Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca

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Prayer

---Prayer


Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 100-18(3):
CANNABIS PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS UPDATE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as most NWT residents are probably aware, as of today, the consumption of cannabis is legal across Canada.

---Applause

Interesting spot for a clap. Our government committed in our mandate to create the policy, program, and legislative regimes necessary to support legalization, and with that comes a firm commitment to public education and awareness.

Public education and awareness efforts are well under way across the Northwest Territories. The Department of Health and Social Services has been working in partnership with other GNWT departments and agencies and the federal government to make sure that NWT residents have the important evidence-based information that they need about the health, social, and legal aspects of cannabis use they need to make informed decisions. Mr. Speaker, we have taken a harm reduction approach that builds on Canada's Lower Risk Guidelines for Cannabis Use, developed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Using this harm reduction approach, our government has made it a priority to make sure that residents are aware of the significant risks of cannabis use on brain development and other health issues, and its potential effects on children, youth, pregnant and nursing women, and people with mental health issues.

As a government, we have been working diligently since August 2016 to ensure public education materials were developed to meet the needs of our residents and help them prepare for legalization of cannabis. This included new web content, direct mail to all households and businesses in the Northwest Territories, parent talk kits, traditional and social media advertising, radio and web content in all NWT indigenous languages, as well as school based education events. The campaign has included informational videos, materials for teachers and students in schools, community surveys, and the identification of community champions to help provide messaging to residents. Cannabis education and resources are also being provided at the community health fairs which are held throughout the Northwest Territories.

Recently, our campaign included hosting Dr. Matthew Hill, a neurologist from the University of Calgary's Hotchkiss Brain Institute. Through a series of in-person and online streaming events, Dr. Hill was able to field questions from youth, teachers, parents and caregivers, and health professionals about health considerations related to cannabis use, especially where it relates to brain health. We had over 125 NWT residents tune in to a live Facebook chat with the neurologist. Approximately 200 high school students here in Yellowknife as well as 30 classrooms across the territory benefited from a live question and answer sessions with Dr. Hill.

Making sure that our health professionals have access to the information that they need to do their jobs now that cannabis is legal has also been a focus area for the Department of Health and Social Services. Approximately 60 health professionals from around the territories participated in a special session focused on the latest research pertaining to the effects of cannabis use on mental health, and specifically, post-traumatic stress disorder. This was the second cannabis health expert we have brought to the territory to present on public health evidence related to cannabis use and to directly answer Northerners’ questions about cannabis and their health.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that many NWT residents have concerns related to the legalization of cannabis and its potential impacts on individuals
and communities. These concerns are not baseless, and it is our responsibility to provide messaging and materials that are culturally relevant, are tailored to our NWT population, and are understood by residents so that they can make informed decisions about cannabis use. For youth under 25, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and those experiencing mental health issues, there are very real health concerns. The legalization of cannabis opens up new opportunities for honest, straightforward conversations with NWT residents about the known health considerations for those who use cannabis. These conversations weren’t always happening prior to legalization, when cannabis was still readily available on the black market and widely used throughout our territories. We welcome this opportunity for frank dialogue.

Mr. Speaker, now that cannabis is legal, the effort of our government to provide information and education sessions to our residents doesn’t stop; more sessions are in the works. Our presentations on cannabis health information at community living fairs will continue. These fairs offer a very personal and direct way to communicate with NWT residents living in our smallest communities about health issues that are important to them. We will also have the presence at festivals and sporting events and other places where people gather and cannabis is likely to be consumed.

New and engaging cannabis health education materials are also under development and will be rolled out over the coming weeks. We have invested significant time and energy developing and pilot-testing these materials and engaging uniquely northern voices in the communication of key health messages.

As our public education campaign continues, we will be partnering with the federal government to expand cannabis public education efforts in Northwest Territories communities. This will include community and school activities, visual and social media content in all NWT official languages, as well as community resources.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the health information our government is sharing about cannabis, the federal government is active on this issue, as well. Their cannabis public education efforts include social media, paid advertising, and promotional materials, all of which are helping to provide important information to residents in our territories and throughout Canada. We are working alongside our federal counterparts to ensure consistency in our messaging and to ensure we complement rather than overlap in our efforts.

Mr. Speaker, we have made a long-term commitment to ensuring that our residents have the most up-to-date information on cannabis so that they can make informed decisions about its use. We know from our extensive consultations with youth from across the territory that they want health information delivered in a manner that is interactive, builds on the knowledge and experience they already have, and is creative. These expressed needs shaped our cannabis public education plan and will continue to inform our public awareness and education efforts as a government going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER’S STATEMENT 101-18(3): THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE COMMITTEES

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government has committed in its mandate to pursue innovative ways to prevent and reduce crime. Our experience has shown that it is not possible to administer a system of justice exactly the same way throughout our territory. Each community is different, with their own unique set of priorities and their own way of addressing local justice needs. Our government provides training and funding for all communities to hire justice coordinators, support community justice committees, and develop culturally relevant crime prevention programs.

Community justice committees, comprised of volunteers from the community, help to develop alternatives to the criminal justice system in their home community. Community justice coordinators are key liaisons between community members, the RCMP, local supports and services, and offenders.

What our community justice supports and programs help our justice system take into account is that people who commit crimes have homes and families. Almost all of them eventually come back to their communities. With the right training and support from our government, local community justice committees can be part of the planning for an offender’s safe return. This work is not always easy. Offenders need to know what supports are available to help them with their release plan, and community members need to know about how offenders have committed to addressing the problems that led to the crime, when they get home. Community justice coordinators and committees can help an offender develop a plan and follow it.

Offences that get referred to a community justice committee are addressed through a restorative model of justice. As more matters are diverted to the restorative process, fewer people are charged with crimes and therefore are not ending up in the corrections system. The RCMP is an important
partner in the successful use of the community justice approach in our communities. When police and victims gain trust in their community’s restorative approach, the number of referrals to the community justice committee increases. Restorative approaches respect the dignity of victims and hold people accountable for their actions. It does not replace the courts, but can include such things as family group conferencing, as well as victim and offender conferencing. It is a different way of dealing with minor offences, and a different way to help an offender plan to return to the community after serving a sentence.

Mr. Speaker, there is innovative work happening throughout the Northwest Territories in support of community justice. Some community justice committees are working with their local probation officers to deliver the Substance Abuse Management and Violence Prevention programs. Others are hosting large events, like the Odd Squad in Deline and Fort McPherson, and the Reel Youth video project in Fort Simpson. Justice committees are also supporting ongoing programs, like the Fort Liard Men’s Support Circle, and youth empowerment projects in Ndilo and Detah, who meet regularly to offer peer support and focus on healthy choices.

Mr. Speaker, our residents know what community safety and wellness supports their communities need, and our government is proud to help them make those things happen. Throughout our territory, every week our government is supporting youth programming, on-the-land activities, and addiction awareness workshops developed locally by justice coordinators and committees.

I applaud the work that the community justice committees and the coordinators are doing to enhance the quality of life in our communities, and thank them for being partners to helping us meet our mandate commitments to reduce and prevent crime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


MINISTER’S STATEMENT 102-18(3):
MINISTER LATE TO THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the honourable Wally Schumann will be late arriving in the House today to attend a videoconference before the House of Commons’ Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


Members’ Statements

MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON SMALL COMMUNITIES’ ACCESS TO CANNABIS AND NORTHERN CANNABIS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Recently the province of Quebec elected a new government. The new government said the legal age for purchasing and consuming cannabis will be 21. The Prime Minister responded by saying that the age proposed by the premier-elect will only feed the illegal cannabis market. The Prime Minister’s reason was that people in Quebec between the ages of 18 and 21 will continue to use street dealers to purchase cannabis.

Mr. Speaker, if we don’t open the doors for small businesses to get into the legal distribution and selling of cannabis within our small communities, I fear we may create a similar situation. Cannabis users in small communities will not have easy access to cannabis products unless they walk down the street to buy it illegally. I realize that small communities can buy online; however, you would likely need a credit card.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this government must work toward creating equal access for cannabis users in small communities, as exists in larger centres with liquor stores. We also must look internally for suppliers of cannabis within the NWT. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we should be open to the idea of cultivating cannabis grow-ops within the NWT. Already there are many businesses across Canada that are growing cannabis on a mass scale to supply this country’s new marketplace. We in the North, Mr. Speaker, are once again in the position where industries from outside the Northwest Territories are reaping benefits of sales made within the territory. Going forward, the NWT should seriously consider the great potential our own home-grown products can provide.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT’s cannabis stock will be supplied by three southern companies. Just imagine if the majority of the territory’s cannabis needs was filled by northern distributors. I truly believe that the NWT must seize the opportunity to tap into this emerging industry before we fall too far behind.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, our government officials across the country are fearful that Canada’s current stock of cannabis is too small, creating a cannabis shortage in the legal market. This also would force cannabis users to once again turn to the illegal market. Legal cannabis presents great business opportunities for people in the NWT. We cannot afford to continue to hamper the full potential of our territory. We must quickly facilitate the growth and
distribution of cannabis within the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CANNABIS LEGALIZATION PREPAREDNESS

MR. O’REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to provide a quick report on Cabinet’s cannabis legalization preparedness. First of all, the sales site of the new NWT Liquor and Cannabis Commission popped up today to sell cannabis online, although it’s extremely hard to find and there are no links from GNWT sites. On the information side, a number of departmental websites deal with cannabis. If one department could win a prize on this, it would be Health and Social Services. It has a good assortment of information, documents, and links on health effects of cannabis. The department sponsored an online talk by a health expert and sent out a mailer, as the Minister mentioned earlier today.

The Department of Justice website has some information for tenants and landlords on cannabis use and plants, but nothing on policing or penalties for cannabis law violations. The Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs has some general information about topics including possession restrictions, growing cannabis, buying it, and impaired driving. Infrastructure has a bid on impaired driving. The Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission has a general information sheet that deals with cannabis as a fitness to work and impairment matter. There is nothing on the Department of Finance, other than a link to the Executive web page. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment and MACA websites have nothing. There is nothing yet in place for private cannabis retail to fulfill Cabinet’s commitment to allow private retail within six months after passage of the bill.

I’m not aware of any government-wide communications, plans, or efforts, and given the uneven coverage of cannabis on departmental web pages, some improvements are clearly in order. There are also issues about the transparency and accountability for the revenues.

Our government will receive revenues and spend funds on implementation activities. Revenues will show up in the Liquor Revolving Fund, and there will be separate reporting on cannabis versus liquor. It is not clear what Cabinet intends to spend in terms of implementation.

The picture I’m painting here is one of a lack of coordination, and there is still no overall plan for cannabis from our government. We need a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that includes public reporting. This is exactly what the standing committee requested. Cabinet promised, and has yet to deliver. Mr. Speaker, where is the plan?

I will have questions for the Minister of Finance later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CANNABIS LEGALIZATION

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, today marks an important day in the history of Canada and how we as a nation address the social and physiological issue of addiction.

Ninety-five years of cannabis prohibition has failed to achieve the ends it sets out to achieve. It has not curbed illegal markets, nor has it righted social wrongs. Prohibition does not ensure that communities are safe; rather, it opens them up to gangsters and bootleggers who are accountable to no one, who cut their products with toxins, and all too often it is accompanied by violence. Bootlegging is a problem that affects us all in the NWT. The consequences of illegally imported controlled substances circumventing local laws is an ever-challenging issue which requires vigilance on the part of all governments and law-abiding citizens.

I want to start off by commending the GNWT for their efforts to make available to the public a great deal of evidence-based resources. Household mailers, talking kits, fact sheets, newspaper ads, and webcasts hosted by health experts are just some of the measures which have been made available to the public. I am proud to see that this and other governments all over Canada are making joint efforts toward shaping conversations as opposed to pushing for convictions of minor offences.

Most impressively, I wish to note the audio recordings made on the topic of “Health Effects of Cannabis” have been published in nine official Indigenous languages, and English and French. It is of utmost importance that all peoples in the NWT are made aware, in their language of choice, of the effects, good and bad and otherwise, that come with the legalization of cannabis.

The aforementioned resources made available to teachers, caregivers, students, and clinicians are key to ensuring a healthy and prosperous future for all those who live in our territory. We as parents, caregivers, and elders have a duty to let these tough conversations play out with those we love and care for.
We all have a responsibility to ensure that Northerners know how to remain compliant with this new legal framework. To purchase, an individual must be 19 years of age, and no one can possess in public more than 30 grams of cannabis. Most importantly, the dangers to oneself and one’s community when operating a vehicle while impaired by cannabis or alcohol must not be forgotten or understated.

Mr. Speaker, Northerners have come a long way since the 1920s, and today marks the beginning of the end of prohibition and the start of a bold new era where we can actually make a meaningful difference in the high rates of substance abuse in the Northwest Territories and across Canada. I am looking hopefully forward to a future where these rates will come down, where our communities will be safer, and our children will be protected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Members’ statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH CANNABIS LEGALIZATION**

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, here we are, October 17th, and recreational cannabis is now available to everyone who is 19 years or older. For Regular MLAs, it’s been a rushed and at times overwhelming sprint to this point. Even now, the government doesn’t have all the pieces in place, such as a fully costed implementation plan. Let’s pause and take stock of how we got here.

First of all, legalization wasn’t our idea. It was the feds who decided that regular citizens should no longer be made criminals because they smoke pot. Our response to this downloaded priority has consumed huge amounts of this Assembly’s time and treasury and energy. Other priorities have been pushed aside.

It’s worth remembering that the effect of cannabis is to alter consciousness, or in other words, to become intoxicated. This is recreational, not medicinal cannabis. During our public hearings in the spring, elders spoke of their concerns about legalizing another intoxicant. We in the NWT have a sadly large experience with the results of people becoming too intoxicated, too often, and with the social toll of dependency and costs of recovery. During those same hearings, parents voiced concern about the effects of cannabis on the brain development of young people. There is a significant downside here for youth and important questions about impaired driving for people of all ages. So you won’t hear me cheering today.

Another benefit the federal government has been touting is an end to the black market, taking cannabis sales into the public taxation system and drying up revenue for organized crime. In our jurisdiction, I have my doubts about these so-called benefits. First, you’ll need a lawyer to get through the paperwork to set up a private store here. If you live at the end of a Canada Post box, your online order may be delivered by the end of the month. Even if people have credit cards, which many don’t, the black market in small communities will be easy and quick, as it’s always been.

What we have today is the beginning of a new vigilance. We need to assess whether the approach we have been hurried to institute is appropriate, to evaluate it soon and often, and adjust as necessary. We need to monitor the use and effects of pot on our youth and citizens, on the need for dependency treatment, and the possible health care consequences of smoking behaviours. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mahsi.

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

**MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO CANNABIS LEGALIZATION**

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Mr. Speaker, there is a buzz in the room today. Bad joke number one. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, for all our lives, marijuana has been an illegal drug. Some see it as an evil influence that must be banned. To others, it’s a harmless, fun pastime. Certainly, it’s always galvanized energetic public debate.

Today, Mr. Speaker, that all changes. Cannabis becomes legal, not just for medical use, but for recreational use as well. As we are seeing, the impacts are going to be enormous.

The public discourse about cannabis has shown what a wide range of impacts are anticipated: impacts on health, on youth, on policing and enforcement. Where will cannabis be legal? How will it be sold? Who will get the profits?

I would like to commend my colleagues who were involved in the public consultation process. I think they did a good job of talking and listening to Northerners to find out what they wanted from a legal cannabis management regime.

Mr. Speaker, it’s a core mandate commitment of the 18th Assembly, and a basic need of our territory, to grow and diversify the economy. Over the last three years, we have spoken a lot about various ways of doing this. We have encouraged agriculture,
tourism, renewable energy, local manufacturing, and more.

I hope that maintaining tight government control over cannabis, even for only six months, won't jeopardize a great economic prospect. I urge the government to encourage communities and business to engage with the process, actively prepare, and be ready in six months to capitalize on this new opportunity for commercial growth and job creation.

We're at the dawn of a new era, Mr. Speaker. No one knows exactly how this will play out, but legal cannabis will revolutionize Canadian society and the economy. I support the government in making sure cannabis is managed carefully. We must be fully mindful of health issues, the safety of youth, road safety, policing, and a host of other questions.

I also want to encourage the government to be bold in recognizing the opportunity presented by this new sector to create jobs and wealth for Northerners.

Oh, and also of note, Mr. Speaker, as of today, the ever-popular tie clip can second as a new multi-use paraphernalia tool. Bad joke number two. Enjoy responsibly, everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON FORT GOOD HOPE DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Preparatory measures. Mr. Speaker, project planning is an essential element for project success.

Mr. Speaker, the Fort Good Hope K’asho Got’ine Council, with funding, sponsorship, and support from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, are initiating a driver training course in Red Deer, Alberta. Starting tomorrow, there will be nine Sahtu students receiving training.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the partnership companies, Divergent Employment Solutions, Career Assistance Network, the Fort Good Hope K’asho Got’ine Dene Community Council, and funding sources, ECE, and ASETS.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives are the foundations of statements as mentioned previously by the Minister: “The best social program is a job.” During my time here, I respectfully concur.

Mr. Speaker, a rewarding segment of this training plan is employment positions are under way upon completion. This can lead to material supply chain transportation for the Great Bear River Bridge assembly opportunities to come. Mahsi.


MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON CANNABIS LEGALIZATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it can sometimes feel like we've been seeing wall-to-wall cannabis coverage for months now. Following the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis, and then the GNWT's creation of its own legislation, Regular Members had a whirlwind seven months to review the proposed laws, research best practices, talk to residents, hold public hearings, and work on making the legislation the best it could be.

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful that so many Northerners shared their views, values, and recommendations with us. Today, on the legalization day, we are breaking new ground.

I know my colleagues will also have much to say on this subject. I would just like to highlight a few outstanding questions on the minds of people in the Mackenzie Delta, and I'm sure in other small communities.

It's my understanding that the RCMP will generally not be enforcing laws around smoking cannabis. That is, smoking in places where it's not allowed, nuisance issues, and similar violations.

Here in the Northwest Territories, that job has been handed to bylaw officers, in the communities with their own bylaws, and to environmental health officers with the Department of Health and Social Services.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are only six environmental health officers for the whole Northwest Territories, and only three of those are outside Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, not all Mackenzie Delta residents have the privilege of resident RCMP, and our communities don't have the resources for new bylaw officers, or to pile new duties on current officers. This is just one of the examples of where we still have a long way to go.

This government's responsibility for cannabis preparedness doesn't end today. In fact, I think we are just getting started. Thank you, and I will have questions later today.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members’ statements. Member for Deh Cho.
MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON
CANNABIS AWARENESS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.] Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON
RENEWAL OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for consensus government to work, each Minister must have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and be a strong enough leader to turn that vision into reality. In a party system, Ministers have party members and political staff to help them develop a vision and associated policy. However, in our system, the Ministers’ only support staff is the bureaucracy, which is not designed nor mandated to make the bold political decisions that are sometimes necessary. I am concerned that, in the absence of a bold vision, we will squander the opportunity to capitalize on what has potential to be the defining issue of this Assembly, the renewal of our post-secondary education system.

Now, it’s easy for Regular Members to stand up here and say what we would do if we were Ministers, so that is what I am going to do. If I were the Minister of Education, this is some of what I would have said on the first day of this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the report on the Aurora College foundational review has exposed this government’s failure to provide adequate post-secondary education in the NWT. I take full responsibility and apologize to all of the college’s students, teachers, and administrators for not providing them with a system in which they could all flourish. That being said, this is an exciting time because the review has given us a golden opportunity to start anew and begin to develop a world-class post-secondary education system. We will need help, so we are currently recruiting an associate deputy minister to assist us.

However, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, this person will be there to turn our vision into reality, not to tell us what our vision is. We are already aware of all the many educational needs that we must work to address and the many strengths we can build on. We know that we have many high school graduates who must be better prepared for post-secondary, so we will redouble our efforts in the JK-12 system. At the same time, we will mobilize our network of community learning centres to ensure that upgrading and expanded training opportunities are accessible to everyone. We will make use of our territory’s natural advantages. We will strive to turn Inuvik into a world-renowned centre for Arctic research and capitalize on its satellite and fibre optic infrastructure. We will work with industry to ensure Northerners have the right training to benefit from resource extraction. We will restore the lustre of the college’s renewable resources program so it once again becomes one of the top in Canada. We will turn our trades program into one that attracts students from across Canada, and we will ensure that we support our residents who want to help the territory by becoming teachers, social workers, nurses, and other essential professionals.

Mr. Speaker, we will do all of this more, and I look forward to working with my colleagues and the residents of the territory to fully develop our vision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


MEMBER’S STATEMENT ON
UNITED STATES CANNABIS LAWS IMPACTING
INUVAIULIT

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories’ liquor operations Inuvik is contracted to Stanton Distributing, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Inuvialuit Development Corporation. Mr. Speaker, that means that every Inuvialuit within the Inuvialuit settlement region, inside and outside, are registered shareholders.

The Inuvialuit Development Corporation, in collaboration with Stanton’s management, decided not to add the sale of licensed marijuana products to its contract between Stanton and the GNWT. Mr. Speaker, due to borders and customs laws within the United States, entry and exit of anyone associated with distribution of licensed marijuana could possibly be denied entry into the United States. Mr. Speaker, Inuvialuit travel back and forth to our relatives in Alaska and the lower 48. We co-manage in every aspect of conservation to enrich the culture and lifestyles of our harvesters and utilize our Indigenous knowledge, building a knowledge system that improves the quality of livelihoods and culture. I understand that there may be a change in US laws, but the IDC Board still has to evaluate all aspects before any sort of reconsideration to the sale of a licensed product as it affects the IDC Board, the IRC Board, and all staff associated with the licensed facility.

Mr. Speaker, this may provide opportunities within the Beaufort Delta region for the possible sales of cannabis, and, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the engagement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Beaufort Delta region
and the possibilities that may provide as well as education into legal cannabis. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members’ statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, please allow me to draw your attention to the presence today at the Clerk’s table of Mr. Anthony W.J. Whittford. As many of you know, Mr. Whittford is a man of many roles; former Commissioner, former Speaker, former Minister, former Member, former Sergeant-at-Arms. He joins us today in his capacity as honorary Clerk. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Whittford to this House this afternoon. It’s always a pleasure to have you at the table. Masi.

Colleagues, we have a special guest here with us today this afternoon. I would like to draw your attention to the people in the gallery, please, to recognize the group from Manitoba. The Manitoba legislative interns are here with us this week to learn more about our consensus-style government. With us today are Alexandria Bonney, Emma Cash, Jonathan Daman, Ashley Haller, Claire Johnston, and Kristen McCaig. Thank you for joining us here today. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O’REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today we had the grade 7 class from William McDonald School in the gallery. I want to thank them and the teacher, Ms. Laura Bromley, for attending. I also have a constituent in the gallery, Ms. Kim McNearney, who worked with me professionally and is a personal friend, and also Leslie Goit. Thank you, everyone, and welcome to the Assembly.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to recognize Mr. Tony Whitford. Amongst his many roles, he is also a resident of Yellowknife North. Someone who is always in the building but does not make it down here often enough, I would like to recognize my constituent assistant, Mr. Keith MacNeill. Thank you, everyone, and welcome to the House.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a Page from the Kam Lake riding, Juliet Stephen. Thank you for all your work here today supporting the Members. I would also like to recognize Mr. Keith MacNeill, a fine member of the Kam Lake constituency. Finally, my constituency assistant, Mr. Michael Burchill, who recently moved to the Northwest Territories, and it’s great to have him help in my office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. BOB McLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife South, Leslie Goit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to recognize one of the Pages, Ms. Tori Haogak, who is my cousin from Inuvik living here in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know I’m supposed to stick to my constituency, but I need to recognize two people in the House, Kim McNearney, who worked with me professionally and is a personal friend, and also Leslie Goit, who was instrumental in my campaign team. So I apologize if I’m breaking the rules, but welcome to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors to the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being part of our proceedings. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 400-18(3):
FULLY COSTED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR CANNABIS LEGALIZATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member’s statement I talked about all of the good things the government has done as it relates to legalization. Now, I’m afraid I have to ask questions around what we’re still lacking in our framework.

Currently the prices that we’ve all seen today on the online stores, and the long line-ups at cannabis and liquor stores, the price is around two to four times what the estimated street market is. This does not appear to be making a dent in the black market. Other Members have raised these concerns, so I would like to ask the Minister of Finance how he is monitoring the sale of black market cannabis and how they are ensuring our legal system is actually...
making a difference to curb the illicit trade of cannabis in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the 12 hours that cannabis has been legal, there was some concern about the price. The difficult question to answer is: how will it affect the illegal market? Maybe we'll send out a questionnaire and ask if it has affected the illegal market's bottom line, with the legalization of cannabis.

We will monitor it. We're 12 hours into the legalization. We will monitor it, and even the early indications with folks lining up at the stores and the online sales that we've had, that obviously has put a dent into the illegal market, but we will continue to monitor it. As I committed to committee, I will be giving them regular updates on the legalization and the effects it has. To answer the question as to how do we know we're making a dent, we don't. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I didn't ask have we made a dent in one hour. I asked how we are monitoring to ensure this process works. There was a commitment to bring forward a costed plan. There is still no costed plan. The Minister thinks this is a laughing matter; I think Northerners think this is a serious matter. So where is the plan, when is he going to bring it forward, and when is this side of the House going to be able to see it and evaluate it to make sure it protects our communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. There are three or four different questions, but I'll allow the Minister of Finance to answer.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister does not think it's a laughing matter, but having said that, it was said before that this was something that was sprung upon us by the federal government, and we worked hard to ensure that we were ready for it. The pricing market, we've given committee an update on the costing and how that was going to work, and we have the producer cost, we have the excise duty, we have the markup and the freight commissions administration costs. My understanding is the total retail price, and it depends on the strand, I believe, is around $10.

MR. TESTART: The Minister is giving us elements of a plan, components of a plan, components of the regime, but not a fully costed, articulated plan that was voted on in this House as a recommendation of the committee's report and committed to in writing by the Minister. The Minister knew in 2015 this was coming. We didn't do any substantial work until 2017. There was plenty of time to get things together. When is that plan going to come forward? I don't want to hear elements of the plan; I want to see a costed plan.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member is correct. I did make a commitment to provide an implementation plan. My understanding is that we should have that in committee's hands Monday at the latest.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will that plan include the private sector regulations or the private store, private sale regulations that this government committed to during the debates on the legislation? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We provided the regulations for private vendors to committee. I believe it's also on our website, so if there are those out there who are considering becoming a private vendor, there are opportunities there. It's on the website with all the conditions that they have to meet, and I will follow up, but I would assume that would be part of the plan, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


QUESTION 401-18(3):
CANNABIS LEGALIZATION IMPLEMENTATION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Finance, who was in charge for preparing for the legalization and regulation of cannabis. It's clear from the public briefing on cannabis implementation we had on October 10th in response to the committee report on Bill 6 that there is no overall government-wide plan for implementation. We heard that the Minister says this plan is going to be available on Monday; when I look at the response from Cabinet to the committee report, it says: "The Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Interdepartmental Working Group is developing a cannabis implementation plan. We will provide copies of that plan to committee prior to making it available to the public, before October 17th." That's today. Why didn't this working group, or why didn't Cabinet, deliver the plan in advance of today? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was not Cabinet, it was the Minister of Finance, and I wanted to ensure we had a plan that was going to be right. I do apologize to committee. I did make the commitment that we would have that before implementation day;
obviously, I missed that. So it's on me, but I will provide the plan to committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for being forthright there. I look forward to the report on the overall plan. So, according to the response to the standing committee report, there is going to be a breakdown of sales by online and by individual stores and by product type in annual reports from the Liquor and Cannabis Commission, but the expenditures for cannabis-related programs, including things like public education, public health research, community support, and so on, it's not clear where those are going to be reported. So can the Minister tell the public and this House whether any of the revenues from cannabis sales will actually be targeted for public education, and how the costs of cannabis implementation will be reported?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Much like the revenue from liquor sales, that goes into a general revenue fund, which we in turn use to deliver a lot of the programs that we offer across the Northwest Territories, and 65 per cent of our budget goes toward social programs, but as far as specifically earmarked, the answer is no. It will be put into general revenue, and we will in turn use that money to deliver many of the programs that we offer today.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I didn't really get a response about how we're going to report the cost of cannabis implementation. One of the key changes that Regular MLAs put into the Cannabis Legalization Regulation Implementation Act was the requirement for a review of the implementation, administration, and effectiveness of the legislation. So what measures, monitoring, reporting, or other means is the Minister putting in place now to ensure that the review of the legislation is meaningful and evidence-based?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the Member on his question on the report. I will continue to give committee an update as we move forward, making it part of the overall report. I mean, as we unroll this, we can see how we can provide all the information to committee that's required.

As far as the monitoring, I believe I made a commitment to committee that I would keep them up to date as we go into the legalization of cannabis. We can have regular updates, if it's committee's wish. We do plan on preparing a report. It will be in the life of this Assembly, obviously. Whether it's after a year after legalization, or six months after legalization, I would welcome feedback from committee. If they think six months is fine or a year would be better, then I will take their advice.


MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to sincerely thank the Minister for that commitment to work with Regular MLAs in designing that report, and I think that's a good commitment.

We now have draft regulations that could enable private retail of cannabis, but in my view they are clearly flawed. The Minister has total and complete discretion over any applications. There is no timeline for approval, or even a requirement for decisions to be made. No appeal process and authority for the Minister to determine the financial feasibility of a proposed operation. It's not even clear whether committee or public input is being sought at this point.

I know that we are all under deadlines, but is the Minister actually interested and willing to make changes to these flawed regulations?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: First of all, I don't believe the regulations are flawed. Maybe they do need some work. Again, we are 12 hours into the legalization, and it is a moving target, so the regulations are not flawed.

As for the Minister having the absolute discretion, Ministers or those decision-makers rely on a business plan, a business case, being presented to become vendors, and we have the technical folks have a look at them. They come forward with a recommendation. I don't think Ministers would have the time to sit and review every application, but we rely on the technical folks. They come up with recommendations. As far as the public input goes, I believe part of that is garnering some support from their local governments to see if there is a desire to have a private vendor in the community.

Again, it is a moving target. We will continue to work with Members, because this is a serious issue for folks across the Northwest Territories, and I want to ensure as a Legislative Assembly, and I speak of all 19 of us, I want to make sure that we have this right before we leave office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 402-18(3):
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IMPACTS OF CANNABIS LEGALIZATION

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Recreational use of cannabis is not addictive in the sense that heroin is
addictive, but it can create dependency behaviours that can be every bit as disruptive and unhealthy as alcohol, tobacco, or other substances. Is it the intention of our professional health services to adjust the way we scan the general population health, offer diagnostic services, promote and offer addiction treatment services, or make other adjustments concurrent upon the legalization of recreational cannabis use? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been reaching out, as you heard in my statement earlier today, to professionals and people who have the knowledge that we need to incorporate into our system here in the Northwest Territories. We are open and willing to learn when it comes to medical marijuana and the impacts it has on residents, but I think one of the important things is now we actually have the opportunity to have that frank dialogue and discussion with our residents in the Northwest Territories that not everybody had been prepared to have when it was illegal. Our staff are getting up to speed. They are getting to understand the implications of consuming cannabis on the body, on the mind, and we are prepared to evolve our system to meet those new realities.

MS. GREEN: With legalization, the message for youth is surely that pot has moved into the realm of being a little more okay than it was yesterday. A watching file on the proliferation of cannabis use among youth will be critical. How does the Minister plan to ensure these new professionals have their pot antennae up and are listening?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Once again, I will go back to the opportunity for frank dialogue. Up until now, the conversation has been, "Marijuana is illegal. You shouldn't be using it." Now, the conversation is, "Cannabis is legal, but we know it has profound impact on the development of young people's minds and brains, as well as pregnant mothers, youth, and all of those different at-risk categories." We can now have informed conversations with those residents to help them understand those implications and those ramifications of utilizing the product.

The health practitioners. As a system, we have been reaching out to experts who can help us get informed, help us speak the right language when it comes to encouraging people not to use, especially at-risk populations. I think we have the opportunity now to have those important discussions that we haven't necessarily had because traditionally the conversations have been around, "It's illegal. You shouldn't consume."

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that answer. I realize that there isn't a lot of information because this substance was not legal, but now that it is, how does the Minister intend to track and report on the possibility of increased demand for dependency treatment services in the event of an increase in demand for pot itself?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Now that we have moved to a single system, and you are getting really tired of hearing that, I'm sure, we have the ability to actually do things in a different way. Whereas all authorities would have been tracking information in their own unique ways, we have an opportunity to ensure that we are collecting data in a simple and consistent way across the authorities. We are doing that work now. We know that cannabis is now legal. It is an opportunity for us to start incorporating that in. We haven't got the specifics in place, obviously, but it is certainly a conversation that has occurred and we are looking for a way to make that happen.

In the meantime, we will be reaching out to clients who are expressing concerns. We have electronic medical records that we can use to help collect data, so that we can have better information for evidence-based decision-making in the future.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's reassuring to hear that the Minister and his officials are prepared to collect information in this area. As my colleague from Mackenzie Delta said, preparedness doesn't end today. So can the Minister tell us how his health promotion and marketing efforts will be tailored to promote public health over the coming months and years? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Contrary to what some Members have indicated, this is something we have been working on for quite some time. We have been working on this since 2016, trying to develop messaging and making sure that we are ready to get the information out there on the impacts of cannabis on the developing brain as well as other health risks.

Our community healthy living fairs are an important tool that we utilize to get into every community to get that information out to our residents. Those community living fairs are going to continue, as will this information continue to be included in those fairs.

We also know that there are lots of professionals out there, like professionals we have already brought up, who could help share information in a meaningful way with residents. We want to keep
doing those types of things. On top of that, the Members have heard me say it before that we have reached out to the federal government seeking some funding to help us tailor some community-specific messaging. I am optimistic that we are going to be able to make a positive announcement on that funding in the next month or two. We have been working closely with the federal government and making progress in that area. Once we make that progress, once that is finalized, we will be able to move forward and do more concrete, community-focused communications around the use of cannabis throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


QUESTION 403-18(3):
ELDER ABUSE RELATED TO CANNABIS LEGALIZATION

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is kind of a difficult question. I do not know even know who to pose the question to, so I am going to pose the question to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It's about elder abuse. Mr. Speaker, there is a real fear that there will be increased elder abuse, financial elder abuse, as a result of the legalization of cannabis. I would like to ask the Minister whether the Department of Health and Social Services has had discussions on that issue that may be looming. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for raising the issue. It's not one that has actually been raised to us before. Having said that, the NWT Seniors' Society is an amazing organization. They have done a significant amount of work in these territories to put out literature and programs to educate people on elder abuse as well as help individuals combat elder abuse and provide resources to them so that they know where to go to and where they can get supports when those types of things are occurring.

They have not reached out to me indicating that they are concerned about the potential growth in this area as a result of cannabis. Having said that, I take the Member's point. I will work with the department to draft up some communication with them to see if there is an opportunity for dialogue. We do not know if this is going to be a problem, but we should be ready.

MR. BEAULIEU: I have noticed in my work in my business as MLA how helpful the social workers are to the communities in all aspects, right from children to youth. I would like to ask the Minister if there will be any special training given to the social workers in this area, where it pertains to maybe as a result of the legalization of marijuana where it pertains to elder abuse.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Once again, I acknowledge that it is a valid conversation. I haven't had the conversation. I hear the Member. I am going to talk to the department, and I would like to reach out to the seniors' society. They are an important partner. I also point out that we are an important partner in combating elder abuse. I have not done any analysis on this. I would like to know a little bit more about what's happening out there with respect to this particular topic before I make a commitment.

MR. BEAULIEU: As many people in here know, I bring the issue of unemployment and the employment numbers of the small communities up many times in the House. That's even increased when we start talking about between the ages of 15 and 24. Then the employment rates are really low, when you get to that age category. That is the age category that I am concerned about that may be approaching the elders. You know, most times, Mr. Speaker, elders do not even mind doing it. They would give their last $20 to the youth in their own families, but I would just like to ask the Minister if there is some thought about any very specific treatment that could be targeted at that group, the youth, some sort of youth treatment very specific to cannabis to prevent future elder abuse in the small communities.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Once again, I take the Member's point. This is not a problem that we know exists or will exists. It's potentially there, and I am prepared to reach out to the NWT Seniors' Society to get their thoughts on whether they are concerned about this and whether or not they have had any discussion on plans. As far as education and training for our youth, we have been reaching out to youth. We have been working with Education, Culture and Employment to make sure that the message is out there on the harmful impacts of cannabis on the developing brain for youth up to 24 years old. That's going to continue. We need to continue to get that information out because every day there are new kids, and every day there are new 23-year-olds, and every day there are new 22-year-olds, and so we are working to get that information out there on a continual basis, making it part of our messaging going forward.

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

QUESTION 404-18(3):
PRIVATELY OWNED RETAIL CANNABIS STORES
MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Minister of Finance, of course about the topic of the day. Mr. Speaker, the government has decided to keep control of cannabis sales in-house for now, and only in communities with liquor stores for the next six months, it seems like. Of course, online orders will be shipped by regular mail, and we all know how long mail can take at times, and so I would like to ask the Minister: does the Minister have any concerns that this management regime will boost cannabis bootlegging in the small communities, in particular resulting in less effective control of the product and increasing demand on law enforcement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, cannabis is not new in the NWT. Legalized cannabis, though, is a controlled substance that is currently being distributed through liquor stores, as the Member pointed out, and federal requirements mean that it will be tracked from the seed-to-sale manner, and that has to be considered in our approach. I do not believe that legalization will add to illegal activities. We can use the liquor as a model. Even though liquor sales are legal, there is an illegal market that continues to exist. I think early indications are, and I can share some numbers, as of noon today we had 122 registered customers, we have had 37 orders placed, so we have had well over $5,000 worth of product that has been sold already. That is an early indicator, a 12-hour indicator, that we have put a dent into the illegal market. It is a controlled substance, so people who buy from a legal vendor will know that they have a federally controlled substance, and they can have the assurance that it is a safe product. I wish we could eliminate bootlegging completely, not only with cannabis but with liquor, but unfortunately, realistically, that is always going to exist.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. Certainly, we appreciate getting the early indicators. It's at this point that I would almost feel like I would like to inject a Jeff Spicoli quote, but, in fact, I do not have one off the top of my head, so I will leave it at that. Bad joke number three. However, Mr. Speaker, if I can, now that pot is legal, the government has committed to opening private retailing in six months. We are seeing the excitement today in the media as retailers open across the country. Is the government committed to fully supporting retail cannabis as part of the growing and diversifying economy in the Northwest Territories?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Our commitment was to have regulation and processes in place to assess anybody considering opening a cannabis store. We have released our regulations and information guide for anyone who might be considering opening a cannabis store well before the sixth month, and we will work with anyone considering opening a cannabis store. Opening a store within the retail framework has been released.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. That leads me to my next question, and that is: is the government currently accepting and processing applications so retailers can be ready next April, when the six months is up, or is April when we will start processing applications?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have not been contacted by any potential retailers at this point. Should interested parties come forward, we will assess those as described in the information guide that was released. So we would work with those who are considering becoming a vendor because we have released the guide, so the answer, I guess, is yes, we would look at starting to process applications.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for informing us of that. We can now look forward to the applications rolling in, hopefully. "Rolling" in, bad joke number four. Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government's retail cannabis framework document lays out a pretty detailed guide for retailers, and I want to commend the government for their effort on putting that together.

What steps is the department taking to prepare for its own inspection and enforcement when it comes to their role when private retailing is permitted? How is the government preparing as it relates to inspection and enforcement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That was almost number five, there. The agreement that a vendor enters into with the NWT Liquor and Cannabis Commission has online requirements and inspection activities. They would enter into an agreement that would allow for the inspections, and the online guide outlines the requirements that would be needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


QUESTION 405-18(3):
CANNABIS ROADSIDE TESTING

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This cannabis issue is multi-faceted, so I have some questions for the Minister of Justice. He is not going
to get off the hook today. There has been a lot of talk of the roadside testing for cannabis for impaired driving, so I would like an update from the Minister. I believe the NWT has procured these roadside drug-testing kits. Have they been distributed across the territory, and are they available to all officers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the roadside drug screening device was approved at the end of August, but I am not certain whether it has actually been deployed across the Northwest Territories as of yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: Hopefully the Minister can provide that information sooner than later. This has been discussed in this House before. Officers are being trained to use the equipment, as well as, I believe, to detect impairment without the equipment. I know that there was a training program that officers were going through, and they had a timeline. How many officers in the territory have been trained to date in cannabis impairment testing?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: There are different types of programs that are taking place. There is the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing and the Drug Recognition Expert Training. I can advise that 31 police officers are trained in the SFST, and four members have been trained in the DRE.

MR. SIMPSON: I figured it would have been more than four members by now, but I know that there are a lot of challenges facing the RCMP in the territory, and you can’t just send them all off for training. Hopefully we can get an updated timeline from the Minister about when all that training will be completed.

One concern that we saw in the media was that these roadside testing kits might fail in cold weather, and I want to know from the Minister: what has the department put in place to monitor the occurrence of false positives so that we are not wrongly charging our residents?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I understand that there have been some concerns about the reliability of these tests in cold weather. I am assured that the tests are quite reliable, and if they aren’t, they will be tested in the courts.


MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want some clarification on that last answer. The Minister is aware that there have been concerns about the reliability, but he is not concerned about the reliability, so there is nothing in place to test the reliability. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I do understand that there are concerns about the reliability of the results of the tests. However, if there are concerns about the reliability, I am sure the defence counsel will attempt to make applications in court so that the reliability of those tests can be reviewed. I do understand, however, that the machines are quite reliable and have been tested in various locations and climates in Canada. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 406-18(3):
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND CANNABIS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of constituents have approached me with concerns around international travel now that cannabis is legalized, particularly into the United States. I am wondering if the Premier, in his role as Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, which includes intergovernmental relations, has had any conversations with the federal government as to how this is going to work? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven’t had any specific conversations about international travel, but I do know that international borders are a federal responsibility and that the legalization of cannabis in Canada did not change Canada’s border rules. Taking cannabis or any product containing cannabis across Canada’s international borders is illegal and can result in serious criminal penalties both at home and abroad. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Earlier today the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction at the federal level gave a press conference and said that Canadians should be vigilant but otherwise should have no issues crossing the border. As relatively new information, and I don’t think it is well-understood at this point, can the Premier reach out to his federal counterparts and get more information on the subject and clarify it so that Northern residents know it is safe to travel, where they can travel, and what they are allowed to do?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Certainly, but we do know that it is illegal to travel with marijuana if you are going abroad. I believe the issue with the United States was that, if you worked in a facility involving marijuana and you went to the United States, it would be illegal. They later clarified that, as long as you were going on a holiday, it would be okay.
It is important for us to get more clarification from the United States rather than just getting it through the TV or through the media.

MR. TESTART: I am glad the Premier shares my interest in this matter and agrees that it is important. When he does get this information from the United States or through the federal government, will he bring that report back to the House or at least make it available on government websites or through some sort of public statement? Can he commit to that?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I can commit to that, but in the meantime, Northwest Territories residents travelling abroad should consult with the Government of Canada’s website around cannabis and international travel. Most countries, including the United States, have a zero-tolerance policy with respect to illegal drugs, including possession and use.


QUESTION 407-18(3):
ALTERNATE SUPPLY SYSTEM FOR REMOTE NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been two weeks since MTS cancelled the barge delivery to Paulatuk and the two communities outside the territory, and no tenders have been awarded yet, Mr. Speaker, which is increasing the cost of living for constituents in my region.

Mr. Speaker, I have follow-up questions for the Minister of Infrastructure on the MTS operations for the upcoming airlift to Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok, which do not include the gasoline delivery to Sachs Harbour. The Minister noted that he would not consider Tuktoyaktuk as a port for the North, given its ideal position as traffic increases in the Northwest Passage. My first question to the Minister is: the cost of the airlift has to come from somewhere, given there may be as many as 100 or more flights worth millions of dollars. My question is: will this additional cost fall on taxpayers in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to update the House a little bit on what I know what is going on today. The tenders have been awarded, and I believe the first flight is going into Paulatuk probably today, hauling fuel, so that process is under way.

As far as Sachs Harbour, the Member e-mailed me asking me about Sachs Harbour for fuel. I have looked into that matter, and Sachs Harbour has significant gasoline in their community, so that isn’t an issue.

As far as where we are going to recover the cost of funding this operation, the fuel is going to come out of the POL revolving account, and for the transportation of commodities and goods going into the community, it is going to come out of the MTS revolving fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response, and it’s good to see. I looked on the website this morning. There were no tenders awarded, and hopefully that process can start soon.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister stated that this error for not delivering fuel was due to ice. However, will the Minister commit to ensure that petroleum products are inspected and meet the requirements before allowing onto any MTS barges so that this doesn’t happen again or commit to other shipping methods?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The fuel situation is part of the delay, and tomorrow I’m doing a Minister’s statement on the whole issue around this marine, MTS, and the supply and stuff. We will be updating the House there. I am actually going to reach out to committee and ask them if they want a briefing on this whole issue.

The fuel that caused some of the delays this year was not even fuel for us. It was for a customer. It was shipped to Hay River via the railroad, and it did not meet spec when it reached there. Then we are not talking like 5, 10 gallons of fuel here. We are talking about hundreds of millions of litres, and that caused a significant delay. That is something that was part of the proponents problem. It wasn’t even our fuel. It wasn’t for our communities. It was a customer’s problem, but we will work closely with the oil company.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It’s good to have good answers, and I believe that the Minister is doing his work for that. However, MTS is a carrier of products, whether they are petroleum products or dry goods around the territory, and I see this as a logistical issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we really need to do, or the department needs to do, is pinpoint where this error started and work from there. My question to the Minister is: will the Minister be accountable for this, or will he ensure that the people who did not do their due diligence of their work are accountable for this and that we ensure that errors like this do not happen again, as shipping is a small window of opportunity in the territory?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: First of all, I answered the question last week, where the Member ended it
saying that was an error, and I said that this isn’t an error. This is a combination of a whole bunch of factors. When I do my Minister’s statement tomorrow, I will clearly lay it out.

There are certainly lessons learned from this thing. I am not saying that the department is not going to learn something from this. Of course, we are going to learn something from this. I think with the announcement that we just did in Hay River around the double-hull barges, it is going to help alleviate some of the situation. I referred last week, maybe we do have to change our scheduling, but that’s something that we have to look at. We are going to have to work closely with all our partners, with the communities, with the Canadian coastguard, and maybe we do look at something in Tuktoyaktuk.

At this point right now, to clearly blame some individual or some people within my department that this was an error on our part is clearly not true. This was a combination of a number of things and that’s why I have offered committee a briefing to go through this all, so everyone can know clearly where we stand and what the situation was.


MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, you know, it sounds like somebody was asleep at the wheel somewhere along the way. In this case, it’s the wheel house in this area for MTS for them to wake up into freezing ice and not be able to move anywhere.

I appreciate the work that the Minister is doing, and I appreciate his work all around. However, somebody needs to be accountable somewhere and we cannot deflect this any further. My question to the Minister is: with this air-lift affect the future rates to be paid by MTS customers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: No, this air-lift will not affect future rates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.


QUESTION 408-18(3):
CANNABIS LEGALIZATION SUPPORTS FOR COMMUNITY GOVERNMENTS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for the Minister responsible for MACA as follow-up to my Member’s statement. Although MACA did not play a lead role in creating our cannabis legislation, the department’s role in working with communities is going to be critical if we want the NWT to respond successfully to legislation. I would like to ask the Minister: what is the department doing to support community governments as they navigate this changing legal landscape? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are part of the interdepartmental committee overseeing the implementation of cannabis legislation here in the Northwest Territories. One thing that we are doing, though, is looking at having a conference and bringing in people from each of the communities to attend the conference and looking at addressing any community governance concerns, hamlets, communities, bands. I will be looking at striving to support the community governments and their understanding of this legislation or any concerns that they might have.

Now, we are looking at having this conference sooner than later because the legislation just came through. We were looking at having it in November. However, with the tourism and a lot of conferences going on, it was hard to get that conference up and running, so we are looking at January to have that conference. So all hamlets, all community governments can get ready to look at coming in.

Some of the things that we are going to be looking at are business licences, looking at plan review, fire safety is going to be a big one now that it has become legalized; community planning, zoning bylaws are some other things that we need to look at. So all of those are going to be encapsulated in the conference that we are going to hold.

I appreciate the Member’s question, and it is something that we are looking at. As I mentioned, we are part of this interdepartmental committee and we are going to try to address it and make sure that we have a good transparency approach to working with our community governments.

MR. BLAKE: We have some time here, as we are not doing the O and M right now, but in my Member’s statement I talked about the need for more resources for enforcement in our small communities. Can the Minister commit to reviewing the funding his department provides to small communities for enforcement purposes and to increase it where needed to tackle cannabis legislation?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As this legislation just came through, I know there was concern about funding for all communities across the Northwest Territories. As the Member knows, we just recently did have an election and we are going to be
reaching out to the new mayors, the new councils, the new NWTAC, if there's going to be an NWTAC board, and have these kinds of discussions with them. We knew this legislation was going to be coming in. We had discussions and concerns brought up at our last meeting, when Cabinet did meet with the NWTAC. We will continue work with the local government administration, as well, and make sure that, as this legislation unfolds, we will be there to adapt and revise any types of work that we need to.

Right now, funding enforcements, we don't know what they are going to be. We are going to have to work with the Department of Justice as well as other departments to make sure that we can adjust to how this legislation proceeds. So it's early days and we will be working with this interdepartmental committee to make the necessary changes. Like I said, working with the partners, the NWTAC and LGANT.

**MR. BLAKE:** MACA's School of Community Government does very important work in our small communities. Can the Minister commit to developing training materials for delivery through the school on cannabis-related municipal planning and enforcement from the community's perspective?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, that is a very good idea. With my other hat, the Housing Corporation, we are looking at developing some signage and communication to get out to all our public housing units. I know the Department of Health and Social Services is working on some really good education and awareness information. So we will work with our committee to see what we can develop, and we do have some really good training opportunities, where we can go online and do some kind of, like, eLearning workshops with our regional centres, so that is a very interesting concept. We will make sure that our interdepartmental committee takes that into consideration when we are getting this information out to our regions and out to the communities.

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

**QUESTION 409-18(3):**

**CANNABIS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Last week, she put out a news release that said that education leaders were interested in talking about cannabis when she met with them and that ECE had compiled information for students, teachers, and parents so they are fully aware of the regulations surrounding this matter. My first question is: does the information only deal with regulations, or does it deal with health effects, as well? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information does deal with health effects, as well, especially geared towards the student population.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you for that response from the Minister. The Minister also said that the information would be circulated well in advance of the October 17th legalization date. Can she please confirm that that was the case?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes, we have given all the information to the district authorities. I am assuming they have done it at the beginning of September, or at least in October; they are getting that out to all of the principals within all of the schools, so by now all schools should have the information available.

**MS. GREEN:** At the level of parents, what information can they expect to find in the future on the ECE website about cannabis education in the school? I note that there does not seem to be anything there at this point.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** We are trying to do as much as we can. We are working with Health and Social Services. There was a brochure sent out to every resident in the Northwest Territories, I believe, with information on it. We have done quite a few things. On October 3rd, we had a Facebook Live on our ECE website that was talking with Dr. Matthew Hill, who was talking about the effects of marijuana. Again, we used him on October 4th at NACC, our Northern Arts and Cultural Centre. He was in person. There was an online webinar especially geared towards grades 7 to 12. October 9th, we did an online webinar in French. October 10th, we did more presentations provided to all the principals, et cetera. However, I do take the Member's note, and, if we do not have enough information, I will review that and we need to bump it up. If we do not have enough on there, then we need to make sure it's accessible, so thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for bringing it forward.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for her responsiveness. My final question is: if parents have questions about the cannabis information or about cannabis as it relates to students and their children, is there a number they can call or an email address they can use to ask those questions, whether of this Minister or of any other Minister?
HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Parents, of course, like I say, we are trying to keep them as informed as possible. We recognize there is a lot of fear out there, and there should be a lot of fear out there. They can contact their principals at any time for any of these instances, but we also have it on the Executive and Indigenous Affairs website. I am going to try to read this off. It's https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/en/cannabis, and on that site you can get information, common questions, contact forms for specific questions. Again, we are trying to keep parents as informed as possible. We are giving literature for students, for teachers, for parents, and we will monitor it. As needs come forward, if we find out we need more, we will try to do our best to accommodate that need.


QUESTION 410-18(3):
ESSO TANK FARM REMEDIATION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Lands and have nothing to do with cannabis. I visited the old Esso tank farm adjacent to the Con Mine here in Yellowknife recently and found the site in a bad state. I even sent the Minister some rather nasty photos. Although the tanks are finally gone, some of the fencing is about to fall down, and the old mine tailings remain uncovered. Can the Minister tell us who is responsible for fixing the fence that is beginning to fall over at this site? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The parcel of land that is known as the Esso tank farm is titled to in fee simple by Imperial Oil, so the condition of the site is the responsibility of Imperial Oil, including when they choose to remediate the site. The fencing also, as I understand it, belongs to Esso.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for that. This is not the first time I have raised the issue in the House, so can the Minister commit to picking up the phone and calling Imperial Oil about fixing the site out there?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I don't think I am going to be phoning Imperial Oil, but I do understand that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been communicating with Imperial Oil about the property during the demolition phase, so there has been contact between Imperial Oil and the GNWT.

MR. O'REILLY: I thank the Minister for that. I know I was a bit facetious, but the fence is about to fall over, and we don't want people getting in there and running around. When I was out at the site, there were also all-terrain vehicle tracks outside the fence, on bare mine tailings. It's not clear whether this is part of the road right-of-way or what. Can the Minister tell us: who is responsible for the remediation of the areas outside the fence, next to the road itself, as this material is being spread all over the place?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand that the roadway itself is on GNWT land, but the city maintains the road.


MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Well, I appreciate the response from the Minister. Since this is GNWT land which is right next to the roadway itself, what are we doing, then, to deal with the tailings that are there? Because there are all-terrain vehicle tracks, and the stuff is being spread out. It’s our responsibility. What is the Minister doing about it?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, as I mentioned, the roadway is apparently owned by the GNWT. I perhaps can get back to the Member opposite after I have spoken with ENR also about this, as well as my own department. I think a more detailed response would be necessary. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 411-18(3):
PRIVATELY OWNED CANNABIS RETAIL STORES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance about the regulations for private sales that he has brought forward. I have taken a look at them, and the concerns I have heard from other people who are interested in a business: you need to sign a lease; you need a development permit; you need to have an extensive criminal background check; and this is all before you start the application process. These seem to be incredibly onerous and incredibly hard to get retail businesses off the ground. Does the Minister truly believe that this meets the goals of the standing committee’s recommendations that privatization be an element of our cannabis regime? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we want to be sure that those who are seriously interested are fully qualified
candidates to be vendors of cannabis, so I believe it is a fair deal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Quoting from the first part of the vendor designation section of the regulations, the Minister needs to be satisfied that “the operation of a cannabis store by the person would be economically viable.”

The Minister is going to determine the market conditions before the market is allowed to determine those conditions. I don't know of any other business that is run this way or permitted this way. Can the Minister clarify what these regulations mean by economic viability of a potential applicant?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Much like with any business venture, the vendors would come forward with a business plan, and they would see whether there is a market for the product or not. Through the early work that we are doing, using the liquor store model, I think it would be a good determination of what type of market is out there.

One thing we don't want to see happen is those getting into the business thinking that it is a cash cow, when a lot of us know that it may not be. We just want to make sure that they know what they are getting into, and that it is a viable operation for them.

**MR. TESTART:** Earlier the Minister commented that the Liquor Commission has made $5,000 in the first hour of sales. It seems like a very viable operation. Again, why is the Minister putting a criterion that he needs to determine if the business is going to be successful before that business is allowed to exist?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, the Member is correct. I did say that there was a good uptake at the beginning and made over $5,000 already, but it is now 14 hours into the legalization of cannabis. Maybe once the excitement wears off, the novelty wears off, or it is not the flavour of the day, there might be some changes, and it might get back to business as usual.

The Minister does make the final determination. I am not going to sit there and decide whether this business is viable; I would rely on the recommendations of those that would provide some technical and financial advice. I don't make the ultimate decision as to whether this business is going to go or not. I would listen to recommendations, like most good leaders do. I would listen to recommendations and make an informed decision based on that.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly not questioning the Minister's judgement or the advice he receives from the quality staff in the public service. My question is: why are the regulations worded in a way that is putting -- I mean, the Minister is telling us now, Mr. Speaker, that he is not sure if this business is going to continue to boom or if it is going to go down. It doesn't sound like the Minister is aware of the economic viability of cannabis in the Northwest Territories. How are business owners or entrepreneurs who look at these regulations given comfort that the Minister is not going to say no because he is worried about them failing? Let the market decide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** That is exactly what we are trying to do. Thank you.


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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. Thank you, committee.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 7, Chartered Professional Accountants Act; Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process; and Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020, and would like to report progress, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): Orders of the day for Thursday, October 18, 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 the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
   - Motion 21-18(3), Extended Adjournment of the House to October 23, 2018
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
   - Bill 7, Chartered Professional Accountants Act
   - Bill 8, Emergency Management Act
   - Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process
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 Thursday, October 18, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:19 p.m.