their challenges. Let's talk a little bit more specifically about the communities. The couple of examples that I gave showed tremendous opportunity as it

relates to innovation and technology and what they can bring to the communities. I'd like to know from the Minister: what is the government doing, or what can we be doing, to actually promote knowledge-based economy a little bit stronger in the communities?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Conversations such as the one we're having right now are one way to promote knowledge-based economy and to let people out there know that there are pots of money within the territorial government to come up with some initiatives like the ones the Member spoke of. I'm sure they received some assistance of some sort from the Government of Northwest Territories. Then recognizing that, going forward, anyone can put a proposal together and submit it to the Government of Northwest Territories. When we speak of the successes of some of the proposals and initiatives that have come forward, I'm sure more people will be encouraged to put initiatives forward or to think there might be an opportunity to receive some funding, because I think it is an issue that is important to the government and to all 19 Members of the Legislative Assembly. I think it's one that we need to promote and put some investment towards.

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

QUESTION 131-18(3):  
AMENDMENTS TO THE CITIES, TOWNS AND  
VILLAGES ACT FOR A HOTEL TAX LEVY

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. The issue of changes to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to allow tax-based communities to introduce hotel levies was discussed earlier in the sitting. The Minister responded and indicated that necessary consultations with the hotel industry stakeholders were causing the delays. These consultations have been going on since at least 2010, even before I became an MLA. I was involved in consultations that the Finance Department was undertaking at that point around a hotel levy. Can the Minister tell us what she heard from the hotel industry this time around? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't speak for Ministers from the other Legislative Assemblies. I'm not sure why they didn't move that forward. I'm sure that the honourable Member would have researched into that. However, I am committed to moving this forward within this Legislative Assembly.

Some of the feedback that we did hear right across was not only from the hotels, but there are a lot of stakeholders who we had to engage with. Some of the feedback that was voiced as concerns was: were territorial government employees going to get taxed? Were municipal governments going to get taxed? Were the residents of the territory going to get taxed when they weren't coming here for tourism?

We heard concerns about the potential of dampening the tourism market and luring tourism away from the smaller communities. We heard concerns about tourism packages, a big one, that tourism packages that were already sold for this year and how that would impact the tourism operators. Those are some of the concerns that we heard. We did get support from the six tax-based communities to support this bill, although they stated that they wouldn't be looking at using it at this point. It would only be the City of Yellowknife that would be actually utilizing this at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for that information. I can assure her, though, that I don't think I heard anything new from when I was involved in consultations back in 2010. I'd like to know if the Minister is finally finished with these consultations and when we're going to see a bill on this in the House?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** We have been working closely with the municipalities, and especially the City of Yellowknife, because it is a primary interest to the City of Yellowknife. We have not deviated from our timeline. We told them right through over a year ago that we would be introducing a legislative proposal in this sitting and that the bill would be introduced in the House in the May/June sitting. We are still on that timeline.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I'd like to thank the Minister again for that. My statement earlier today referred to the fact that the GNWT has virtually withdrawn from tourism services in the GNWT's tourism capital here in Yellowknife and that, as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the city is going to have to continue to top up money to continue with the centre that is over at City Hall. This makes the creation of a hotel levy all the more urgent. I'd like to know: what is stopping the Minister from acting on this bill now and getting it before this House during this sitting in March?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** We are working diligently on it. Like I said earlier, we are on the timeline that we had talked about with the City of Yellowknife and the standing committee. We've been putting that timeline forward for over a year now.

What is stopping it there? There is nothing stopping the bill itself. However, to meet the timeline that the Member is wanting, if he wants it introduced during this sitting, it will be of great difficulty. We are just finishing the drafting of the legislative proposal. At that point, it will go to standing committee to accept their recommendations, which are processed. After that is done, it comes back to me and then I give the drafting instructions to my department, and then we work with the Department of Justice to actually draft the bill. We are on time, and I do apologize if some of the Members feel that it's too much time, but we are on time with what we have been saying all along. We are meeting that commitment, and I am trying my best to make it happen. I promise it will happen during this Legislative Assembly.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to thank the Minister for that list of reasons why we can't get the bill in this sitting, but I hope she can go back to her department and work again on this. Maybe I'll start with: we don't even have a legislative proposal yet. I've looked at the Cities, Towns and Villages Act. The legislative powers are laid out in section 70(1). All that needs to be done is add one line in there about hotel levy and give the tax-based communities the authority to do it. I don't understand what's so complicated around this. Everybody I've ever talked to has been in favour of this. Let's start with this, Mr. Speaker, or I'll finish with this: when is the Standing Committee on Government Operations actually going to get a legislative proposal for this change? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I don't usually like to correct Members, but I do say that it's not only one simple line. The hotel tax levy is one piece of the puzzle that the City of Yellowknife has asked us to implement with this bill, and so with due respect to the City of Yellowknife, we're doing the hotel tax levy; but we're also looking at the funding, the energy efficiency retrofits for homeowners, so there is more than just one line within this bill. As stated, we had promised that we would bring it forward in this sitting and within the next couple of weeks. The draft legislative proposal will be provided to standing committee or offered for them to review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 132-18(3):  
FEDERAL LAND TRANSFER TAX PROPOSAL

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his budget, the Finance Minister spoke about new sources of revenue for the GNWT. I quote, "During

2018-2019, we will be developing detailed proposals to implement a land transfer tax similar to other jurisdictions. This tax will raise an additional \$3.1 million annually and can be structured progressively by levying a smaller percentage on property of lower value to lower the impact on modest-income home owners."

I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if he can provide more detail on the policy objective of this new tax proposal? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Finance.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Regular Members have come to the government and challenged it with trying to find other revenue options, and this is one of them. We are working and currently targeting the fall of 2016 of the Legislative Assembly for the introduction of legislation that would authorize the collection of land transfer tax. There will be opportunities coming forward for our committee to have some input, and obviously we would have to go to them before we get to that stage. There will be opportunities there for them to have input. We will provide them with all the details then. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** As I feared, this is a revenue grab by government, and I'm not one of those Members who are looking for new ways to increase this. I think the federal government has its hands strong on how we can actually raise taxes. My question is this new tax proposal: how much of it are we going to retain and how much of it is going to be clawed back through our funding agreements with Ottawa?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I disagree with the Member. This is not a tax grab or a cash grab. This is something that we're putting into place. My understanding is a potential revenue from this would be about \$3 million. My understanding is that we would retain all of it.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you for that clarification. My question is: it's \$3.1 million. Does the Minister know where that's coming from? He has detailed the clear revenue figure. There must be some sense of where it's coming from. My fear is that certain parts of the territory are going to pay higher into this tax than other parts of the territory, especially with his somewhat cryptic statements in the budget address around lessening the impact. Who is going to be paying for this?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** As far as which areas in the Northwest Territories are actually going to be affected the most, I mean, I think the initial plan was some of the lower-priced properties won't have to pay as much, obviously. If you're living in a jurisdiction that has a fairly good economy and the

prices are quite high, then your taxes are going to be reflective of that. Again, we're in the process of putting the information together, and I'd be more than happy to, once we have that put together, sit down with the appropriate committee and have that discussion and seek input from them.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if that's any clearer, but I'll put it plainly and not hypothetically: is this new tax going to disproportionately affect residents of the City of Yellowknife? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I'll answer plainly: the tax may affect those communities that have higher real estate costs than other communities across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 133-18(3):  
CHEMOTHERAPY SERVICES AT STANTON  
HOSPITAL

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are once again for the Minister of Health and Social Services. MLAs received notice in December that chemotherapy services had been suspended at Stanton Hospital and, until their resumption, patients would receive their treatment at the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton. Can the Minister give us the current status on when chemotherapy will be resumed in Yellowknife? Mahsi.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. I appreciate the frustration that residents of the Northwest Territories who are receiving their cancer treatment at Stanton are experiencing, and obviously we want to make sure we're providing the best care that we can to these individuals.

Since we've moved to a single authority, we are conducting reviews of our programs and services to make sure that we are providing a high-standard, best service that we can. In the review of the cancer services that are provided here in Yellowknife, and just a reminder to all Members that we have a lot of individuals in the Northwest Territories who are receiving cancer, including chemo, treatment in the South due to the particular cancers that they have, we aren't able to provide cancer and chemo treatment to all residents of the Northwest Territories.

For the services that were provided here, there was an assessment done. It was determined that there are areas for a clear improvement in the cancer treatment that we do provide. We did choose to shut down the chemo services temporarily so that we can conduct modern training and get the staff all up to date with the best training. That included an online component, but also a practicum or a mentorship in Alberta on-site, so our staff did have to leave the Northwest Territories.

We've also recognized that this is an opportunity for us to update some of our equipment, which is one of the reasons that the delay is a little longer than we had hoped for. We're hoping, and I think I provided an update to the Members, that we're looking at four to eight more weeks before we can go live. I think we owe it to our residents who can receive this type of treatment to provide them with the best quality treatment we can. We're hoping we're be up and running in four to eight weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I thank the Minister for the detail he was able to provide there. Could the Minister now specify what kinds of knowledge or skill deficiencies were found to be in need of correction?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** As I indicated, since we've moved to a single authority, it's given us a real opportunity to look at things at a territory-wide level and make sure that our residents are receiving top-quality services.

When the review was done of the chemo program in Yellowknife, and once again recognizing that it didn't provide chemo to all of our residents who needed treatment, it was determined that there was an opportunity to provide more current training. This field is changing constantly and we need to make sure that our staff are up-to-date all the time, which means we need to have a solid program in there to ensure that the training is ongoing.

I always felt at the time that we could do better, that we needed to provide more timely training to our practitioners and we needed to make sure that they had adequate back-up when they are away getting that training so that we don't have a gap in service. We're doing that work now.

We're also taking the opportunity to upgrade some of our equipment so that, when those patients do come back, or future patients do come to us, we get the same kind of feedback that we're getting now, which is that the service that they're receiving at the Cross in Alberta is amazing, it's state-of-the-art and really great. We want to be able to provide, at a minimum, what they're providing at the Cross in Edmonton, for the services that we do provide here.

**MS. GREEN:** I thank the Minister for his answer. I think any of us would want our loved ones to report that they had received amazing service for chemotherapy, wherever it is provided. Moving on now to references to policies that need review: can the Minister elaborate on what gaps or deficiencies in policy were identified and what steps are being taken to address these deficiencies?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I do not have that detail in front of me at my fingertips today, but I will commit to getting the Members some additional update on what is occurring in the chemo unit here in Yellowknife, and when we hope to be up and running.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. My final question is whether he can anticipate additional closures being necessary for training and equipment upgrading going forward? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** One of the things that has become available to us as a territorial health system since we have moved to a single system is that we have the opportunity to look at our systems across the territories. We are conducting reviews of many of our programs, whether they are programs at Stanton or whether they are programs that stretch across the territory as a whole. I anticipate, and I think it is fair to anticipate, that we are going to find areas where we need to make significant improvements in the provision of healthcare here in the Northwest Territories.

I hope that does not mean that we have closures in many of our areas, but I think we should be prepared that we may have to do temporary closures to some of our units in some of our areas in order to ensure that we have the time to bring our services up to the highest standards that we possibly can. I cannot say what those areas are, but we are digging into the provision of services across the territory, and there is, I think, a chance that we may have to temporarily suspend or modify delivery for short periods of time as we bring these program improvements into place so that we can have the best care, the best health, and the best services for the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, replies to budget address, day 7 of 7. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

## Replies to Budget Address

### MR. BEAULIEU'S REPLY

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the number one issue facing small communities is the lack of employment. That means there are many opportunities for the government to create jobs within our small communities. Job creation must be strategic, and can contribute to the GNWT's financial health as well as to our communities. If there is one thing we have to do in the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, it is to create jobs where jobs are needed most. Mr. Speaker, jobs in our small communities will have a positive impact on all communities in the NWT, including Yellowknife and the regional centres.

When our small community members are working, they will spend most of their money in the large centres. For example, you will see an increase in snowmobile and boat sales. In other words, Mr. Speaker, all boats shall rise, as the saying goes.

Mr. Speaker, homecare is one such strategic spending item. If the Department of Health and Social Services creates a homecare program in all small communities, it could keep seniors out of long-term care. As I have said many times in the House, for every senior who stays at home instead of entering a long-term care facility, the government would defer spending of \$140,000 per year.

This has an additional benefit of allowing seniors to age in place, which is what they typically want to do. However, before seniors can age in place, the NWT Housing Corporation must start retrofitting seniors' homes to a level that is more barrier-free and senior-friendly. The Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT Housing Corporation must begin to put some real money behind aging in place. I am talking about improving at least 150 houses across the NWT. If we were to average five houses per community, it would create many jobs in our small communities. This would be very, very positive for Yellowknife and the regional centres. Just imagine that number, Mr. Speaker, spending \$80,000 to \$100,000 per unit towards aging in place over the next three years. That would be expenditures of about \$15 million into our economy. That would put builders and suppliers to work.

Mr. Speaker, a community access road program are a low-cost way to create many benefits. Some benefits include increased mobility, increased productivity, savings costs for transportation of people and materials, greater access to lakes, rivers, trap-lines, campsites, and hunting grounds. Access roads provide a much-needed opportunity for people in our communities to connect with traditional areas, to provide more opportunities for other on-the-land recreational and cultural activities,

and would help reduce the cost of living. Building access roads creates good local jobs and will reduce the need for some types of social spending. Increasing spending to the access road program by 50 per cent would bring the amount close to \$2.5 million and would see great benefits to our residents.

Mr. Speaker, we need to put more funding into combatting addictions in our territory by working with the local Indigenous governments to create on-the-land treatment programs in each community, including Yellowknife. Support should be provided by a mobile treatment system, perhaps run out of the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre on the K'atlodeeche Reserve. The cost of addictions to its victims, their families, communities, our health system, and our justice system should be incentive enough. However, the added benefit to the GNWT will be a much better bottom line. Mr. Speaker, if we were to do this, we would see a large decrease in social spending and our people would be in better health.

We will create a society that is educated and ready to work. We can concentrate on our economy. We can put our money into supporting small business. The businesses, in return, can put more people to work.

Mr. Speaker, we need a new approach to the issue of absent students in our schools. Firstly, we must understand that poor attendance is usually a result of deeper social issues which are created within their homes, like parents with addictions and poverty. Parents who cannot feed their kids properly have difficulty sending them to school. The way a child acts in school is a direct reflection of what it's like at home, so if there is dysfunction in the home, the child is more likely to "act out" in ways that may be disrespectful, rude, or even dangerous. Over long periods of time, such interactions fuel a negative relationship between students and schools. Students facing these issues are far less likely to graduate high school. A student who does not graduate from high school has a greater chance of being in the social services system than one who graduates.

Children must have positive reinforcement that they can look forward to going to school. That is what will ultimately boost attendance rates. This will also result in higher graduation rates in our smaller communities. When a student graduates, it increases their potential to get a job by 25 per cent. Imagine what that would do for our economy and the finances of our government.

Mr. Speaker, we must pursue a reorientation of our correctional facilities to ensure abundant, positive opportunities to improve inmates' life skills and foster quality socialization. The aim must be to help

each inmate reintegrate into society as a rehabilitated and improved individual, not a more broken and potentially more dangerous person than they were when they entered the justice system. A concentrated effort focused on inmate rehabilitation will lower the recidivism rate of inmates. There are many benefits to these programs, and some have been measured, studied, and reported.

Additionally, there should be a systematic program to help people stabilize their lives after being released. Such a program should include an element designed to eliminate all possible barriers to future employment for former inmates. A person who is rehabilitated and working in the community as opposed to being in jail will save the system more than \$100,000 per year; that is the cost of incarcerating one inmate for one year.

Mr. Speaker, the land-leasing policy system in small communities must be reviewed, and the cost to community members must be lowered. I realize that the government is working on its land-leasing policy, but we have people right now who are asked to pay 10 per cent of the property value as an annual fee for renting the lot. That cost is prohibitive to most residents who would like to obtain a lease. If they cannot obtain a lease, they are unable to access Housing Corporation programs and would not be able to decrease their cost of living by making their home more efficient and comfortable. This is especially true for our elders.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Alberta has an Advancing Futures bursary that provides up to \$40,000 in education funding for youth formerly in foster care, aged 18 to 24. A program coordinator is also available to assist case workers and youth with the education portion of a transition plan. The bursary is available to obtain high school equivalency through adult education for entry into post-secondary schooling, to earn a license or certificate, to learn a trade, or to earn a post-secondary diploma or degree. Advancing Futures will also assist students to learn life skills and to obtain meaningful employment. This is a system based on young people's potential and helping them overcome challenges.

In British Columbia, another good program exists for former youth-in-care, aged 19 to 26. For eligible applicants, the province will waive tuition fees for students seeking an undergraduate degree in a public post-secondary institution in the province. The program also covers apprenticeship and trades programs. I am concerned that our government does not do enough to help youth emerging from foster care into adulthood and that our system is fragmented and not holistic.

Mr. Speaker, the conservation economy has tremendous potential in the Northwest Territories.

In Lutselk'e there is a group called "Ni hat'ni Dene," which means "Watchers of the Land." The Ni hat'ni Dene are protecting the land and enjoying what they do, and for every dollar that they are paid, the GNWT reduces social spending by \$2.50. This is more strategic spending. Each time the government chooses to replicate this type of process, we will see a reduction to large budget items like income support, housing, and health and social services. This is important because strategic spending can help foster greater economic self-sufficiency in our people and thereby less reliance on government. Furthermore, our government would be working alongside Indigenous governments, working on and caring for the land of our ancestors.

Mr. Speaker, we must begin working with Indigenous governments and the federal government to clean up more waste sites. There are hundreds of these sites in the Northwest Territories. This work would bring many jobs to the North and will help us build a cleaner, more sustainable environment right across the territory, especially in the Akaitcho and Tlicho regions where the majority of these sites exist.

In order to provide certainty to our government, Indigenous governments, and industry, we must put more money and effort into completing land use plans in regions without settled land and resource agreements. The goal should be to get Agreements-in-Principle signed before the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this government must begin to invest heavily in early childhood development, and more must be put into the budget for prenatal care, covering children up to the age of three. People working in the field of early childhood development tell us that the return on early childhood development spending is about 7 to 1, possibly as high as 10 to 1. Mr. Speaker, for every dollar that is spent on early childhood development, we will see a decrease in social spending by up to \$10 over a person's lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, these adjustments to the budget will increase spending by a modest amount of \$20 to \$25 million. We will then see the benefits being accrued to the Government of the Northwest Territories and our people. We must have faith that we can speed up social change with sensible, targeted programs and strategic investment. We must show faith in our people of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of the Northwest Territories will do right by the people of our territory. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Replies to budget address, day 7 of 7. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN'S REPLY

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two years ago the Finance Minister told residents of the NWT that he had a plan for the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly: to reduce spending on operations and maintenance in order to generate a surplus to pay for infrastructure. The plan was for two budgets of program cuts and layoffs, followed by two years of spending. The Minister made good on his plan for restraint by cutting \$100 million from the first two budgets and issuing layoff notices to about 100 people, most of them working here in Yellowknife.

This year's budget was supposed to represent a turnaround, yet it offers one third less new spending than last year. Revenue is estimated to drop by more than \$50 million in the next fiscal year. Clearly, the problems the Finance Minister flagged on the revenue side are worse than anticipated and need our immediate attention. I will come back to this point later.

There are several investments which will be of direct benefit to the residents of Yellowknife Centre. The government has heard and responded to the needs of people who gather downtown to drink, along with concerns and complaints from residents who live and work downtown. The government investment in the temporary sobering centre, first at the Yellowknife Arena and now at the Salvation Army, provides a safe place for people to sleep off their intoxication.

The GNWT has partnered with the city and the federal government to fund the Safe Ride program that transports clients to various locations, including the sobering centre. This service meets the immediate needs of people with addictions and mental wellness challenges. I note the federal government funding for this program is only for one year. I urge the Minister of Health and Social Services to negotiate long-term funding for this program.

Later this year, the sobering centre and the day shelter will move to a permanent location on 50<sup>th</sup> Street. It is my hope that once this move happens, the Minister of Health and Social Services will provide further harm reduction for chronic alcoholics by launching a managed alcohol program. This is a program that provides regular and measured doses of alcohol to help people cope with their addictions in a more constructive way than drinking non-beverage alcohol or involving themselves in criminal activity to support their needs.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation has improved housing options for people who are chronically homeless. Just before Christmas, I was pleased to join the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation for the opening of eight new semi-independent units in my riding at the

Yellowknife Women's Centre. The Women's Centre also operates a Housing First program for both men and women. They are housed in market rentals downtown. The Side Door is offering a Housing First program for youth. I hope that the Minister will soon reach an agreement with the Salvation Army to create semi-independent units for men. These initiatives have strengthened housing options for vulnerable populations.

I am happy to see continued support for the Housing First program in this budget, but note that the total funding has remained the same for three years in spite of the fact that we still have a significant homeless population living in emergency shelters. It is time to increase funding in this area. It is, of course, a better investment to provide people with a home than to house them in emergency shelters. Having a home gives them an opportunity to stabilize in order to make productive choices for their future.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the announcement of the new Transitional Rent Supplement Program to help low-income people reduce their total spending on accommodation to less than 30 per cent of their gross income. Almost one in five households in Yellowknife reported shelter affordability as a problem in the 2014 housing survey. My hope is that the new program will be widely promoted and easier to access than its predecessor.

Finally, on the topic of housing, last fall, the Minister responded to a motion from Regular MLAs to produce a report that provides a plan for reducing core housing need across the territory, including a budget. This plan can best be described as sketchy, since it is not broken down in terms of how various program supports will be implemented on a regional basis or where the \$67 million budgeted is going to come from. This budget decreases spending on housing by almost \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, I spent many hours listening to the heartbreaking testimony at the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry when hearings were held here in Yellowknife last month. A sister of one of the NWT missing women talked about the difficulty to getting information about what action police had taken to find her sister. I hope that the creation of a Historical Case Unit within the RCMP will help this woman, and all of the other families who have murdered and missing loved ones, seek justice and closure.

Mr. Speaker, there is a significant population of people in Yellowknife Centre who are elderly. They will benefit from the increase to the NWT Seniors' Supplement Benefit announced last September, as well as various forms of housing assistance provided by the NWT Housing Corporation, but we still have a long way to go to provide long-term care

and independent housing for seniors, especially here in Yellowknife, where waiting lists are long and very slow-moving.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago, Regular MLAs demanded government fully fund the introduction of junior kindergarten across the NWT. Unfortunately, the program started without all of the money in place, but I am happy to see an additional \$881,000 available for inclusive schooling for three- and four-year-olds in this budget. The next step is to revamp the funding formula for inclusive schooling so that the growing number of children who have learning challenges get the support that they need as quickly as possible.

The issue of providing busing for junior kindergarten students was also unresolved in the last fiscal year, and the issue is not mentioned in this budget. It is my understanding that there is now a territory-wide study under way of busing needs for all grades. Trustees at the Yellowknife school boards have told us that their busing programs run a substantial deficit that is unsustainable. Funding for education must include getting students to school where they live too far away to walk.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the government for its new Child and Youth Mental Health Counsellors program. While there are some loose ends to resolve, I think we can all agree that providing new support for mental health for young people is of vital importance. I understand this new model is going to be tested in two regions starting this fall. My hope is that the program will be ready to roll out in Yellowknife sooner than the government's planned introduction date of 2021.

Finally, on the topic of children, I want to revisit the issue of how unaffordable childcare is for many families. I appreciate the increased subsidies the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has offered to childcare operators. Even so, a family with a child in full-time childcare and one in after-school care will spend almost as much on care for them as they will on shelter. This situation often prompts caregivers, usually women, to take time out of the workforce to provide childcare. For them, it is a better investment of time vis-a-vis the amount they are paying someone else to do the job. When this happens, the government also loses the tax income the care giver is paying while at work. This is tax income we can't afford to lose. There is a better way: to subsidize childcare costs for families on an income-tested basis. There is no money in this budget for this initiative, but I am looking forward to an announcement by the Minister now that negotiations with the federal government on early childhood development are complete.

Mr. Speaker, many residents of Yellowknife Centre are employed directly or indirectly by the mineral

resource sector, whether in exploration, development, or mining. They want to see a continued government focus in this area to ensure their livelihood over the long term. I applaud the government's continued investment in the Mining Incentive Program. If anything, investment in this program should be increased, since exploration is the gateway to identifying economic potential of new deposits.

At the same time, the government needs to work harder on advancing land rights negotiations and agreements. Despite some lofty talk by the Premier at the beginning of our term, progress towards signed agreements has varied from non-existent to very slow. I realize the GNWT is not the only party at the table, but we would be better served if the Premier talked about the need to advance Indigenous land rights as a red alert issue, rather than trying to revive the oil and gas sector in the Beaufort Sea. Certainty of land tenure is the foundation of economic development, whether mining, agriculture, or forestry.

Mr. Speaker, the investment that government is making in economic diversification is inadequate. While tourism, fishing, and agriculture are small contributors to the GDP of the Northwest Territories in comparison to industry and public administration, these sectors continue to grow in value and provide new employment opportunities. These ventures offer good economic multipliers of job creation and are worthy of greater support, whether that means building or expanding campgrounds or increasing the film industry rebate program, to name just two possibilities. I note that, while investment in fisheries and agriculture has increased in the last two budgets, funding for the fur program, the Great Northern Arts Festival, and the film industry has remained static for the last three years. It is time to change that.

Tourism is the fastest growing sector of our economy. The budget papers from two years ago don't include a measurement for tourism. This budget notes that over 100,000 visitors came to the NWT in the last fiscal year and spent over \$200 million. Residents have seen business opportunities, creating a boom in hotel construction and increasing traffic in restaurants. I would like to see the government provide additional assistance to businesses that want to create additional activities for leisure tourists and aurora viewers to enjoy. Further, it is time for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to tell us the plan for providing tourism information services in Yellowknife. I commend the City of Yellowknife for helping out in a pinch, but it is time for the territorial government to step up.

Mr. Speaker, I am now going to turn my attention from the spending side of the budget to revenue

generation. In his February 2016 paper on revenue options, the Finance Minister said that, in order to generate operating surpluses to build infrastructure, he has three choices; to reduce expenditures, to increase revenues, or to implement a combination of both. Let's leave aside the question of exactly what kind of infrastructure we are going to invest in and agree that we do, in fact, have an infrastructure deficit. Ottawa has pledged the better part of \$600 million over the next 10 years to begin to fill that gap, but we need money of our own to access that money. The Ottawa offer is cost-shared, with the NWT contributing 25 per cent or about \$150 million of that total. The operating surplus for the next fiscal year is projected to be just \$23 million. We need to ensure that we have money available for these cost-shared projects when federal funding starts to flow.

Part of the Finance Minister's problem is that revenue from most sources is down. Corporate income tax was down in this fiscal year, and it will fall another \$30 million in the next fiscal year. Personal income tax is also down by more than a quarter. I understand that these revenue sources are the most variable in the budget, and often for reasons that are beyond the government's control, but that does not mean we are powerless to increase revenue.

Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting a fact we are all familiar with: the NWT economy is small and fragile. If world commodity prices drop, the NWT takes a fall. The Premier has said time and again that our economy has not recovered from the 2008 financial crisis. The crisis knocked our economy off its peak; peak GDP, peak workforce size, peak employment, and peak resource revenues. The territorial government collected \$119 million in corporate income tax during this peak period 10 years ago. In the next fiscal year, it is forecasting corporate income tax of just \$31 million, a decline of two thirds over that high point.

What can we do to increase revenue? That is the perennial question examined in the 2016 Revenue Options Paper. Various options were examined using the criteria of how much money they would raise, the impact they would have on the economy, and the principles of a predictable, fair, and simple tax policy. The largest source of revenue for the GNWT is, of course, the grant from Canada. It is increasing by \$24 million in the next fiscal year and accounts for about 70 per cent of our total revenue. The problem with the grant from Canada is that it does not encourage the GNWT to increase its own-source revenues, such as they are. If the GNWT grows its own-source revenues, the territorial formula financing goes down and, in good years, vice versa. There is not much incentive for the GNWT to increase its own-source revenues, so it has not; but it could, and that is the discussion we

need to have. I am going to go even further and say that it is also time to rethink the territorial formula financing so that the promise of devolution is fulfilled in greater financial independence for the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the Revenue Options Paper lays out several possibilities to raise more money. A tax bracket for high individual income earners would net \$2 million a year. A 1 per cent increase in the payroll tax would bring in \$20 million. A 1 per cent increase in corporate tax would yield \$5 million. The revenue options paper dismisses all of these options because they would increase the cost of living, the cost of doing business, and/or generally make the NWT a less desirable place to live and work. There is no evidence presented to support this conclusion. It is simply a Finance Department mantra.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a closer look at corporate tax as an example. Our corporate tax rate for large businesses is 11.5 per cent, while Nunavut is at 12 per cent and Yukon at 15 per cent. The Nunavut and Yukon economies are not suffering as a result of the higher rate. In fact, both Nunavut's and Yukon's populations have increased, and so has their economic activity, particularly mining. If the NWT raised its corporate rate to 15 per cent, it would potentially raise an additional \$18 million in revenues each year. This is a sum of money worth talking about. It would, at least in theory, almost double the operating surplus for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the MLA for Frame Lake, pointed out that the GNWT will earn more from the tobacco tax in the next fiscal year than it will from royalties on minerals, oil, and gas. I realize this is a blip, due in part to the suspended oil production in Norman Wells, but it could soon be the new normal as hydrocarbon production there continues to decline.

Mr. Speaker, a report commissioned by the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment concludes there is "a significant opportunity for the NWT to benefit more from mining." I have already mentioned some ideas in the report, such as increasing incentives for exploration, expediting land rights negotiations to create certainty about which land is available for exploration and development, and renegotiating the share of resource revenues that the GNWT can retain without losses on the grant from Canada.

I was shocked to read that the NWT take on mineral resources is among the lowest in the world because of this government's generous deductions on royalties and corporate taxes along with lax oversight on tax avoidance. In short, we could and should be benefiting more from mining in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude this statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. For reasons I do not understand, the Minister of ITI says now is not the time to revisit royalties, even though he is developing a new Mineral Resources Act. Instead, he would like to delay this discussion until the mines begin to close. This situation is totally unacceptable. We need the money to help close our infrastructure gap, diversify our economy, and improve the well-being of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed I have not mentioned either of the forthcoming taxes on carbon and cannabis. Neither is mentioned in the budget because they are not yet in place. I believe that both of these taxes should be revenue neutral. Revenue from a carbon tax needs to be invested in shifting our territory away from its dependence on fossil fuels. NWT residents are, in fact, already paying a carbon tax on freight that enters from Alberta. I have heard only a few complaints, and this is on a tax which has no benefit to the NWT at all. Likewise, the cannabis tax should be revenue neutral. There will be considerable start-up costs related to legalizing cannabis that are absent from the budget. There will also be a need for ongoing and robust public education directed to youth about the potential harmful effects of this drug, even if it is legal.

Mr. Speaker, we face declining revenue and increased forced growth in spending. Either we continue to reduce expenditures or we raise revenue. In my view, we do not really have a choice. Government has already made more than \$100 million worth of cuts, yet our operating surplus will be smaller next year than last. The Finance Minister is forecasting a rebound for the final year of our term, but I am unclear what evidence that is based on or whether he is indulging in some wishful thinking.

We know now that we have additional expenses coming our way, such as completing the collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers, meeting the increased needs of our elderly residents, and reinventing Aurora College, to name just a few examples.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, for the Finance Minister to do what he has not done before; that is, to initiate an open-ended public conversation about revenue generation in the NWT. Instead of having the Minister tell residents that all opportunities to increase revenue will not work, he needs to engage Northerners face-to-face to find solutions to this ongoing problem. The 2016 Revenue Options

paper is the logical starting point for this conversation.

Once the Minister has completed this engagement, he needs to bring the results here so we can debate them and make decisions about how we are going to generate more revenue. I challenge the Minister to begin this work now so that it is ready in time for the next budget. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Replies to budget address, day 7 of 7. Member for Nahendeh.

#### MR. THOMPSON'S REPLY

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my reply to the budget will be a bit different from the one I was working on this past Thursday. Working behind the scenes has brought us closer to a final agreement on the budget. It has been a long process, from closely reviewing the business plans to finding common ground, and finally getting closer to a budget that we can agree to pass. I realize there is still some work to be done, but I feel we can reach a final agreement that meet the needs of the residents of the NWT. This being the third budget, I thinking we are getting better at listening to one another. For a \$1.73 billion budget, we are only a few million dollars apart. Don't get me wrong, we still have work to do.

Even so, Mr. Speaker, this year's business plans were a bit challenging, especially when you consider we were spending more than \$1.73 billion in public funds. Some departments' plans lacked details. There were sometimes inconsistencies, typographical errors, and wholesale repetition of sections from the previous years. I would like to have the departments provide more detailed descriptions of all planned activities, as identified by the Members from this side. We need to be better informed so we can make better decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister said the 2018-2019 budget proposes operation expenditures of \$1.713 billion. As we worked through the business plans, we came up with an additional \$2.9 million dollars of requests. Some were increases in funding, others were reinstatement of planned cuts, and others were new investments. I have to say, for the first time in three years, we were in the same ball park.

As the Minister said in his budget address, the projected operating surplus of \$23 million is the lowest in seven years. What does this mean? It means short-term borrowing is projected to increase and that we will add to our debt. With this in mind, we need a realistic plan for how the GNWT intends to proceed with major projects within its existing borrowing capacity, and what circumstances might trigger the GNWT to seek

increases to its current federally imposed borrowing limit. The scary thing is that we are still do not have a collective agreement with a number of the unions.

I am happy to see the Government of Northwest Territories is adding \$37.8 million to departmental budgets that did not reflect the realities of their spending, which caused them to come back for supplementary appropriations. I would like to thank the government for a more realistic budget for these departments.

Mr. Speaker, I realize the most of the regions face hardships, and I empathize with them. In the Nahendeh riding, we have been experiencing this for a long period of time. All you need to do is visit the six communities, especially the smaller ones, to realize the hardships the residents face. Unfortunately, we do not have huge GNWT infrastructure projects such as the construction of a major highway; I would love to see the Mackenzie Valley highway start at the south end as well. I am happy to see the good news that the National Energy Board has approved the plan to repair the Norman Wells pipeline and that Enbridge has been working with the aboriginal governments on this project. However, we still see communities having to share jobs so people can survive. This is a huge disappointment.

I agree that we need to diversify our economy. I believe tourism can play an important role in our economy, especially in the Nahendeh riding. We see a number of tourists coming into our region during the summer months, but few or maybe none during the winter. In our riding, we see the investments that the government is making and hope to increase the number of visitors coming to our region. This could lead to future employment and business opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, when I see the government developing strategies, I think this is a very good first step. It's the next steps that concern me. There doesn't seem to be a lot of action that helps the ordinary resident. In my riding, I see a number of individuals trying to get into commercial agriculture, but access to land is a huge stumbling block. The Deh Cho, especially Fort Simpson, used to be a flourishing spot that provided excellent land for growing and it provided for many. I know it can do so again. Unfortunately, I have heard from a number of people who want to access land who say that the government makes it difficult that they can't afford to do it. I had one individual tell me it is cheaper to build a tank farm than a number of greenhouses. This is a concern.

Mr. Speaker, there are things to celebrate in this budget. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has responded to the needs for inclusive schooling in the junior kindergarten

program. The additional addition of \$881,000 is a good start to address this issue and it is my understanding that this will continue in future budgets.

Mr. Speaker, I was very excited to see an additional \$1.6 million to expand the Distance Learning Program into four more small communities. I have heard from someone in my riding. They would like to see their children continue their studies in their home community. This expansion will help.

Mr. Speaker, it is also exciting that there is \$848,000 to improve diagnosis and case management services for people with autism and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and another \$653,000 to expand services for young children in small communities who need speech language therapy, occupational therapy, audiology services, and enhanced services for more complex neurological disorders.

Mr. Speaker, in my past career, I had the opportunity to speak with youth from across the Territories about their challenges. Today, those challenges still have not changed. If anything, they have gotten worse. We need to understand the mental health needs of our children and youth in the Northwest Territories. This requires urgent attention. The addition of child and youth mental health counsellors is a very positive step. These much-needed positions will help our youth and their families address mental health and addiction issues, support mental wellness, and to build coping and resiliency skills. I look forward to seeing them in each school.

I am happy that, for the smallest communities, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will continue the travelling model of mental health support that has been successfully implemented. Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation plans to enable residents to bundle aging-in-place initiatives with other housing programs and the plan to support fuel tank replacement are positive steps to help residents of the Northwest Territories, especially our elders.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at the Mandate Commitment 4.3.5, Reduction of the burden of chronic diseases by promoting healthy lifestyles and improving screening and management, with specific focus on increasing awareness and availability of smoking cessation aids, I hope the Department of Health and Social Services will revisit the Don't Be A Butthead campaign. I recommend this or a similar campaign target two specific demographics: one, children and youth, and two, our small communities, with the goal of reducing smoking rates in small communities to match the lower rates in Yellowknife and the regional centres. Such a campaign must also

include public health and safety components addressing cannabis use.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the Department of Health and Social Services plan a review of supplementary health benefits sooner than it is set out in the business plan. It should include an assessment of income or means-testing. The department should provide regular updates on this file to this House. As well, the department should propose a way to introduce funding to close the current gap in services for residents who are currently excluded from coverage. This group includes non-Indigenous working poor without workplace insurance.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has reversed all its reductions to the Social Work Diploma program and the Teacher Education Program. Now I would like to see them restore regular enrolment and program operations until all related review and strategic planning, including the foundational review and the proposed review of the social work program, are complete. I respect the process, but this will be the second year without an intake, and that is concerning.

If you look at the department's forecast for positions in demand from 2015 to 2030, you find: teachers, elementary school and kindergarten teachers, 777 positions; secondary school teachers, 577 positions; early childhood educators and assistants, 448 positions. In the social work positions: social workers, 158; and social and community service workers, 479, are high on the list. This should be telling us something. There is going to be a demand for trained people, and we need to prepare for that.

Mr. Speaker, we heard from the arts community that they would like an increase to their funding after more than 10 years without one. After learning their concerns, I would like to recommend Education, Culture and Employment add an additional \$500,000 to funding for the Northwest Territories Arts Council in the 2018-2019 Main Estimates. This would double the current support. As well, I would like to see the department identify \$100,000 in the 2018-2019 Main Estimates for a touring grant program that would aid Northwest Territories-based performing artists in performing opportunities outside the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it is great to see funding being provided to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres. However, the NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada that does not annually support the territorial Council of Friendship Centres or the Local Friendship Centres.

For example, the Rankin Inlet Friendship Centre receives a tremendous amount of support, operating a number of satellite offices in the Kivalliq

Region, and providing a number of programs and services in other communities. In the Yukon, the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre receives multi-year funding to operate a number of programs and services in Whitehorse and the surrounding communities. I think we need to do the same here in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the Housing Corporation develop a policy to ensure that individual communities are empowered to decide whether modular or stick-built units are used in their communities. This could be achieved through the development of the proposed community housing plan. This would be a huge step to empower the communities and improve local housing.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will provide additional resources for Single Window Service Centres / Government Services Officers (GSOs), so each small community has this service by the end of our term in office. By providing these positions, each community will have a one-stop shop where those most in need can more easily access help navigating government. As for the larger centres, I realize that we cannot provide this type of position for them, but hopefully the government can work together for something similar in the future.

I am happy that Education, Culture and Employment is proposing \$1.4 million to establish six new career and education advisors who will engage with students and youth, helping them make informed decisions about their education and career paths. However, the problem is that the six positions will be split between Yellowknife and Inuvik, to serve the whole NWT. This idea does not make any sense if we are doing what is best for our young people. If we are really looking at what is good for the whole NWT, we need to see one position in each of the six regions. This way, the advisors will get to know the youth, staff, and communities better.

Mr. Speaker, there has been some discussion on the proposed four- or five-stream secondary school structure. According to the labour market forecast, a high school diploma will be enough to qualify for only 14 per cent of territorial jobs (3,871) by the year 2030. Roughly 77 per cent of jobs will require more than a high school diploma. It is apparent that the proposed new structure will impact future secondary students and their post-secondary options, both educational and career-based. Further, the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices pilot has clearly demonstrated the importance of meaningful engagement in advance of decision-making with students, parents, and teachers. I strongly recommend that the department is proactive in its communication with all members, students, parents, and teachers, and that a final

draft and full communications plan be complete by the end of June.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the Finance Minister speak about converting maturing equity leases to fee-simple title. This would help residents holding those leases be secure in renovating or building homes, starting businesses, and contributing to the economic development of the territory. Presently, this is a huge issue.

I am happy to see the Department of Lands taking action on equity lease issues across the NWT. However, I have a huge concern about the department's approach. The budget shows a new initiative for the creation of three positions for Fort Smith to address 244 outstanding equity lease files in the NWT. To me, this is excessive to resolve 244 equity leases, particularly when staff are located in Fort Smith, where there are only six equity leases. I understand the need to train staff, but once training is complete, staff need to be redeployed to communities where equity leases are of the greatest concern. This includes Fort Providence, where there are 58 equity leases, Fort Simpson with 33, and Yellowknife with 50, including the Ingraham Trail and Detah.

The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh spoke about the land lease system. Presently, the Department of Lands charges 10 per cent of assessed value of the land. This is very expensive to consider when you are only renting a lot from the GNWT and, after 10 years, you have to start all over again. Mr. Speaker, the residents pay more than double what I pay in my tax-based community. I would like to see the department reduce the rate from 10 per cent to 3 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this year we are seeing a second year of cuts to funding for multisport games. This is totally unacceptable. Last year, the government cut \$150,000, and this year they are proposing to cut an additional \$250,000. I can bet that another \$250,000 will be removed in next year's budget. It is very disappointing, especially for me. In my opinion, these games belong to the government and need to be funded from within the department's budget. To see this happen as part of the GNWT's fiscal strategy is very sad, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, I am trying to address issues with the Small Community Employment Program. I understand what the Department of Education, Culture and Employment wishes to do with the program, but, in the small communities of Nahendeh, we need employment opportunities. People want to work, and, unfortunately, there isn't a lot of work out there. As one contractor says, it is getting bad when we see more vehicles getting repossessed than we see vehicles roadside assistance happening. I hope the department will

earmark a good portion of the Small Community Employment funding for job creation.

On a similar note, I cannot forget about my summer students with jobs with the Government of the Northwest Territories. They are very important in my region and in the whole territory. I would like to see a concrete plan for hiring summer students and to see a budget for it.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I have to say that we still have some challenges facing us. We only have a couple of more years left in our term, and, like I heard on TV the other day, "let's do it right." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Replies to the budget address, day 7 of 7. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 84-18(3):  
EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION AND  
PARTICIPATION - NWT DISABILITY STRATEGIC  
FRAMEWORK: 2017 TO 2027

TABLED DOCUMENT 85-18(3):  
DISABILITY MATTERS - A COMPANION TO THE  
NWT DISABILITY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:  
2017 TO 2027

TABLED DOCUMENT 86-18(3):  
GNWT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES INVENTORY

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Participation - NWT Disability Strategic Framework: 2017 to 2027"; "Disability Matters - A Companion to the NWT Disability Strategic Framework: 2017 to 2027"; and "GNWT Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities Inventory." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 87-18(3):  
2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 88-18(3):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR THE  
PERIOD OCTOBER 17, 2017 TO FEBRUARY 6,  
2018

**MR. SPEAKER:** I hereby table the "2016-2017 Annual Report of the Legislative Assembly of the

Northwest Territories"; and, pursuant to section 5 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the "Summary of Members' Absences for the period October 17, 2017 to February 6, 2018."

Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns; Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process; Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. I want to thank our visitors in the gallery for sticking with us. It has been quite a day. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, continuing the Department of Education, Culture and Employment followed by continuing the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, time permitting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to discuss Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, and continue where we left off with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The last time we discussed the department, we went through opening comments as well as comments from the Minister. I will ask the Minister if he has witnesses he wishes to bring into the Chamber. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my right, I have Deputy Minister Sylvia Haener, and on my left, Assistant Deputy Minister Olin Lovely.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment begins at page 25 of the main estimates. As I have stated, we have already done opening comments, so we will proceed to consider the detail. The departmental total can be found on page 29, but as is our practice, we will consider the detail in the document before considering the departmental total. There are five activities in this department. The first activity is corporate management and begins on page 33.

What we will do is we will consider each activity at once, and some activities have more than one page. They include the expenditure summary, as well as information items. If committee has comments, they can speak to each activity once. Please reference the page that you are discussing. I will open the floor to comments on corporate management operations expenditure summary or the active positions found on the next page. Comments or questions on ECE corporate management? Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am looking at page 33, and I am seeing that there is a slight increase in planning, research, and evaluation, and I am wondering what the additional funds are being used for. Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are for the three positions that we are using for the case management system.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. I would just like to remind everyone to end your statement with a "thank you" or some way so that the sound crew knows when it is time to change the mic. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wonder if the Minister could just refresh my memory about the case management positions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The case management system is the system we use to provide payments for income assistance clients and to track expenditures and a number of other

programs and services that we offer. As part of the support for that system, we needed to add three positions in order to bring more services in-house rather than contracting it to a company that we have a contract with down south. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Further, Ms. Green?

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the witness please say what kinds of services are being brought in-house that were once contracted? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are going to be IT resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we talk about three positions for case management, we are talking about IT positions for case management. Is that correct? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and yes, that is correct. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Nothing further from Ms. Green. Anything further to the activity of corporate management? Seeing none, I will call this activity. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 33, contract services went down to \$780,000. Can the Minister explain what the change is between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019? There is a difference of \$107,000.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of bringing more services in-house, we are going to use fewer contracted services from the company that I had previously mentioned. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, if the company is coming in and we are going to save some money, why aren't we hiring more people to save more money if we are trying to reduce this area? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Haener.

**MS. HAENER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. These resources were contracted with a consulting firm that specialized in IT services for our case management system, and we, in looking at that, determined that it was actually cheaper to hire people and employ them in-house to perform those tasks. That is why we are looking at the three resources and less expenditure in contracted services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Next, it's Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am looking at the operations expenditure summary, the compensation and benefits line. There is this decreasing trend from 2016-2017 where it was \$8.1 million down to \$6.9 million anticipated for 2018-2019, but when I look at the next page, which is the active positions, we see that there is actually a three-person increase in this activity area for the department. Can someone explain to me how we are adding staff, but the money for compensation and benefits is actually going down over time? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Each year, as part of our accounting process, we have to accrue an amount for employee leave and termination benefits. Part of that actual dollar amount of \$8,102,000 includes that, plus we had also run through a couple of senior managers, and we were paying one while they were in their retirement process, so that cost also is incurred as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just so I understand, there were some extraordinary costs related to personnel or human resources issues back in 2016-2017. It was like a one-time thing in one year? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's correct. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. On the contract services line, the main estimates for last year were

\$887,000 but only \$396,000 was expended. Can someone tell me what happened there and whether any of that contract work has now been carried forward into the new year 2018-2019? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this relates to the senior manager positions. As part of a reduction exercise that we undertook in 2017-2018, we reduced the contract services by \$400,000. That's largely attributed to that. We were trying to bring most of those services in-house, as the deputy minister had indicated, but we were unable to find the number of qualified applicants to undertake a full in-source of that service, so we are blending that service and bringing part of it in-house and part of it through contracted services, hence the increase in the next year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. Next is Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As with a number of Members on the issue of arts funding, the NWT Arts Strategy has been raised. This framework has not been reviewed in a significant amount of time. I'm wondering if the Minister can commit to reviewing that framework within this fiscal year. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. Would the Minister confirm whether or not this is the proper section to raise that issue?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, it's not the proper section, but I will commit that we will look at that framework within this government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart, anything further for corporate management?

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason why I raised that here is it does deal with policy legislation and broad strategic framework, including comprehensive framework for evaluating programs, setting and monitoring performance measurements and targets. Is the current arts funding evaluated by this division or by this activity? Are we evaluating our arts programming and seeing what its impact is as we deal with education funding? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That specific funding is administered through the Arts Council, so it's flow-through money. Every

year, we look at the program but it's flow-through money that we don't really evaluate at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Maybe we should. I would recommend that perhaps we look at the impact and value for money of this in conjunction with the Arts Council and our partners so that we can make sure we're meeting the requirements of maintaining steady flow of resources to arts communities and to the Arts Council itself, and that we're meeting the strategic objectives. It's good to get money out the door, but it's much better if we know that money is making an impact. Again, the other reason that I asked these questions to the Minister in this section is this framework is a multi-departmental framework. It's not just housed within one activity within ECE. It may require changing government policies or changing legislation that governs some of these areas.

Is the Minister confident that none of that work has to go on in reviewing the arts strategy and that it can all be done by the arts and culture division of the department? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I have mentioned in the House, I will be working with my colleague from ITI to look at the options moving forward on the strategy within this term. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Testart. I see no more comments. I will call this activity. Corporate management, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$12,881,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. The next activity begins on page 35, culture, heritage and languages, and continues on to page 39. Do you have comments, questions, or concerns? Mr. Vanthuyne. Please indicate which page you are discussing. Thank you.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to discuss page 37, the NWT Arts Council. This is where there are grants to artists and cultural groups to support their undertakings. As the previous speaker, my colleague from Kam Lake, alluded to, a number of Members and the public at large have been raising some concerns to some degree about the need to undertake a review of the strategy but also the increased funding to the

Northwest Territories Arts Council, as it hasn't seen an increase in a significant number of years.

I just want to maybe hear from the Minister. We've heard recently that people were thinking that maybe there was the possible opportunity of getting lottery funds to support arts. We know that that's probably not realistic at this point in time. Can the Minister let us know if there is any consideration with regard to increasing the pot to the Northwest Territories Arts Council that currently sits at \$500,000 a year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know I've had questions in the House regarding the Arts Council funding; we are going through the main assessments now. I know there have been concerns about an increase. I did mention that we were looking right across government and seeing what our contributions were collectively. During our discussions, I had mentioned, and what I said in the House is that I believe we're sufficiently funding the arts community right across the sector. That funding is fully utilized. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess the clear question to the Minister then is: will we be seeing an increase to the NWT Arts Council? Again, it sits at \$500,000. I want to know specifically from the Minister: will any increase be given to the NWT Arts Council?

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As noted in the main estimates, it is \$500,000 currently. Thank you. That's what we have before us, thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think at this time I will get off this line of questioning, but I strongly suggest that the Minister -- just one moment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I will go to the Minister. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you know, we go through a process when we're going through the main estimates and operations with budget. That line item, I can defend what's before me within our budget, within ECE and what's on the paper here. With that line of questions, I'd

like to maybe ask the Minister of Finance to answer that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Minister of Finance, Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in our correspondence with committee, one of the recommendations they made was a possible addition to the funding to the NWT Arts Council. In my correspondence back to committee, I have made that commitment in the form of a supplemental we would be bringing forward an increase to the contribution to the NWT Arts Council of \$200,000.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Anything further, Mr. Vanthuyne?

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the respective department and the Minister of Finance for their confirmation. No further questions at this time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next, I have Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will take this opportunity to acknowledge the recent announcement of additional funding for the Arts Council and commend the government for their efforts towards supporting the arts in the Northwest Territories.

I have some questions about the support to northern performers item, which is on page 37, and on page 38, it gives some detail on the purposes of it: "Grants to performing artists, festival organizations and events, community governments and band councils for the promotion of performing arts in NWT communities."

An ongoing area of advocacy for many of my honourable friends has been around a touring grant in support for northern performers so that they can maintain their residency here in the North, live in the North, and be allowed to travel elsewhere and that the government provide subsidies to allow that. The government has often turned towards this funding, the support to northern performers, as the "it already happens and there are no additional resources needed."

I would just like to get a sense of where this money goes. Can the Minister give some detail on who is receiving contributions from the support to northern performers funding? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do not have that level of detail of who is receiving it. You did hear in the House today during the question period that we did give funding to the Inuvialuit Drummers and Dancers to go to the gathering down in Edmonton, but if the Member would like, we can look at getting some of that information for him. I believe there were about 20 groups that got the funding last year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be voting on this item shortly, so I don't need the information later. I would appreciate if the Minister had that information when we ask these questions in this Committee of the Whole review. However, I just want to get clarification.

I think the Drummers is an example of a group that should be getting a support to go on tours, but this is particularly broad. It also supports festival organizations and events, community governments, and band councils. What do those contributions look like? Are we providing contributions to Long John Jamboree, to Muskrat Jamboree, to those kind of events, or is it only going to northern performers? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't get into all 20 of them, but yes, we are funding Long John Jamboree Society, Snowking Winter Festival, Folk on the Rocks, Great Northern Arts Festival, Kole Crook Fiddle Association, Western Arctic Moving Pictures, Tides Canada Initiatives Society; the list goes on. In due time, I will just save reading the whole list and just give an idea of some of the groups that we do fund. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for the clarification from the Minister. In this section, too, we see arts organizations operating funding in the amount of \$460,000, and these are stated as "contributions to provide ongoing operational support to established arts organizations and large cultural events and festivals in the Northwest Territories."

I would like to ask the Minister: if there is dedicated funding to support festivals such as that were just on that list, what is the difference, I guess, between the two funding sources when they are going to the same organization?

What has been addressed in the House, Mr. Chair, has been a need for dedicated funding support for Northern artists who are on tour to southern Canada, which, as everyone in the Northwest Territories understands, is very expensive. There is very little incentive for a Northerner to stay here when they could be moving to Vancouver or Toronto, where it is much easier to do festival circuits and to get around. The artists who are staying here love it here, and we ought to be supporting them with some sort of dedicated touring. My concern is, if it is only \$101,000 and it's wide open for everyone to look for resources, then perhaps we need to streamline this to be a little more specified so that we can support those artists and keep them here in the North so that we don't lose them to the South. It is good to be flexible, but it is also good to be specific when we are trying to achieve a specific policy gain for northern artists. Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the arts organizations operating funding, that is a lot for the O and M side of things with the organizations. The support to northern performers, again, let's take Western Arctic Moving Pictures, for example. We fund their operations, but we also fund them to go out and do the travel. Support to northern performers supports cultural delegations to things like Arctic Winter Games, Minister's Culture and Heritage Circle, international festivals, and NWT Days that we have had in the past in Ottawa, as well as things like the Circumpolar Games. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am assuming that some of the support to northern performers monies are being used by -- sorry, let me ask: is this money given on conditions, or is it just transferred to the organizations? Is there an application process that says how they need to use the money? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, with the grant contribution agreement that we go into, there is an accountability component. So, yes, there are conditions applied to this when we fund them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Is support to northern performers money being provided to festival organizations to

bring in southern performers to the Northwest Territories to perform at those festivals? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In some cases, yes, it can be used for that. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's my point; right? It's support to northern performers, and we need something to do that and be specific in providing that level of support.

I want to be clear for the record today that I am not advocating we reduce funding to festival organizations. They are a very important part of our Northern culture and our communities, and I would never recommend removing any kind of funding from them. What I am talking about is that there is a real need that northern performers, some of them nationally recognized and award-winning northern performers, have brought forward to this government and are looking for additional support.

I will conclude with this: in the review of our arts strategy, will some dedicated effort be given to this idea of a northern touring grant, and can that be part of the work going forward? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like any other of our strategies that we have worked on developing, we would have to create a discussion paper. As I mentioned, I have to talk with my colleague in the Department of ITI moving forward before we see what those discussions will look like. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Can the Minister, then, commit to talking to artists who are looking for this additional funding? I don't think I am doing it justice, clearly. This makes a lot of sense to me, but can the Minister commit to involving artists in this work so that it is not just a departmental analysis of total arts funding? That is not at all what is required here. We need to talk to the artists who are looking for additional support. Can the Minister commit to doing that? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. By getting strategy that we have come out of within the

Department of ECE, we have always engaged our partners, we have always engaged our stakeholders to ensure that they give us the input and the expertise that is needed to develop such a strategy of where we are going to be moving forward over the next number of years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart, your time has expired. Minister, just for the public's information, I know ITI produces a grants and contributions guide every year; does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment produce something similar that shows the organizations that received the grants and in what amounts?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, staff of the department are working on a document like that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am looking at page 38, near the bottom of the page, Indigenous languages broadcasting, and also I see a bit of an increase, almost \$100,000, in that area. A little bit of background of we are facing: some of the communities that I represent are not getting the broadcasts from the Aboriginal-language radio station, CKLB. I am wondering if this money is money that will be used with the intent of bringing some broadcasting back into the communities. I have one community where there is no broadcasting at all, of any sort of radio, because there is something with the equipment. I am wondering if this money can be used to support that, to get the communities back online for that radio station. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is what exactly that funding is for, is to support our current radio stations and, like you mentioned, MLA Beaulieu, that we can look at new communities, as well.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One more question: Mr. Chairman, earlier the Minister was reading a list of northern performers, support to northern performers; I was wondering if the Minister could commit to just agreeing to provide that list to committee later on. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Member is looking for a commitment from the Minister. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I can provide the list for the NWT Arts Council funding support to northern performers, as well as the arts organization operating funding. We can provide that to Members. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. No further questions from Mr. Beaulieu. Seeing nothing further from committee. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I, too, would like to thank the Minister of Finance. I don't do it very often, so I hope he is listening. I would like to thank him for the commitment of 200,000 extra dollars for the NWT Arts Council, and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for agreeing to undertake a review of arts programs. I just want to ask about the scope of this review. Is it to just review existing programs, or are we actually going to be developing a new arts strategy? The last one I am aware of dates, I think, from 2004 for ECE. What is the objective here, a new arts strategy or just a review of existing programs? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we will be looking at refreshing the arts strategy. As I mentioned earlier, we will be reaching out to our partners, our stakeholders, to make sure that we get the right input and feedback and contributions in developing the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the commitment of the Minister to engage the public and the arts community in preparing that strategy refresh. Is part of that also going to be an opportunity to look at how we approach the arts? Right now, it is divided between ITI and ECE. Is there going to be some look at how we might restructure those programs to make them more efficient and effective? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have already reached out to the Department of ITI and started those discussions on options moving forward. With the questions in the House earlier on in this session, we went ahead and started that dialogue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, again I just want to thank the Minister, then, for confirming that the scope of this is not just going to be a review of existing programs, that the Minister is open to looking at how it might be restructured to make this a more effective and efficient approach to the arts on behalf of all of our residents. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member for the comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Anything further, Mr. O'Reilly? Nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. Seeing no further comments, I will call this activity. Page 36, culture, heritage and languages, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$19,422,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Moving on to our third activity; early childhood and school services begins at page 40 and continues to page 44. Does committee have comments or questions? Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on page 41, I see that the revised estimates for the current fiscal year and the estimate for the next is the same for inclusive schooling, and yet, in the budget address, the Minister announced there would be an additional \$881,000 available for inclusive schooling. Could the Minister please clarify? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That announcement of the extra funding was done towards the end, at the last minute before the mains were printed, so it will be reflected. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. It will be reflected where? Could you please clarify?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Sorry. It will be reflected in the overall commitment that we made with that \$881,000 and what was made in my statement in the opening address, as the mains were printed before we made that change for the increased inclusive schooling for \$881,000. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. So this money will come through a

supplementary appropriation? Is that what you are saying?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, that is correct.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the clarification from the Minister on that. My next question has to do with reworking the inclusive school funding. Could the Minister please provide us with an indication of whether there is any work going on to rework the inclusive schooling funding formula? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you. In terms of the funding formula for inclusive schooling, not at this moment. We are still going to use the same formula.

I just want to correct myself, that it is not through a supplementary appropriation that we will be bringing that \$881,000 for inclusive schooling. It will be an internal reallocation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to go back now to the inclusive schooling money. Where is the money coming from? That is the \$881,000. Which program or programs is it being reallocated from? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you look at the program detail under schools, it is coming out of that line item. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Am I correct in understanding that it is coming out of schools, and it is going back into schools versus inclusive schooling? It is just changing hands within the same pot; is that correct? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is correct, internal reallocation of that funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Chair, I am going to go out on a limb and say that the schools are not going to be very happy to know that they are losing \$881,000 from one allocation in order to have inclusive schooling funded from that same amount of money. What we had been led to believe is that there was additional money for inclusive schooling available in this budget, and now it seems we have been misled, unless I am missing something. Where is the additional money for inclusive schooling, or isn't there any? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That \$881,000 for inclusive schooling that we had mentioned, when we did put the funding out there for junior kindergarten for funding, we did not get full enrolments of all grades, so there was a surplus of money for that money that the Finance Minister had brought in the last budget. Because we did not get full enrolments in junior kindergarten, that surplus from that money that reallocated for JK, we are using to reallocate internally to fund inclusive schooling. I will go to Mr. Lovely for a bit more clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you are aware, there is about \$155 million that we provide to education authorities, and that is broken up into administration, territorial schools, inclusive schooling, and Indigenous languages.

A large component of what we provide to the schools is based on the number of students who are enrolled. In any given year, the budgets will vary depending on the enrolment. This past year, we saw enrolments across the education system decrease by 1.8 per cent. Instead of returning that money back into the consolidated revenue fund, we received permission to include that into the inclusive schooling. Rather than seeing the budget go down by \$881,000, it maintained itself at that rate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand what the witness had to say there, but what I am concerned about is: if enrolment rebounds over the next school year, where will the money for inclusive schooling come from at that point? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the first year that we have had the territorial

implementation of junior kindergarten throughout the Northwest Territories. We did mention that we were going to continue to monitor and evaluate. Should enrolments rebound, we do go through a business planning process with our operations budget on a yearly basis and have those discussions then. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like more certainty around the funding for inclusive schooling. I would like it to be added to the base going forward so that there is certainty that there is money for all grades for inclusive schooling, since it is so critical to their success. Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I can confirm that the reallocation of the funding that we have put into inclusive schooling for this year is added to the base. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, does that mean that that money is going to be available for every year going forward? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is dependent on enrolment. We go through the funding formula when we look at enrolments in the school, so it will be based on enrolments. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, what I have heard from the various meetings we have had with school trustees is that there is a great need for inclusive schooling money in order to diagnose and assist children with learning disabilities as quickly as possible. For that reason, I am going to say that this is an area that needs constant support, that the schools cannot be going up and down according to enrolment each year. They have to have a reliable amount of money for inclusive schooling. To that end, will the Minister consider adding a fixed amount of money for inclusive schooling going forward and/or rework the formula to ensure that there is certainty for school boards? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, we fund inclusive schooling at 15 per cent; sorry, we are legislated at 15 per cent. We are currently funding school boards at 17.3 per cent. We did increase this funding for junior kindergarten with an internal reallocation, and we will look at it on a year-to-year basis based on enrolments. We did meet with our education leaders, and we did hear the same thing. I think this increase in funding for this year with the first rollout of junior kindergarten is definitely going to help. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Twenty-three seconds, Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am going to just skip over now to funding for busing. I know the Minister has a territory-wide committee looking at funding for busing. I'm wondering, if he finds that there is, in fact, a need for more busing, whether he will provide that money in a supplemental in the fall. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Your time has expired, but I will allow the Minister time to respond. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct. We are going through a territorial-wide survey on busing and transportation in communities across the Northwest Territories. Once we have that report, we will take a look at it. Obviously, it will have to go through Finance. I cannot make that commitment at this time, but we will wait until that report comes out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've got to come back to this inclusive schooling thing so that I can get a clearer understanding of it. The 17.5 per cent is based on kindergarten to grade 12, and with junior kindergarten, you are putting \$881,000 into the program. Is this correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification, I am not sure where the 17.5 came from. I did mention that we fund inclusive schooling at 17.3, and that \$881,000 is going to inclusive schooling for junior kindergarten. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that correction. I apologize. I did say 17.5. I wrote it down wrong.

In the future, is this number going to stay as a base number? I am hearing you say that it is going to be based on enrolment. I know right now you say it's 15 per cent you're legislated. You're at 17.3, plus the \$881,000. My first question is: what is the percentage that we are actually putting into inclusive schooling now with \$881,000? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we would have to do a recalculation, since this funding is going in right now, but from now on, moving forward, we will be funding inclusive schooling from JK to 12 and just not K to 12. This internal reallocation that you see before you is part of that, moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that clarification. So are we going to be going to 17.3 per cent from junior kindergarten to grade 12, or is it going to be a different number? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, we are legislated at 15 per cent, and I just got the figure now. It is now at 17.6 per cent that we are funding inclusive schooling for JK to 12. I just got to updated numbers. Previous, before, K to 12 was at 17.3 per cent. It is in legislation. We cannot keep it funded at those rates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer. I think probably some of my colleagues are going to have some other questions for that. I am going to go on to my next item here. You heard in my reply to the budget that we talked about new career and academic counselling positions. I have looked through the main estimates, and I am trying to understand. Where is it in this business plan? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Member will turn to page 49, it would be in the labour development and standards. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Okay, so that is into another activity, so I will wait for that question, there. Thank you to the Minister for that clarification. In regard to the budget, on page 41 we saw an increase for early childhood development and learning of \$2.695 million, so can the Minister explain what this huge increase is on? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you have heard during questions in the House, we do have a funding agreement with the Government of Canada, and that is reflected in that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Hopefully, this will be my last question on this page here. Has the department broken down this money, how they are going to allocate these funds? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have. As I have chatted with the Member, once this agreement is officially signed and we can make an announcement, we will be willing to come before standing committee and share that information. Thank you.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that. I am looking forward to that briefing, so at this point in time those are all my questions for this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Next on my list I have Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is on page 42. In the current bilateral agreements, discussions between this government and the federal government, can we see some additional funding coming in for the fiscal year for, more specifically, the whole area of early childhood programming or any other funding that is under way through these bilateral negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just trying to tread lightly here in terms of working with our counterparts with the Government of Canada. We will be making an announcement and, when we do make that announcement, we can inform all Members of the increased funding that we are going to have for early childhood development. Right now, I just want to make sure that we have that confirmation and good working relationships with the Government of Canada. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for the answer that the Minister gave. I just basically want to know if there is additional funding that we will see for the upcoming year in the areas of youth support, early development programming. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Anything from the Minister?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I can confirm there will be an increase in funding. As you have heard me say in this House, as well, we also have 11 communities in the Northwest Territories that currently do not have any childcare or daycare programming, and, with some of this additional funding, we want to make sure that it is a priority to get early childhood programming as well as childcare in those communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Anything further, Mr. McNeely?

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Next, I have Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to go back to this inclusive schooling amount. It was announced as additional funding in the budget address, and I guess what we are hearing now from the Minister is that, I guess on page 6 of the budget address, we are also going to direct an additional \$881,000 towards providing inclusive schooling funding for junior kindergarten students. Is this new funding that is to be added to the base, or is it lapsed funding from decreased enrolment in JK funding? What is this funding? I cannot find it in the business plan. I cannot find it in the main estimates. Where is it? Let's start with where it comes from, and then I would like to know where it shows up. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned, the mains were printed before those decisions were made, and it is an internal reallocation. The Member did mention that there was a lower enrolment than we expected in junior kindergarten. I will just confirm that it is an internal reallocation to fund inclusive schooling for junior kindergarten. To get into the really specific details, I can go to Mr. Lovely to explain. I think he explained it earlier, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In a normal business planning year, if the enrolments had gone down, that funding would have been returned to the Department of Finance. Rather than return that money to the Department of Finance, it was reinvested into the education system under inclusive schooling. However, because of the timing of when the main estimates were printed and when that decision was made, it was unable to be reflected in the main estimates for 2018-2019, but, as we move forward into the next main estimates process, it will be reflected in the 2018-2019 revised main estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to our ECE colleagues for that explanation. So, that \$881,000, is it entirely from this lapsed funding or is some of it an internal reallocation of contributions that go to the district education authorities? What is the proportion if it is mixed up? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can confirm with the Member that it is entirely from the lapse, the funding. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks, Mr. Chair. That is better than taking it out of, clawing it out of, the DEA funding, so that is good news. So is this just a one-time allocation, or is it basically going to be added to the ongoing funding that is provided to the district education authorities? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is added to ongoing. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay. That is not what I think I heard last time from the Minister. Just to be crystal clear, this \$881,000 addition for inclusive schooling to presumably cover junior kindergarten students, that will be added to the ongoing funding that is provided to the district education authorities not just in 2018-2019, but in all future years. Is that correct? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is ongoing funding from JK to 12, as I had mentioned earlier, and every year, it is going to change based on enrolments from school to school, authority to authority. I will ask my assistant deputy minister, Olin Lovely, to maybe get into a little bit more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under inclusive schooling for this current fiscal year, it was only counting the number of students who were in kindergarten to grade 12. Because of this decision to include junior kindergarten students in the inclusive schooling formula, in the 2018-2019 school year, those students will be counted within that formula for inclusive schooling.

\$881,000 reflects the amount that is provided under inclusive schooling for the number of junior kindergarten students throughout the education system. If the number of junior kindergarten students increases, then the amount for inclusive schooling will go up. If it decreases, the amount for junior kindergarten will go down. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think I understand that, but is this then the equivalent of actually changing the formulas that fund inclusive schooling to now include junior kindergarten students for all future years? Is that what this really amounts to? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and yes. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, that was a long series of questions to get to the basic answer

that the formulas are going to be changed. That's great for inclusive schooling.

I want to refresh the Minister and his staff's memories, then, about Tabled Document 423-18(2) on September 19, 2017. I have got extra copies here if the Minister and his staff need them, but this was a table that showed the formulas for funding schools where junior kindergarten was not included and then the shortfall if junior kindergarten students were included.

I have just heard now from the Minister that he is going to include junior kindergarten students for the inclusive schooling portion of those formulas. That is great news. What about the other portions that did not include junior kindergarten students, like administration, school consultants, counselling, secretaries, custodians, Aboriginal languages O and M, and Aboriginal languages assistance? Are those formulas going to be changed to include junior kindergarten students in 2018-2019? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are currently looking at the Aboriginal languages directive, and we are looking at possibly adding that moving forward. With all of the other ones, I believe they are going to stay the same, but we are including JK in those. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Once that directive is sorted out, one of the potential outcomes is to change the formula to include JK students? Is that what I am hearing from the Minister? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and yes, that is correct. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell us when that developmental review of the directive is going to be completed? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have an exact timeline, but I can let the Member know that probably within the next couple

of months, probably before the next business planning cycle. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. That is helpful to know. The shortfall for the two formulas for Aboriginal languages are \$36,000, and the other one is \$267,000. I know that is based on enrolments as predicted for JK. Is the Minister then going to be bringing forward a supplementary appropriation if he wants to increase the funding for Aboriginal languages to include JK students? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we would have to get that directive done first, and like I said, it will probably be in the next couple of months. Maybe my deputy minister can elaborate to that a little bit more. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly, your time has expired. Next is Mr. Beaulieu. Oh, I apologize. Ms. Haener.

**MS. HAENER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister indicated, we are currently working through the directive. It is not clear at this point what resources would be required related to the directive, but as we work through it and that becomes clearer, we will examine options in terms of addressing those resource needs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Haener. Mr. O'Reilly, your time has expired. Next, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am on page 42 in the descriptions. I see an increase in the early childhood worker scholarship of more than double the budget. I would like to ask the Minister what type of uptake there is for that program.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are pleased to say that we do have great uptake for students going into early childhood development programming. Also, with the increased funding that I had mentioned with the Government of Canada, there were increases to providing more scholarships so that we have more staff and workers that are working in daycares, day homes, and into the junior kindergarten system trained and qualified. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister a question on the two programs that are called Early Childhood Program Grants, \$80,000, and Early Childhood Worker Grant Program for \$890,000. The definitions for both of those programs are the same. I just wanted to know what the difference is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Mr. Chair, the Worker Grant Program is specifically for workers. There are subsidies and increases sometimes when they increase their training and their level of education. The grants are just for childcare programs.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am on page 43, the third item down, healthy food for children and youth. It talks about "nutritious food to support breakfast, snack, or lunch programs." I would like to ask the Minister if there are some active all-year-long breakfast programs in any of the schools. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do provide all of our education councils and authorities funding for breakfast, lunch, and snack programs. I believe every school offers those programs. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just on a bit of clarification I am seeking overall: I needed to ask the Minister about early childhood development education, so I am talking about early childhood development educators. Aside from the grant, is there anything in this particular activity where the money is used to educate early childhood development workers? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are various items that we do have in this area. One is the scholarships. We continue to provide support for those who are wanting to increase their training or qualifications. Every year,

we also do professional development and hold a symposium. That includes JK educators as well as Aboriginal Head Start instructors and our daycare operators, as well, throughout the North. So, yes, we can even get the specific programs for the Member if he likes. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am hoping that, with the strategy for the department to train, increase capacity, and create jobs for some of the small communities, there is definitely going to be a need for daycares, and I guess my question is going towards whether or not there is going to be an easy place to educate the daycare operators. I am wondering if the Minister could maybe advise me: I do not think we have to be too specific, but if he just generally has the knowledge on, say, for example, if we were to restart the daycare in Lutselk'e, where would the daycare operators train, like which location? Would the educators come to Lutselk'e to train, or would they come here or somewhere else? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do have staff who actually go into the communities to do some of the training. We do have that symposium that we hold every year, early childhood symposium. If anybody is wanting to start up a daycare, as well, we would be more than welcome to work with communities. We do have really good start-up funds, subsidies, for daycares and childcare spaces. As I mentioned earlier, we have 11 communities that we would really like to get into and provide that daycare and childcare to families who do need it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. I see nothing further from Mr. Beaulieu. Anyone else who has not spoken on this section? Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, am going to ask the Minister if he can clarify this budget commitment to increase junior kindergarten funding or the inclusive education side of the junior kindergarten funding, because I am still unclear. The Minister spoke to a lapse in funding that has allowed the department to fully fund inclusive education and that the mains could not be printed in time for us to see that in the document here, so I would like to ask: where can I find the funding that has lapsed?

As one of the Minister's witnesses said, there is lapsed funding, and that is where we are getting it

from, et cetera, so where can I see that in this activity? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned, in the program detail, you will see schools at \$128,822,000, so next year, when we get the mains and the business plans again, you are going to see that number being revised. That is going to reflect that internal reallocation of \$881,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart, this has been explained twice before. Could you please specify perhaps where you are having issues with this because we are repeating ourselves now, Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** I am looking for where I could see it in here. I understand the issue, but I did not understand where an average reader who is trying to connect the budget address to the main estimates could see this detail. I understand now. Are there any other areas of this department's budget that are not accounted for in the document before us, that we might have to be notified about?

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, there will not be. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** I thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your allowances. This is confusing, or it was confusing, and hopefully we are a bit closer to understanding all of the issues. For me, the important thing is that the formulas are changing, and that is fine. I would like to ask questions about the early childhood worker scholarship. That is on page 42. The activity is listed as grants to support full-time, face-to-face, post-secondary education in early childhood development at the diploma level or higher. Is the policy intention of this to retain those workers here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That would be the plan and the priority, to keep our early childhood workers here, as we are looking forward to sustaining our daycares and our day homes right now as well as our investments in the communities that do not have daycares. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. So how is this program evaluated, I suppose? I mean, I have no problem with scholarships, but, if they are designed to bring people back to the North, how are we doing with that? Are we actually seeing the recipients of these scholarships returning north to work in this field in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just like, I guess, any other scholarship, it is a grant that we give to the students. They have to submit an application. They have to submit their marks and their grades after they have completed their courses, as well.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. I just remind the Minister to indicate when he is done speaking. Thank you. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my question was not: are the obligations of students receiving the scholarship being met? It is: are we actually bringing home the recipients of these scholarships? So, essentially, if the reason we are granting the scholarship is to train more northern workers in this field, is it working? Are we getting people back? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned earlier, the scholarship is fully utilized. That is a good thing, that we are actually getting residents out there taking the Early Childhood Development Program. Yes, we can look into evaluating how many of our students actually take the program and get to do some work, either in the JK classroom or in a daycare in the community. Yes, we can try to get that information collected. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Similar to the early childhood program operator subsidy, is this program fully subscribed at this point? Is all the money getting to day home operators? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As Members know, we did make some improvements to our early childhood program operator subsidy last year, providing more funding to our operators to

give them the support to run a daycare. It is fully utilized every year, and that is another really good news story in terms of working and supporting early childhood development in the Northwest Territories with our partners. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is good news. Since the changes were made to the program, what have we seen as a result of the increased spending? Have we seen more affordable daycare spaces, or more daycare spaces? Are there any tangible outcomes from this investment that we can see? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It has only been a year, so we still need to evaluate that. As I mentioned earlier, we are going to be signing a bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada. We are going to get more funding that is going to possibly help more of our daycares and our early childhood operators moving forward.

As we collect all that information together, we will keep Members updated. As I also mentioned to Members earlier, once the agreement has been signed, we will be willing to come before committee and give an update on the action plan moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Noting the clock, I will now rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do I have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

**Orders of the Day**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 21, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns
  - Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process
  - Minister's Statement 32-18(3), Update on the Northwest Territories Disability Framework and Action Plan
  - Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills

## 23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 21, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

