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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

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
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, March 11, 2019****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:34 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 168-18(3):
DRAFT CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to provide Members with an update on the draft Child and Family Services Quality Improvement Plan. The quality improvement plan sets out actions that we are taking right now to address issues identified as part of internal reviews, the 2018 Auditor General's Report, and from staff feedback.

The quality improvement plan extends the work that was started under Building Stronger Families, and refocuses our efforts in those areas where it is needed the most. It reinforces what has already been achieved, ensures outstanding items are completed, and addresses additional gaps that were found.

The plan responds directly to the Auditor General's recommendation to develop a detailed action plan that clearly sets out how we will ensure that the child and family services system will operate in compliance with legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the plan contains key actions that will allow us to better manage, resource, and structure our system to ensure that significant changes achieved through the Building Stronger Families Action Plan can be sustained.

It identifies four strategic directions to improve the child and family services system, including:

- Continuing to build a culture of quality;
- Investing in human resources;

- Building staff capacity; and
- Engaging with our partners.

As part of the quality improvement plan, we have already taken important steps in each of these areas.

To meet the goal of the plan, the government has proposed a new investment of \$3.3 million to add positions to support child and family services. We have already completed an initial caseload analysis and have started a territory-wide recruitment campaign for front-line staff.

We have also set up quality reviews for closed investigations, foster-care services, and minimum contact requirements. We have clarified roles and responsibilities for the out of territory program and have established a system to monitor the interprovincial placement agreements and courtesy supervision for out-of-territory placements.

Mr. Speaker, with the renewed focus of the quality improvement plan, we have also implemented a revised accountability framework and established a guardianship standard, tool, and checklist. We have established a training team and completed additional training for staff, supervisors, managers, and assistant directors. We've created a quality committee and working groups, implemented monthly staff teleconferences, and set up an assistant directors' forum.

Mr. Speaker, engagement is one of the strategic directions of the quality improvement plan. Working collaboratively with our partners and receiving ongoing feedback is crucial to ensure that we are moving in the right direction to improve the quality of child and family services and are supporting our staff and partners adequately through this process.

While our team continues to work on the priority areas of the quality improvement plan, over the coming months, we will work with key stakeholders to further refine the plan and receive valuable feedback on the implementation of specific actions. This is a living document, Mr. Speaker, and will change over time as actions are completed and new actions are identified as needing focused attention to be addressed.

For example, once publicly released, the Department of Health and Social Services will review carefully the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Government Operations in relation to the Auditor's General's 2018 report, and these recommendations will inform revisions to the quality improvement plan and its implementation.

In addition, we have reached out to Indigenous governments to request a meeting with them to discuss their priorities and how we can work together to strengthen child and family services across the Northwest Territories. This feedback will also help shape the quality improvement plan and the implementation of specific action items.

Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to taking action to improve our child and family services system, and our number one priority will continue to be the well-being and safety of children and youth in our care. The Auditor General's report and our own internal audits have shown that there are areas that need focused and better-resourced attention to continue to build on the promise of Building Stronger Families. With our living quality improvement plan, we will continue to work with Members of the Legislative Assembly, child and family services staff, communities, Indigenous leaders, other partners, and the families we serve to make the changes we need for a stronger child and family services system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 169-18(3):
PROGRESS ON TRANSPARENCY AND
ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVES

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, in recognition of global Open Government Week, I would like to take this opportunity to update this House on our government's progress in advancing our mandate commitments for increasing government transparency and accountability.

One year ago, Mr. Speaker, I stood on this floor and announced the release of our government's Open Government Policy. The policy represented an important step towards fulfilling our government's pledge to greater openness and transparency.

Mr. Speaker, the Open Government Policy committed our government to develop directives and guidelines to improve the way we share information and data, and how we acquire and use feedback from residents from public engagements. All Ministers are accountable under the policy to ensure that their departments and agencies follow

these directives and guidelines and to take further actions to increase openness and transparency.

Since the Open Government Policy was launched a year ago, an interdepartmental working group has worked to develop one of the major commitments of the Open Government Policy, a common approach to public engagement for our government. The approach has since been piloted within the government, and I am pleased to announce today that it has been launched to the public.

Engaging with the public on issues of importance and interest to them is vital to advancing the principles of open government, Mr. Speaker. This is why the common approach we have developed consists of a number of elements and resources, including:

- A step-by-step guide for employees planning public engagement activities;
- Updated web resources and a common online approach that provides a central listing of all public engagement opportunities; and
- An advisory committee to build capacity and a community of practice among our government staff.

Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage all Members in this House and NWT residents to visit the Open Government website and learn more about the Government of the Northwest Territories' common approach to public engagement. It is my hope that residents will embrace this new approach to engagement with our government and will make their voices known through their participation.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of the 18th Legislative Assembly, I am proud of the progress that our government has made to increase government accountability and transparency. While we recognize that improving the way we share data and information and engage with residents is an ongoing process, not a destination, our government remains committed to this process and to fulfilling our mandate commitments in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COMMONWEALTH DAY 2019

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today on the occasion of Commonwealth Day, the annual celebration of the Commonwealth of Nations, observed by roughly 2.4

billion people in 53 countries around the world, spread over every continent and ocean.

The day will be celebrated with a broad range of activities, including faith and civic gatherings, debates, school assemblies, flag raising ceremonies, street parties, cultural events, and a multicultural, multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey, where the head of the Commonwealth, the sovereign Her Majesty the Queen, will deliver an address that will be broadcast around the world.

The theme for 2019 is "A Connected Commonwealth," which offers opportunities for the people, governments, and institutions of this richly diverse family of nations to connect and work together at many levels through far-reaching and deep-rooted networks of friendship and goodwill.

This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth as we know it today. What was once held together by colonial rule has transformed into an international community of nations in free association, with old ties and new links enabling co-operation towards social, political, and economic development which is both inclusive and sustainable.

To quote the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Right Honourable Patricia Scotland, "At this time, when multilateralism is under threat and we see nationalism and narrow self-interest on the rise, the Commonwealth shines as a beacon of hope and promise, inspiring confidence in the benefits of international cooperation and collective action."

Commonwealth Day serves as a reminder of the awesome responsibility we bear to each other as human beings and of the continuing importance of international cooperation and of the peaceful co-existence of nation-states, cultures, and peoples.

I would like to conclude with the encouraging words of Her Majesty the Queen, "We are able to look to the future with greater confidence and optimism as a result of the links that we share and thanks to the networks of cooperation and mutual support to which we contribute and on which we draw. With enduring commitment through times of great change, successive generations have demonstrated that, whilst the goodwill for which the Commonwealth is renowned may be intangible, its impact is very real."

Happy Commonwealth Day, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORT FOR MANUFACTURING

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, last fall I, along with the Member from Hay River North and along with the Minister of ITI, was pleased to attend a policy discussion with the NWT Manufacturers' Association focusing on the development of a NWT manufacturing strategy. This is another one of our mandate commitments for this Assembly, and I was pleased to see that we are moving forward in this area.

In particular, I was pleased to see new energy and ideas being generated from members of the Manufacturers' Association. Giving credit where credit is due, I noted significant interest and responsiveness on behalf of the Department of ITI.

Mr. Speaker, manufacturers in the NWT face a number of challenges, factors that we are all familiar with. Like all of us, they face high energy costs. They face high costs of shipping that hit them twice; first, when they import raw materials, and then again when they try to market finished products.

Recruiting, training, and keeping qualified staff is another challenge. Finding skilled tradespeople is not always easy, but is important when compared to the demands of training and supervising unskilled labour.

Then, when a product is complete, who do they sell it to? Our territory offers a small market for the purchase of manufactured goods. Online selling is a good way to reach a wider market, but then, to send their product elsewhere, they are faced with the shipping costs again.

Facing these challenges, it may seem a difficult task to get a manufacturing initiative off the ground, and certainly it will be. Energy, commitment, and initiative will be needed, but there are ways in which the government can help alleviate those pressures, Mr. Speaker:

- We can support partnerships among manufacturers to achieve economies of scale.
- We can design training and apprenticeship programs to help workers find and match a skilled workforce with demand from employers.
- We can support research and innovation to reward new, made-in-the-North ideas and practices.
- We can assist with marketing to help manufacturers develop new markets for their products.

Mr. Speaker, our greatest strength is the imagination, creativity, and resourcefulness of the people of the North. We can provide them with backing and resources to develop home-grown

ideas and support this untapped sector to flourish and grow. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of ITI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS CULTURAL GALA 2019

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about an event that occurred this past Friday evening in the community of Detah, which was the Indigenous Cultural Gala that is being held to honour the grand opening of an Artisan Shop, within the Chief Drygeese Hall of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this event truly showcased northern art and creativity at its best. It featured a fashion show, which provided an opportunity for northern artists to collaborate and exhibit their homemade and handcrafted items on a runway. There were creations of all sorts, Mr. Speaker, from traditional vests to handmade earrings and necklaces. This event was an excellent demonstration of artisan collaboration, which supported Indigenous makeup artists, hair stylists, musicians, a florist, a photographer, and clothing designers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share some of the names of the designers who contributed to the gala. The list includes designs from Berna Beaulieu, Lesley Ann Evans, Shawna Mcleod, Sarah Plotner, and Sheena Yakeleya. There were also designs from Charlene Chapple, owner of Haylani Apparel; Tishna Marlowe of Dene Couture; as well as Sarah Erasmus of Erasmus Apparel.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the musicians who performed at this event included Wesley Hardisty, who played the fiddle; William Greenland, who played the flute; and Casey Koyczan, who performed with multiple instruments and audio-visual effects.

Mr. Speaker, this event was only made possible thanks to a dozen generous sponsors, a small army of devoted volunteers, and thanks to the entire staff of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, who worked tirelessly on this event planning and coordinating. As a regional collective, the communities of Yellowknife, Detah, and N'dilo really came together in a positive way with this Indigenous Cultural Gala. It would be great to see this event become an annual mainstay within the cultural fabric of the Northwest Territories. Until the next one. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EDUCATIONAL REFORM

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I delivered a statement on the concerns the Sahtu is experiencing with low numbers of graduates.

Mr. Speaker, leading by a consultation process designed to engage all leaders, parents, and stakeholders is healthy in both strategic planning and developments of an action plan. Last year, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment delivered the Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and three-year action plan.

Mr. Speaker, I agree on the principles of prudent management and, in the area of Sahtu education reform, advancing forward, a universal review session is long overdue, including reviewing the Education Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment response to the Aurora College Foundational Review is establishing a vision for post-secondary education for the Northwest Territories, a common vision around education after high school. I agree with these reformed engagements and the initiated online survey for public input. However, other venues can be reviewed for maximum outcomes, such as a Sahtu regional symposium for education.

Mr. Speaker, it is not what the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of ECE can do for the residents and families; it's what the families and leadership can do for education. This forum would create a community-based dialogue and joint collaboration necessary for a modernized education action plan. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of ECE. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PALLIATIVE CARE ACTION PLAN

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last December the federal government released its framework on palliative care in Canada. The framework is a counterpoint to the 2016 introduction of assisted dying legislation. It identifies four priority areas for action intended to improve access to palliative care. They include palliative care education and training for healthcare providers and caregivers; measures to support palliative care providers; research and the collection of data on palliative care; and finally, measures to facilitate equitable access to palliative care, particularly for underserved populations.

The federal framework was developed in consultation with provincial and territorial governments, including our own. Now that there is a federal framework, this government says it is examining how we could align our palliative care services. Our mandate for the 18th Assembly calls for the development of an action plan for expanded palliative care services, although the mandate tracker contains no information on progress towards this commitment, which is shown as "under way."

Achieving these alignments will require special accommodations within the service environment of our territory-wide system. Information on culturally safe end-of-life practices specific to the cultural context of the NWT will be especially important, particularly in fulfilling the recent Cultural Safety Declaration of Commitment.

In attempting to honour the desire for not only for aging but dying in place, our far-flung healthcare service area will need to provide the ability to consult a palliative care clinical support network.

Mr. Speaker, the needs of seniors are becoming more obvious as their population increases, whether it is in relation to the need for the increased supply of long-term care beds, housing support and programs under the seniors' planning study, or the increased demand on seniors' programs and services.

There is not much time left in the mandate of this Assembly, and I am eager to see what progress has been made on the palliative care action plan commitment under the mandate. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IRENE AND ANGUS MCLEOD RETIREMENT

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have the privilege of congratulating Irene and Angus McLeod of Fort Liard as they are celebrating a combined 75 years of service to the GNWT in the community of Fort Liard.

Irene has been working at the health centre in Fort Liard since August 1973. Irene first began working as a housekeeper, and then it became housekeeping, receptionist, and clerical duties. Irene remained in this position for 10 years.

Following this, Irene became the interpreter, medical travel assistant, and receptionist. When Irene was young, she aspired to be a nurse. However, the first time she assisted with a delivery,

she realized that her dream of being a nurse may not be what she thought, as she started to feel sick during the delivery. Irene thought to herself, "So much for that idea." Irene soon realized she needed to find something that she enjoyed. She shared and encouraged everyone committed to the long term, "If you want to learn more, you have to teach yourself and have the motivation and drive to excel."

Angus has been employed at the health centre in the custodial service for 35 years. When asked how to maintain successful long-term employment, Angus stated, "If you want to work, then work. Don't take time off." Angus shared he rarely, if ever, took time off.

When asked what they enjoyed most about their work, Irene shared how she enjoyed meeting new people and interpreting for the elders. Angus shared how he enjoyed getting out and helping people.

Irene and Angus were born and raised in Fort Liard. Both have nine siblings. They are each the eldest in their families. Irene and Angus met in Fort Liard in 1972 and married on December 20, 1973. They have been blessed with three children, William, Lisa, and Clinton. They also have the privilege of having 11 grandchildren, with the 12th on the way in May 2019.

Mr. Speaker, Irene would like to express a heartfelt thanks to her grandfather for her successes and drive in life, namely her employment. Irene attended residential school from the age of five to 15. Her grandfather cared for her and was the one who revived her South Slavey dialect, which has served her and the people of Fort Liard well.

I would like to thank them very much for their service and encourage them to enjoy their retirement, since they have put three quarters of their life together for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I rise today to make my fourth annual midwifery statement. The Northwest Territories Midwifery Program has one of the longest gestation periods in the history of this Assembly, but now there is some good news to report.

In response to my questioning during the Committee of the Whole review of the Department

of Health and Social Services budget earlier in this sitting, there is now confirmation of new 2019-2020 funding of \$373,000 for three positions. One of them is a full-time midwifery clinical specialist and a three-quarter-time midwife position, both in Yellowknife, and a three-quarter midwife position for Hay River. The total spending on midwifery for 2019-2020 will be \$1.789 million, which will be a very good investment with huge payoffs in deferred or avoided costs.

For 2019-2020, there will be a total complement of 8.5 full-time-equivalent midwifery staff in the Northwest Territories. The department says that this makes for one of the most robust midwifery programs in the country, measured against 15 total positions in Saskatchewan and the Maritime provinces with a combined total of 13. A Northwest Territories midwifery program means mothers having children in their home communities, with decreased travel costs, the benefits of pre- and post-natal care, and a healthcare model completely in tune with community health centres and reconciliation. Good news, indeed.

In applauding this program, I have to give a great deal of credit to midwifery advocates who have lobbied long and faithfully for these results. We go back to the last Assembly in 2012, when public advocacy prompted the government to commission a Midwifery Review and Expansion Analysis Report. Since then, I have personally attended at least two midwifery demonstrations out in front of this building.

Although it has taken more than seven years to get here, I also want to recognize the work of successive Ministers of Health and their staff, especially the current Minister, who went to the well with what must have been a convincing business case to secure the resources to see this through.

I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later today about making sure that we get this good news on midwifery out to all of our citizens and publicly report on further implementation and progress. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER FIRE DEPARTMENT APPRECIATION

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to give a shout-out to the women and men of the Hay River Fire Department. Since yesterday they have been working to contain a fire that flared up at Hay River landfill, and for the past week they have been working to manage the fire as it burned underground. For the most part, all of the firefighters have other full-time jobs and family

responsibilities, so I am sure that many of them have had some long, tiring days over the past week. That is why I figured that this would be a good time to show them some appreciation and thank them for helping keep our region safe.

Mr. Speaker, we are lucky in Hay River. For decades, the Hay River Fire Department has set a high bar when it comes to training and preparedness. As a resident, it feels great to know that, if I am ever in a situation where I need to call an ambulance or report a fire, there is a dedicated team ready to jump into action. I know that it is not something that every community has, so I am thankful, and I don't take it for granted.

In addition to responding to hundreds of calls each year and spending thousands of hours fighting fires, providing emergency medical services in town and along 800 kilometres of highway, and performing other emergency services, such as the 24-hour flood watch in the spring, the members of the Hay River Fire Department find plenty of time to contribute to the community in other ways, as well.

Every year they are present at the track-and-field championships, managing the medical tent, taking care of athletes and spectators, and helping out in other ways; on New Year's they treat the community to multiple firework displays; during the Christmas season they team up with the RCMP for the annual toy drive, where they collect and deliver hundreds of toys for children; and throughout the year they also hold public safety events.

Mr. Speaker, we are very lucky to have them. I know that they are all busy right now, they are all tired right now, and I just want to let them know that their work is appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the visitors in the gallery, but more specifically, a visitor in our interpreter booth. If I can ask Mary just to stand up for a few minutes, Mary Kudlak. I would like to recognize a respected elder, Mary Kudlak from Ulukhaktok. We are lucky to have Mary as an Inuinnaqtun interpreter this week.

Mary was born 30 miles east of Ulukhaktok in a place called Anialik. She grew up in a caribou-skin tent where they speared fish, wintered in snow houses, and hunted seals through seal breathing holes. Mary has the same Inuit facial tattoos as her grandmother, Helen Kalvak. Her tattoos were done by Hovak Johnston, who brought back traditional Inuit tattooing.

Mary can be found ice fishing from March until July around the surrounding lakes in Ulukhaktok. She has a fire pit outside her house where anyone is welcome to share her traditional food, stories, and drum songs. Mary is a respected elder in the Northwest Territories, and many people look up to her as a mentor. She is an advocate of her official language, Inuinnaqtun, and shares her passion and knowledge through the territory.

Mary definitely does not see age as a barrier. This past weekend, colleagues, Mary completed the Ice Road Jigging Challenge, went for a slide down the snow castle ice slide, and sat on the Snow King's throne.

At this point in time, I would like to say thank you, Mary, for all of the things that you do to keep Indigenous languages alive and for continuing to educate our youth about the traditional ways of our people. Masi for all of your services.

---Applause

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize my constituent, Mary Kudlak. Actually, Mary is a relative of mine. She grew up with my father in residential school in Kugluktuk, actually, I think, in the '50s. I would like to welcome Mary to the Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us. It is always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 671-18(3): PALLIATIVE CARE ACTION PLAN

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. First, could the Minister tell us the status of the mandate commitment on developing and implementing an action plan for expanded palliative care services? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That item is 4.2.1. In an effort to limit the number of action plans that we are developing, we have actually incorporated the palliative care work within the existing Continuing Care Services Action

Plan. That is actually under objective 4 within that action plan. Palliative care is a component of home and community care, and this review is currently under way and will help to inform these services when they are rolled out and delivered.

Also, Mr. Speaker, palliative care is also a component of the Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy 2015-2025, and we have hired a territorial palliative care specialist to work in collaboration with the authority, with the Tlicho Community Services Agency, and Hay River to finalize palliative care policies, care pathways, and protocols for the implementation across the entire health system in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I just have to make sure I understand what was said there. This plan is becoming part of another plan, and the other plan is coming to us I'm not sure when?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Continuing Care Services Action Plan has already been released. It's a public document, and objective number 4 is the area where we're focusing on some work in the palliative care. We're doing the homecare review, those types of things that are going to help inform how we move forward in this area. Also, Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy 2015-2025 has also already been released, and we've already hired a territorial palliative care specialist who is doing a significant amount of work to help streamline palliative services here throughout the Northwest Territories.

MS. GREEN: I'm wondering what advice the Minister took from families and people who have requested and used palliative care in the development of the provisions in the continuing care plan?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In the development of the Continuing Care Action Plan, we reached out to stakeholders across the Northwest Territories and got feedback from a number of them. With respect to Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy, the territorial palliative care specialist is working with the different authorities and communities in order to streamline services and programs. Some of the things that we're looking at are helping individuals in smaller communities who have family members who might be palliative, to support them in their own homes and communities. This may include support from community health nurses. It may include providing tools or resources, equipment that is necessary to help maintain that person in their home. We are working, where it is safe to do so, to actually have individuals remain in their communities during their final days, but also when they need support, as well.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Finally, I want to ask a question with reference to the Cultural Safety Action Plan that was recently released. Can the Minister tell us how the development of the palliative portion of the Continuing Care Services Plan included traditional knowledge and the healing approaches of all the cultures of the NWT? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The activities within the Continuing Care Services Action Plan are focused on ensuring culturally safe palliative care for clients and their families throughout the Northwest Territories, and staff are being supported to have cultural safety awareness training. This includes, obviously, updating and adapting practises and resources and tools to ensure that they are contextually as well as culturally appropriate. I know the Member knows, we recently released a Cultural Safety Action Plan which would also be applied in all the work that we do in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 672-18(3):
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS
PROVIDING HOUSING SERVICES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In one of my communities, we have a couple who opened their home to homelessness and people who are in need. They do an amazing job, and I don't want to embarrass them so I won't give their names. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Housing: does the Minister know of any programs that this couple can access to improve their home so that it will be a warmer and welcoming home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker?

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I just want to thank the Member for bringing this forward. I also want to encourage the Member to have the family maybe contact our office through an email, and then I can share that with other departments such as Health and Social Services, ECE. It wouldn't be the first time that we've taken an interdepartmental focus on helping people out in our communities, or even organizations. I would like to also encourage the individuals to go and speak with their local housing organization, or go into the district office to see what kind of programs they'd be involved in. To get more of the details for the individuals, any Members who might come across such an issue, contact me

and send me an email, and then we can get the process started. I do want to appreciate, as the Member said, the family that is taking in people into their homes. It's unfortunate, and if there's a way we can help, we'll definitely look at that.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister. He read all my questions over here, and he was able to answer most of them. I understand an email, but will the Minister be willing to work with me and the family to set up a meeting with his staff to do something like that? I mean, an email would work, but maybe a face-to-face may be beneficial.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, I will definitely commit to having staff work with the Member as well as the family, but to get the ball rolling to get things started and looked into right away, and to get me started having conversations with some of my Cabinet colleagues, I would encourage that the Member work with the family to get an email sent to us with the details so we can look into how we can solve the issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the Minister's willingness to open up and get an email there and work with his colleagues. Does the Minister know of anything that we can reach out and tell the family about right now through Housing? Are there any homeless programs or something like that, which we're able to work with? This will be my last question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Really, just get us a phone number, even, and we can get staff to call the family and start working on what kind of programs they might be able to apply for. I don't know the situation fully, but we definitely want to help. Get us a phone number. Get it to my office. We'll make sure that staff reach out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

QUESTION 673-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EDUCATION
ACTION PLANS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm following up on my statement to the Minister of Education here. My first question is: what role does the Early Childhood Education Action Plan play in supporting educating in the Sahtu region? Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Early Childhood Education Action

Plan doesn't actually specify which regions; however, throughout all of the Northwest Territories, on early childhood, with the partnership with the federal government, we're providing the expansion of our distance delivery for our part-time Early Learning and Childcare Certificate Program, so that's distance learning. That can be provided to all communities. As well, we have an Early Learning Childcare Diploma program currently offered in Yellowknife. Of course, people would have to come to Yellowknife to access that, and we have student financial assistance available for that. We also have additional scholarships for people who are looking into getting into early childhood development. We used to have 10. With the support of the federal government, we now have increased that to 30. Then, of course, we provide funding for junior kindergarten in all regions, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that informative reply. My next question is: is the Minister supportive of an education symposium in the Sahtu region?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The education monies are actually provided to the education bodies, councils in this situation, and sometimes authorities in different communities. We're always more than willing to meet and to talk about anything education, but it would have to go through the appropriate bodies, which would be the education council at that point. If they're willing to organize it and fund it, then I will make sure that, of course, we have staff from ECE to attend, for sure. I think it's important.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that information. I look forward to exploring dates and options here. There is the old saying, "If you want to do something, you have to do it yourself." In this case, I don't feel comfortable with the authority that we currently have in trying to schedule this gathering. My next question is: is the Minister in support of an education review for the Sahtu region?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I think it is important to review all of the programs throughout the GNWT on a regular basis. I am more than supportive of actually having an educational review, although I have to clarify and state that we only have a couple of months left in this Assembly. I already have priorities on the table. I don't think that I will be able to manage to do a review during the rest of this term. I will put it on a transitional report, though, to state that there was a request to have an educational review. I think, if we are going to do it, for one, we should be doing it right across our whole education.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I know we are getting to the tail end of this Assembly here, but I think we have more than a couple of months. Is the Minister willing to provide an assigned staff member to work with my office in scheduling dates that may lead up to this symposium? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I should clarify: my understanding of the question before was if we would do a comprehensive review on the whole education system. That isn't something that I could probably do in the next few months. However, we are constantly doing reviews of our education programming through our education renewal program. That is ongoing, that we are always looking at our programs, our education services, and they are always being reviewed on a constant basis. I just want to clarify that it is not like we are not doing it. We do it regularly. If you are looking at a full, comprehensive one, that is a little bit different. Having someone to work with the Members in organizing a symposium, like I said, if the district council is willing to fund and organize one, then I am sure that I can get my staff to find a date that would mutually work for all parties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 674-18(3):

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. ITI has undergone a few initiatives regarding manufacturing. We have our manufacturing strategy forthcoming, of course. Last spring, the Minister tabled a "what we heard" report with regard to that strategy. That had significant input from those interested in manufacturing. Also, the Minister and myself and the Member from Hay River North met with those who were interested in revitalizing manufacturers' associations.

Finding and retaining labour is a challenge that is consistently shared among manufacturers. I would like to ask the Minister: what initiatives, if any, is the Minister discussing with his other department colleagues to retain more skilled workers in the North, but especially around affordable housing and attracting people to the trades through apprenticeship? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we work very closely with the Department of Education on this matter. A question like that probably would be better served going to the Minister of Education. I can say, on behalf of the Minister of ITI and our department, that the Government of the Northwest Territories takes this very seriously. You can see that in our partnerships. You can see it with industry partnerships with the mining industry and the Mine Training Society, how that has worked out, how it has linked education and employment and economic opportunities right across the whole territory for the residents.

Partnership between our government and the industry training provides and continues to help raise education awareness levels right across the territory. I know this isn't specific to the strategy, but it definitely raises the awareness around how people can access these programs and the trade levels and related fields and the benefits that come with these things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate that some of the questioning might be better suited for other Ministers, but these are concerns. These are issues that manufacturers have raised directly with the Ministry, either in the "what we heard" report" or at the gathering that we had last fall. That is the reason why I raised them today. When it comes to procurement, many challenges have been identified by manufacturers. Specific frustration has been expressed with the lack of consultation and rationale on changes to technical specifications that require manufacturers sometimes to retool or modify their operations. I would like to ask the Minister: will the Minister make a commitment that specification changes will be consulted upon with the respective manufacturers prior to making changes to those specifications?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Standing committee has the manufacturing strategy in their purview, and I am looking forward to the comments that come back from committee on that. With that said, I think the issue the Member is highlighting is one that has been identified in the past. We have addressed it. We have taken a number of steps to improve the understanding and the application of our manufacturing policy, both to the manufacturers and to our GNWT procurement departments. I know for a fact that we have done that. We have taken these steps. We have even taken steps where we have sponsored facility tours and updated the manufacturers' product lists and the specifications. I think actually the Member even came one of the tours with me on that. I believe the one that he is highlighting specifically, actions that we are proposing within our strategy, is going to help address this because it is in there. We are talking about communication with the northern

manufacturers strategy and the capacity of the Manufacturers' Association to interact with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Again, I am looking forward to hearing from committee on their comments on this.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. Yes, indeed, the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is looking forward to providing input with regard to this strategy. Many manufacturers describe the GNWT's enforcement of both the Business Incentive Policy as well as the manufacturing policy as being, quite frankly, unsatisfactory. A number of concerned representatives recounted instances where they believed policies were either misinterpreted, or possibly ignored, resulting in arbitrary decision-making. Does the Minister accept that these are legitimate concerns and will he revalidate the Business Incentive Policy and the manufacturers policy?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I believe we have already done that, because that was identified in the Economic Opportunities Strategy in 2014, which led our government to develop a strategy. This strategy is with standing committee, and I look forward to hearing their feedback, as I said. The strategy that is with standing committee includes provisions for renewing the Manufactured Products Policy by reducing the number of barriers and addressing past irritants to this sector.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In discussions, a number of the manufacturers have identified information-sharing as a concern. Many companies, in fact, said that they were unaware of the GNWT funding and support programs for businesses. How will the department support better means for manufacturers to more easily access government resources, supports, programs, and funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As the Member will know from reading the strategy, it is focused heavily on increasing the capacity of the Northwest Territories Manufacturers' Association to be a voice for the manufacturers. We have continued to meet with them on a timely basis and make sure we get a lot of input from them as we move this thing forward.

At the same time, we want to use this strategy to connect them with funding and training programs that are available to them. Just because you are in manufacturing doesn't mean you actually know about all these programs that are out there. We are going to work on that with them.

We want to identify ways to expand their businesses and grow opportunities. Within this strategy, we are also looking at including an establishment of a pathfinder position and an establishment of a reverse trade show and the development of a marketing plan and a website for made-in-the-NWT products. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 675-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION GENERATOR PROCUREMENT
COSTS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The multi-year saga of NTPC's new diesel generators of the Jackfish Lake plant has finally come to a close, and I have questions for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Now that the generators are, in fact, delivered and the contract has ended, what are the final cost overruns for this debacle that taxpayers will ultimately be responsible for?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I don't have that information at my fingertips. I will get that information to the Member, so I will take the rest of his questions as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has taken the questions as notice. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 676-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MIDWIFERY
PROGRAM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In remarks in Committee of the Whole the other day, there used to be an additional \$373,000 for midwifery in 2019-2020, bringing the total resources devoted to midwifery to \$1.78 million. There used to be a staff complement of 8.5 full-time-equivalent people. Could the Minister of Health and Social Services summarize where these positions will be located and how services will be offered to other communities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There already are a number of midwifery positions that exist in both Fort Smith and Hay River. The new positions that are being established, there are 2.5 positions in total. One of the positions is going to be the territorial midwifery clinical specialist position, and this position will provide some coordination and consistent program guidance midwifery services that exist across the

Northwest Territories. They will also be responsible for engaging the clinical governance and quality assurance activities within the authority and liaise with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority for this exact same purpose.

We also are establishing a 0.5 midwifery position in Hay River, and this position is going to be added to the existing complement, and this position will ensure the sustainability of the current services in Hay River, but will also do some of the groundwork for rolling out midwifery services and supports to communities like Fort Resolution and other communities in the Deh Cho. We also have a 0.75 position that we are establishing here in Yellowknife, and this position will work with the territorial midwifery clinical specialist and other primary health practitioners to lay the groundwork for integrated midwifery services here in the capital, but also for rolling out midwifery services throughout the rest of the territories as part of the territorial model. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that and I am certainly interested in finding out more about how the services are going to be expanded to all our communities. I am not aware of any plans to monitor and evaluate the new Northwest Territories midwifery program and publicly report implementation and overall progress. Can the Minister describe how the NWT midwifery program will be monitored and evaluated, and how the results will be publicly reported?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The department has received approval for a monitoring framework that outlines a plan to monitor the assurances at the following three levels, at the three levels we are doing our work; the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the public of the Northwest Territories, the department, and the authority.

At the Legislative Assembly level, monitoring involves indicators of interest to the public, such as increased access to safe, qualified midwifery care as close to home as possible, and reporting at this level will be made public through the Legislative Assembly and through the Minister's office. Department-level monitoring involves indicators that show the territorial midwifery program is meeting best practices and standards as well as in-existence regular auditing mechanisms, and then the authority-level monitoring involves indicators that inform authority leadership on how to improve the quality and efficiency of programs. So there are multiple things that are being done to monitor the effectiveness of this program to ensure that any enhancements and changes are evidence-based and in the best interest of the residents and the programs.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that, and I would encourage him to share that framework with the standing committee. Families have been advocating for midwifery for years, mostly mothers such as Leslie Paulette, Wendy Lahey, and Joanna Tiemessen. How will the role of these public partners be continued as we roll out these services and evaluate their delivery?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As the Member so accurately described in his Member's statement, there has been a lot of work done on this, a lot of years on this, and certainly been a lot of advocacy in this particular area. Public feedback received through the 2017 midwifery stakeholder engagement process has informed the work of the advisory committee on midwifery to help it develop the process and the approach to midwifery expansion. The advocates and consumers were specifically targeted in this engagement. The advisory committee, which included representation from the authorities and the Midwifery Association, are going to continue to provide input into the expansion process. The department will continue to work with the authority in the expansion of midwifery services and will continue to work with clients who are interested in receiving these services to make sure that we develop a program that is strong and meaningful.

To prepare for some of the regional expansion, the Hay River midwifery program, the department, as I said, has received some one-time funding from the federal government to start engaging communities, traditional knowledge-keepers, and care providers in the South Slave and the Deh Cho regions, and this work will just continue to lead to help bolster and strengthen midwifery services as we roll out a territorial program here in the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that information and his good work on the file. Lastly, I think I have done my part in trying to share some of the good news about a Northwest Territories midwifery program, but I think that a lot more could be done to promote this significant achievement, so can the Minister tell us what plans his department has to communicate and promote a Northwest Territories midwifery program? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: A communications plan will be developed in collaboration with the health authorities to inform the public and other stakeholders of the expanded services and how this change will gradually increase access to services during the first few years of implementation. I do want to point out and note that expansion of midwifery services is envisioned as a process that

will be phased in over several years. This is year one of a multi-year rollout, and of course, it is going to be incredibly important that, as we roll out different phases and steps, we make sure that the public understands what these services are, how to access them, and what benefits they will bring. So that will all be incorporated in the communications plans as we roll out over the next several years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 677-18(3):
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER POSITION
FUNDING

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and I am following up on questions I asked about her budget in Committee of the Whole last week. First, could the Minister tell us whether the new ADM of Post-secondary Education is being paid by the college or being paid by the department? Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The associate deputy minister of post-secondary position actually will come out of the Aurora College funding. They do have funding for what used to be a president position, and this person will be taking on the role of overseeing the operations of the college. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Do I understand, then, from the Minister that the new ADM is the president of the college?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: No. This associate deputy minister is responsible for overseeing the operations of the Aurora College, just like the president's duties. However, this is an associate deputy minister position. The main priority is actually bringing forward the framework, and then, of course, when that work is done, then that position will dissolve and then a president position will be reinstated for our post-secondary polytechnic university.

MS. GREEN: The last Aurora College report shows that they were projecting a deficit of \$374,000. I do wonder if that is still the case, given the fact that two programs have been discontinued, the board has been dismissed, and the president resigned just a little bit into the new fiscal year. Is there money available at Aurora College to pay this position and related expenses?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Actually, yes, there is more money. The money for the associate deputy minister is budgeted already. It will come out of the monies that were allocated for a president fee.

The deficit that the MLA from Yellowknife Centre spoke of was a year-end deficit, monies to be drawn down in that year. There was direction from the Education Department that they need to use some of that surplus, but the accumulated surplus for 2016-2017 was over \$10 million, and the accumulated surplus for Aurora College on the 2017-2018 year was over \$13 million. They are trying to use it down, to use some of the money. However, their accumulated surplus keeps increasing yearly, and I will be tabling a report in this week to show the latest surplus.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My temptation now is to bring out my wish list of education spending to help the Minister with that colossal surplus. Are the surpluses going to continue because these positions are unfilled, and can Aurora College keep these surpluses as they occur? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: These are accumulated surpluses. They add up over the years. Like I said, the last one that was tabled here was 2017-2018. It was over \$13 million. That money will be used for the polytechnic university to assist with the implementation plan, although, Mr. Speaker, I must qualify that that is one pot of funding. If there is additional funding that is drawn up that is expected through the implementation plan, then I, as the Minister, or whichever Minister is in this position at that time, I am hoping, will be bringing forward that figure to the government to ask for additional funding. We will be looking at monies from the federal government. We will be looking at outside funds, as well. That is part of the comprehensive plan in developing this strategic work as we go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 678-18(3):
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER POSITION
FUNDING

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple more questions for the Minister. The first one is: how much is the budget for this position in the next fiscal year? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that, if she is actually asking for the salary of a person, there might be some confidential issues on that. I am willing to meet with the Member outside the Chamber to define that more in depth, if she would like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Let me ask this question in a different way. I am assuming that there is an office with an assistant, travel, contracting capabilities, and so on. The line item that is called "development of a polytechnic," how much is that budget for the next fiscal year?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do know that we give approximately \$32 million to the Aurora College at this point. They provide a plan for how they are using that money. I don't, at this time, have the exact figure that is for the associate deputy minister's office, including travel, et cetera. Again, I can get that for the Member.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that commitment. In order to increase transparency, can the Minister commit to creating a line item in the next budget which shows taxpayers what is being spent on the development of a polytechnic university?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I will take that under advisement. I can't make that commitment on the floor. I would have to talk with my colleagues in Finance, et cetera, to find out what is confidential, what is not confidential, and how we share that information. It is a little bit more complicated than I would like to make a commitment at this point.

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

MS. GREEN: I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. I was just digesting the information that was just given. I guess I am not understanding how spending on a government program could be confidential. It needs to be part of the mains, part of the program spending that we look at and review every year. I would like the Minister to make a commitment that she will make this information public, if not today, then shortly. Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: My understanding, again, and I am sure I will be corrected if I am not right, is that there are certain areas that we report on. There are other areas that we don't report on so in-depth because of confidentiality, such as line items. The commitment is that, the first couple of years, we will be developing an implementation plan to move us into a polytechnic university, and during that work, there will be financial targets that will be identified in that work, and then also looking at partners, not only us, but other partners also to

find those resources. That will be part of the implementation plan, the money needed to move it forward, because there are more expenses than just a wage. There may be capital. We don't know. There are a lot of other things that we may be looking at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committee on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 381-18(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 4,
2018-2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 382-18(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019"; and "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 383-18(3):
DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT AND GUIDE FOR
MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I hereby table the Draft Code of Conduct and Guide for Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

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

Notices of Motion

MOTION 35-18(3):
DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT AND GUIDE FOR
MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, I will move the following motion: now, therefore, I move,

seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Tabled Document 384-18(3), Draft Code of Conduct and Guide for Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for review and that the committee report be presented to the Legislative Assembly during its August 2019 sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 48:
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, I will move that Bill 48, Post-Secondary Education Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Member for Hay River North.

BILL 49:
SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, I will move that Bill 49, Small Business Tax Relief Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Lands.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 46:
PUBLIC LAND ACT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 46, Public Land Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Bill 46 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 47:
APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 47, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2019-2020, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Bill 47 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Item 21, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 47: APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 47, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2019-2020, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make appropriations for operations expenditures for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. It also sets out limits on amounts that may be borrowed by the Commissioner on behalf of the government, including information with respect to all existing borrowing and all projected borrowing for the fiscal year, and authorizes the making of disbursements to pay the principals of the amount borrowed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 47 has had its second reading. Second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 45: CORRECTIONS ACT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 45, Corrections Act, be read for the second time. This act repeals and replaces the former act. The new act focuses less on punishment and more on rehabilitation and community reintegration of offenders. Operational improvements are made, including with respect to risk management and security, quality assurance

and monitoring, case management and programming, and staff training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 45 has had its second reading and is now referred to a standing committee. Second reading of bills. Item 22, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 26, Statistics Act; Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act; Committee Report 12-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services; Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement; Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement; Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services; and Tabled Document 237-18(3), Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits 2018 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits Report, August 2018, 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 call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Committee Report 12-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): I will call committee back to order. We have agreed to consider Committee Report 12-18(3), Standing

Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services. On Committee Report 12-118(3), the chair of the Standing Committee of Government Operations, do you have any opening comments? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On February 26, 2019, the Standing Committee on Government Operations presented its Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services. The committee report included 13 recommendations, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss the details of the report and the recommendations in Committee of the Whole today. Members of the committee may have individual comments apart from these, but I will not reread the extensive report we read into the record. Nothing further for now, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Do any Members have any further comments? Recognizing Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not part of the committee that produced this report, but I want to talk about how important it is. Government provides a wide range of programs and services to residents, but there are few as vulnerable as children who are in care. It is not once, but twice, as we know, that the Auditor General has pointed out the limitations and failings, quite frankly, of the response to children in care.

I am aware that the Minister has taken this report seriously, and he has implemented a number of changes, such as those he reported on today in his Ministerial statement, and I want to ask him to take seriously the committee's recommendations to make sure that there is a comprehensive approach to child and family services, and that we put this terrible chapter of failing children in care behind us and come to a place where we can be proud of the services that are provided and that we can say with all honesty that we have done everything we can for children in care. So I may have also some specific comments as the recommendations fall out, but I wanted to make those comments at the beginning. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Ms. Green. Any further comments? Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 94-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services incorporate into its quality improvement plan for child and family services the recommendations made in this report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Members, the motion is being distributed. Okay, Mr. Abernethy, proceed.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the recommendation, we have read through the recommendations in this report and, with respect to recommendation one, we agree. The department values the work that has been done by the Standing Committee on Government Operations and will certainly incorporate the recommendations that are not already covered in the quality improvement plan that are being made by the committee.

A couple of them, we have some questions about content and specificity, but in general, we agree with incorporating their changes into our report. As we are going through each motion, I will talk about each one and how we intend to incorporate it. In some cases, the recommendations already are in line with what we are doing in the quality improvement plan, so I will go into that detail, as well. So in principle, we agree with recommendation number one, but as it is a recommendation to government, Cabinet will be abstaining. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 95-18(3):
 STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
 OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
 THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
 OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
 TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
 – DRAFT ACTION OR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN,
 CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that any government department, board, or agency being audited produce a draft action plan or implementation plan in response to the audit, provide the committee with a copy of that plan consistent with the appropriate process conventions, and present the plan at the committee's public hearing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: You should go to the mover first.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This motion is similar to previous motions the committee has made in response to Auditor General reports. Every year, we learn how to apply more specific language, and we feel this time we've got it right.

The audit function of the Standing Committee on Government Operations is crucial to good governance and serves the role of what would be called the public accounts committee in other jurisdictions. It's crucial that these reviews can be done to the best of the ability of the committee, assessing the best available information at the time. It's difficult to understand how a government is going to respond to the findings of an Auditor General report without a clear action or implementation plan that is preferably costed. That's exactly what this motion is calling for, and this does not apply solely to the department that was audited in this report, but to all future departments and agencies that come before the committee.

The Auditor General reports tend to be high-profile. They tend to have important recommendations that the public is interested in, and if the committee is going to give the opportunity to raise the concerns in the report, the full range of analysis, deliberation, and comment, then we need to see exactly how the government intends to respond.

This recommendation is driven to achieve that point that, in the future, now we are now moving to a cycle of two audits per year from the Auditor General's Office, that, when the departments appear before the committee, they will have something in hand for the committee to address, so the committee and the public has confidence that

the recommendations of the Auditor General are, in fact, being delivered on. Further, the standing committee can then come back in six months or other intervals of time and say: how far along are you on your action plan? Which actions have been implemented? It gives the committee the ability to check in on departments as they proceed to address the findings of the Auditor General.

All too often, these reports can become "one and done." There's one hearing at a point in time, and that's the last you hear of it. We need to move away from it as an Assembly, and ensure the committees have more on their plates to constantly look at the systemic issues and make sure they're being addressed. I encourage the government to take heed to this recommendation, and that, in the future, there will be comprehensive action plans and implementation plans in draft form made available to committee prior to a public hearing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion? Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We accept that recommendation. As a note, this Legislative Assembly has already agreed to develop some process conventions around this area. My one comment on it is I'd hate to presuppose the outcomes of that process convention. It seems like the Member has already determined what that process convention is going to look like. I would say that we need some caution around that.

I've been around for a number of years, and I've seen a number of Auditor General's reports come in, and not all of them asked for an action plan. So if we're developing process conventions that say we have to create an action plan, we may be creating work where we don't need to. Where an action plan is necessary, if that is what the process convention says, that is something that we as a Cabinet will absolutely abide by. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour of the motion? Against? Abstentions? Passed.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 96-18(3):
 STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
 OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
 THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
 OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
 TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
 – GAPS IN SCREENING AND REVIEWS,
 CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services act immediately to ensure that all gaps in screenings and reviews identified by the Office of the Auditor General, including screening for guardianship agreements and foster homes, are addressed, and that it advise the committee when this is completed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wonder if it is appropriate in this setting to ask the Minister whether he can report on this recommendation at this time. Is that possible?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Not at this time. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I support this motion; however, I am a little concerned that it reports to the Committee on Government Operations instead of the Standing Committee of Social Development. Social development is the committee that will end up with this document after the Auditor General's report, and direction will come to social development. That is my concern with it. It can be cc'd to the Standing Committee on Government Operations, but it should go to standing committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will address the comments made by my honourable friend from Nahendeh. The committee's remit in this instance is to consider the report of the Auditor General, and to again ensure that this is not a "one and done" process, that we remain in constant contact on these issues, and to ensure that they are addressed.

I appreciate where the Member is coming from, but the committee does want to ensure that these recommendations are followed to the satisfaction of our findings and the satisfaction of the recommendations made in this report. It's a small Assembly. We work very closely together on both sides of the House, and I think we can ensure that the Standing Committee on Social Development is

engaged in this, and certainly, if that standing committee has the department and this area of the department's work within its own mandate, it can certainly act on that to enquire further. Our work is solely related to the Auditor General's report and the specific recommendations.

I think there could be more work to be done on this issue, especially around this area. If the department completes its recommendation, then our work is done, but Social Development may want to reach further and develop more scrutiny on this area of child and family services. I encourage the Member who is chair of that committee to look into that, but I think it's important that the Standing Committee on Government Operations continue to pay close attention to the outcomes of the department's work in responding to the Auditor General's reports.

To the specific recommendation, Mr. Chair, there were very troubling findings in the Auditor General's report around screenings and reviews for, in particular, guardianship agreements in foster homes, and we want to ensure that those screenings have been done because, at the time of the issuance of the report, many had not been done. This is about ensuring that children in these homes and in these agreements are safe, that the agreements are compliant with the relevant legislation and regulations, and that the department knows these facts are true. With that, I encourage everyone to support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We agree with the Auditor General that all the foster homes must be appropriately screened, assessed, and reviewed, and also supporting documentation be placed in the files to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in foster care. We do take a responsibility to ensure that we are placing children with properly approved, trained, and nurturing foster parents very seriously; however, compliance with the standards that would assess those various things as the Members have indicated was very low. The ongoing quality review process we've implemented will better monitor compliance to the standards that ensure proper assessments are completed prior to children being placed in a foster home, and allow for timely feedback to the front line staff.

New tools, Mr. Chair, are in place, Matrix NWT, which includes checklists, reminders, and approval processes. This will support improvements to the screening and monitoring of foster homes. Improvements to the staff and the caseload, as well as training for both staff and foster parents, will ensure supports are available for prospective and future foster parents.

Mr. Chair, the authority is taking a broader approach than improving the gaps found by the OAG in their screening reviews for foster homes, for example, the 37 files that have been raised previously. All open foster homes in the Northwest Territories are being reviewed in regard to addressing any gaps to ensure that children are being placed in homes with appropriate documentation and screening. The authority completed their first quality review for foster care service, which covered a three-month period. The authority is working with each region, the TCSA, and Hay River to develop and implement strategies to continue to make improvements and improve on compliance.

Mr. Chair, this recommendation, in my mind, also speaks to guardianship agreements and orders, and we accept that there was confusion and a lack of clarity in our standards around the role of child protection workers in supporting guardianship applications in the court. This one really is about helping keep Indigenous families together. This is something that I know the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and I heard loud and clear when we travelled throughout the Northwest Territories on our initial review of child and family services.

To ensure due diligence in transferring guardianship from the director to a prospective guardian, a new standard has been developed that requires proper assessment to be completed in order to ensure the safety and well-being of childcare. The standard identified processes for assessing prospective guardians, financial support through voluntary support service agreements, requirements for ensuring guardians understand their roles, and for situations in which guardians return children to the care of their parents. With guardianship, it is the parents who are the key decision-makers in allowing their children to be placed with guardians.

We did seek legal advice on whether child and family services can screen new guardians, where permanent custody orders have been withdrawn and the guardianship order has been granted. For the cases identified in the Auditor General's review, the department cannot retrospectively screen guardians once a guardianship has been assigned through a legal agreement. Once the director is no longer the legal custodian of a child, Child and Family Services has no legal right to be involved with the family, unless there is a new child protection concern. This standard that we have developed is to make sure that we are doing our work on the front end, rather than having to come back at a later time.

We agree with the recommendation in principle. We look forward to making progress in this area. As it is

a recommendation to government, Cabinet will be abstaining. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was hoping that there would be a bit of an opportunity to just speak in general terms about all of the motions, and I just thought this would be as good a time as any to just speak in general about my own feelings about what happened with child and family services and the auditor's report.

I strongly feel that to follow the auditor's report to the T is not going to solve the issue. Unfortunately, the department has tried almost everything according to the act to try to resolve child and family services, but it can't be resolved until we deal with the root problems that are facing child and family services.

Maybe this seems to be out of place, but I just feel that I have to speak up at this point. It is in the Auditor's report, a clear indication in the Auditor's report, that there are 1,000 kids going through child and family services or through care or are in some sort of care, whether it be care at home or care in somebody else's foster home, and 80 percent of those are related to alcohol. I know that the department has an addictions plan, and what I would like to see done is that addictions plan amalgamated into Child and Family Services first off, at the very beginning, to try to resolve the root problems. If we follow the act, which we have a legal obligation to do, it will make it a lot easier if we are dealing with families that are sober. The Auditor General said it, but I didn't know the number. I knew it was high, but I didn't know the number, and right now, we are looking at this number that the Auditor General put out, that 80 percent, or, in other words, 800 out of 1,000 kids who are in care are because of alcohol-related issues. You look at that, and it seems like just about everything stems from that.

I am a firm believer that kids in care are coming from poverty and that poverty is something that we need to address in order for the families to stay together. I think that I have said this in the House, and it is not a comfortable thing to say, but I have said it many times, and it is because it appears as though some of these kids in foster care are in foster because their families are poor. Do poor families and poor parents have the right to have kids? They do, and they should be supported in order to keep their kids. If poverty is the reason, if alcohol is the reason, we should address those root problems. Why are kids poor? Because there is a lack of employment. You take a look at what is happening in our communities; there are low employment rates, and the kids come from those

communities, where there are low employment rates.

Just based on the numbers, there could be a lot of kids out of Yellowknife as well. I realize that. For the mainstream people who have work, many double incomes or even one good single income, their kids aren't being taken away for the most part. It happens. It happens to everyone, but for the most part, it is not happening. It would also be good to take a look at the work that is being done by the anti-poverty group and, again, amalgamate that into the Child and Family Services action plan that is directed by the Auditor General.

Maybe the Auditor General doesn't have all of the answers. Maybe we have the answers, as well, and some of the people in the communities, maybe they have the answers, as well. I agree with a lot of what the Auditor General is saying, and a lot of what the Auditor General wants to do are good things under normal circumstances, but when you have a lot of alcohol involved and you have a lot of poverty involved, then those things won't apply. This is assuming that people, you know, were rich enough to be able to care for their kids, and it is all neglect, that they are losing their kids because of other reasons other than alcohol and poverty. I feel that that is what it is.

I also think that we need to start looking at the justice system and determine how many of our inmates have come through the foster care system. That is something that is important. I think that we have to look at housing, and we have to take housing and make sure that the kids have proper housing.

I am seeing this as a real opportunity for the government to have a real integrated approach with all of the departments. I know that Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for employing or providing support for individuals, and I think that that support should be sufficient so that individuals do get to keep their children at home.

I guess the last thing that I just want to talk about that was in the Auditor General's report is the training of foster parents. I think that what is important in order to keep the foster children in their home communities is to train the foster parents and find foster parents. Maybe some people don't think that they are capable of being foster parents, and maybe they are. Some are not eligible, I realize that, but many can be eligible. With proper training and proper supports, I think that it is something that will actually resolve the issue.

If we follow a plan that is developed according to what the Auditor General put out, we are going to probably fail. I mean, I am not surprised that the Auditor General indicated that things got worse,

because yes, well, if you just follow a plan that is put together from the outside, then it is not going to work. There needs to be an approach by everyone and we have to address the root problems that are facing us and that are causing us to have to take a lot of kids into care.

I just wanted to make those comments for the record, Mr. Chair, because I think that, if we just follow what the Auditor General said, I think the next group will be sitting here facing the same problems the next time the Auditor General does a report on Child and Family Services for our territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 97-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– DEPARTMENTAL STANDING COMMITTEE
APPEARANCES,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services appear before the appropriate standing committee twice yearly to report on its compliance with Child and Family Services Act and its progress on its Quality Improvement Plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Testart, proceed. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, we have tread this ground already in this Committee of the Whole time. Which is the appropriate standing committee is really up for the department to report on Child and Family Services. It is really up to a given Assembly. In the case of this audit, the responsibility is shared between two committees. However, the committee in this case wanted to create a recommendation that wasn't solely based on the audit findings and this particular report, which, although it is deeply significant and concerning, is a point in time. The committee feels very strongly that future governments need to be on top of Child and Family Services at all times, so this

recommendation is hopefully binding for future governments, that they will come before whatever committee is charged with oversight and report on the general provisions of the Child and Family Services Act and how the system is supporting children in care and any quality improvement plans that are currently under way.

For clarity, although this arises from our audit review, it is not specific to the audit and speaks much more broadly to the ongoing work of the legislature in its review of the Department of Health and Social Services as it provides support to families and children in care. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the remainder of this term, we will certainly provide reports twice yearly, as the report says. Given the desire of multiple committees to be involved, I am prepared to send a letter with joint receivers, so I will send it to both the chair of government office and the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, and together we can work to figure out how to present, given that both parties are clearly interested, so we can work out those details going forward.

I will certainly recommend by way of a transition document that that same commitment remain in future governments. Depending on the structure that is established, we don't know what the committees will be in future governments, but I will certainly make that recommendation in transition that the briefings in this area go to the two committees responsible for these areas, the area responsible for Auditor General reports and the area responsible for social services.

As we know, most quality reviews are completed on a quarterly basis, but they do require some time to put into reports. We do our system-wide audits every two years, but I am confident that we will be able to provide meaningful data to the committees twice a year, so we accept it, we agree, but it is a recommendation to Cabinet, so we will be abstaining. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 98-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND
REPORTING,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services publicly identify performance indicators, including client-centered outcomes, that it will use to assess improvements in Child and Family Services over time, and further, that reporting on these measures be incorporated into the department's annual business plan and the annual report of the director of Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This motion is self-explanatory in what it calls for, but we were particularly seized with identifying performance measures that were more than just output-based, such as, you know, amount of children care versus children who have moved outside the system, something along those lines. Those are useful figures, but we really need a better understanding of the quality of care, and committee members felt very strongly that identifying very clear performance indicators, especially those directed at clients in the system, are the best way to understand the quality of the provision of services and not just the quantity of those services, for lack of a better word.

As we know, governments report often. This government actually is quite proactive in many of its reporting requirements, or the information it chooses to report publicly, and those are good things, but often the issue is not the reporting itself but what is being reported. So it is crucial that any reporting that is done incorporates these measurements and that these measurements are included in basically everything the department does at a broader level, so that both the public and Members of this Assembly, future Members as well, can be able to look at a line or look at a report and clearly see how the system is functioning and whether or not it is functioning up to a standard that is acceptable as determined by legislation, regulation, and the public interest. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. We do agree with this recommendation in principle. As

part of the Quality Improvement Plan, the department has already committed to developing a set of key indicators. That is action 1.5 in the Quality Improvement Plan that has been shared. The set of performance indicators are currently under development. Once completed, the department will include these in future business plans as well as the annual report of the director of Child and Family Services where they align with the scope of the plan, so they will be made public through those mechanisms.

The department will be seeking some legal advice to see to what extent the Child and Family Services Act allows for tracking client-centered outcomes with the consideration for privacy and confidentiality requirements. What I mean by that, for example, is tracking some outcomes would require linking Child and Family Services data to other related measures such as hospitalization data, immunization data, and those types of things. This would also require the identification of common variables to link these data sets; things like child name, date of birth, health care number, et cetera. So if a health care number is required, as is often the case for hospitalization data, the CFS system would need to track this information through the Matrix NWT. Currently, the healthcare card number is not collected through the system, which could add some complication, which is why we agree with this recommendation and principle as opposed to straight agreement, because we have some work to do to determine whether or not we can actually do it to the degree that I believe the Members want based on the recommendation.

For other indicators related to measuring the success of youths once they have left or aged out, for example, things like employment or employment training, educational attainment, whether they are actually eligible to enrol in college, whether they are eligible to enter trade programs, these types of things, the department would have to verify with legal counsel. If the Child and Family Services Act actually permits following children once their files are closed or locked for reporting purposes, once that is confirmed, we would need to go through what information is needed for data linkages.

So while we don't agree that there is value in this to help make evidence-based decisions, we are not 100 percent sure that we can collect the data in the way the Members would like us to, so our commitment is that we will do the work to figure out if we can, and if we can, we will. If we can't, we will certainly explain to committee what our challenges are and why we are unable, so that is why we agree with this in a principle as opposed to just a straight accept. We have more work to do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? All against? Abstentions?

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 99-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH
INDIGENOUS AND COMMUNITY
GOVERNMENTS,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services incorporate into its Quality Improvement Plan on Child and Family Services a commitment to strengthen working relationships with Indigenous and community governments; and further, that reporting on these measures be incorporated into the department's annual business plans and the annual report of the director of Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that my colleague, the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, spoke about the complex nature of some of the root causes that cause the intervention of Child and Family Services. There is really not a single solution; I agree. It is not in the Auditor General's report, what is going to fix the problem. It is not expending millions of dollars without a plan. It is, really, working with communities and figuring out where the strengths of those communities are and applying those strengths holistically so that we can ensure that communities feel supported.

With an overwhelming number of Indigenous children in the system, it is really incumbent on this government to take action to engage communities to ensure that that statistic can come down and that communities are involved in the provision of these services for children. The only way that we are going to get there is if we start working together.

There is a lot of movement on this file, both nationally and here in the Northwest Territories, with the signing of self-government agreements that include Indigenous governments offering child and

family services. Even though the capacity to deliver those services may not be there today, it is important to start working together now so that we can build a better system, both that the GNWT operates and eventually Indigenous governments are going to operate. We acknowledge that there are already some of those relationships in place, but they need to be stronger. They need to be stronger so that we can see better results and so that communities can feel engaged and involved in the system, so that it is not an adversarial process, and it is one that speaks to the needs of communities as well as the needs of children in care. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We accept this recommendation. The department has committed to this action in the Quality Improvement Plan. It is specifically in action item 3.5. Increased communication and engagement of staff has been, obviously, an important focus for improving change management in all CFS strategic initiatives. The aim, obviously, is to bring decision-making closer to the front line and ensure that any quality improvement initiatives make sense in the context of front-line approach in the communities across the territories at the front line, in the communities where the children live.

The department does recognize that it is important to engage with Indigenous government leaders and non-government organizations, as well as current and past clients. This will strengthen community capacity and help us move in the right direction to ultimately improve the outcomes for children, youth, and their families. To that end, Mr. Chair, I have directed the department to set up a teleconference with Indigenous governments for March 15th, as well as an in-person meeting for May 2019, to discuss how, together with our partners, we can strengthen working relationships with Indigenous and community governments. Mr. Chair, as part of the reporting on the Quality Improvement Plan, the department will track the meetings held with Indigenous and community governments, and we will be in a position to report back to committee on those.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, there is a requirement in legislation to work with our Indigenous governments, and we are committed to that. We will do that. As this is a recommendation to government, although we accept it, we will be abstaining. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour to the motion? Against? Abstentions?

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 100-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services incorporate into its Quality Improvement Plan on Child and Family Services a commitment to strengthen working relationships with community stakeholders in Child and Family Services, including the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories and the extended families of children in care; and further, that reporting on these measures be incorporated into the department's annual business plan and the annual report of the director of Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is one of several motions involving the front-line workers and actors who are engaged in the system who might not necessarily be government employees. The committee recognizes the enormous role that foster families and extended families play in support for children in care and that their experience is crucial to making the system work. We made a number of recommendations. This one is the first that calls for strengthening the working relationship with these community stakeholders.

Many of our committee members come from or have experience with traditional backgrounds, particularly in Indigenous communities, and we were very clear in asking for the committee to bring forward a recommendation that addressed extended families for children in care. Extended families can sometimes be a better option than other options that the government may identify, and working with those extended families can be a way to ensure that traditional knowledge is maintained and that common ties to language, culture, and tradition are maintained as the child continues to be in a system of care. Again, the committee feels very strongly that this holistic approach is going to ultimately achieve better results for children in care.

and result in better compliance for the government to manage its responsibilities under the act.

You will note as well, Mr. Chair, that this recommendation also includes reporting conditions. That is, again, so that the current committees, future committees, and members of the public will be able to clearly see evidence of whether this is being done. The government can be held to account as a result, and the committee can continue to monitor how successful these relationships are being in caring for children. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One would think that the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories would play a central role in the role of children in care, but it is my information that they don't, that information is not readily shared with them, and that they do not, in fact, take a central role in advocacy and training for other foster families. There is an opportunity here, with this resolution, to increase the collaboration between the department and the Foster Family Coalition, and I urge the department to take advantage of that opportunity. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department has reviewed the recommendation and does accept it. The recommendation is reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan under sections 3.5 and 4.8. I also talked, during my conversation around recommendation number 3, about some of the work that we are doing with the Foster Family Coalition as far as tracking and working with them. The department and authorities also participate in a monthly partnership meeting hosted by the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories. As a note, the executive director of the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories is the co-chair on the Foster Care Quality Working Group that has been recently established. The quality working group is focusing on how to improve relationships with all foster homes, including those with extended families.

As part of the reporting in the Quality Improvement Plan and directly relating to this recommendation, the department will track the meetings held with the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories and report on those, and we are working, obviously, to strengthen our relationship with the Foster Family Coalition moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions?

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 101-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– TRAINING FOR FOSTER PARENTS,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services develop and implement training for foster parents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, the committee, in our deliberations around how we felt the issues that were raised by the report that really needed to be addressed, felt that the role of foster parents in the system and the government's working relationship with them really needed to be improved. Committee noted that the resources for providing training to foster parents was really insufficient, with many foster parents not having any formal training at all.

Committee is very concerned by this and wants to ensure that anyone who is caring for children in the system has the adequate resources and understanding of their obligations under the legislation to be compliant and ensure that children are cared for, because that is really the top priority at the end of the day. We feel very strongly as a committee that training supported by the GNWT is required to ensure that foster parents have the support that they need to be effective caregivers and guardians of children in care. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This recommendation doesn't go far enough. The training should be mandatory. I understand that foster parents are often parents of children themselves, but being a foster parent is a different role. It requires different support and different skills, recognizing that children may be in their home

temporarily, that they may come from circumstances of trauma and neglect, and that they may need special attention. It would have been my preference that this motion say that the training was mandatory. I think that it is really important to say that this relationship with the foster parents goes both ways. It is not just the government demanding things from the foster parents and providing them with training and so on, but also that foster parents are able to ask for help when they need it. For that reason, I would have preferred to see that this was mandatory. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department has actually already committed to this action in the Quality Improvement Plan. Please take a look at action item 4.6. The Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories is currently engaging us in this action item. I do take the Member from Yellowknife Centre's point, and I will certainly raise those issues with the deputy and the team working on this to see what additional steps may be necessary to make the training mandatory. If we can do that, we will certainly look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions?

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 102-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– INFORMATION-SHARING AGREEMENT WITH
FOSTER FAMILY COALITION OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish an information-sharing agreement with the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories to ensure that all foster parents may be connected with that organization's resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this is one in our series in motions in support of foster parents in the Child and Family Services system. In this case, it is to ensure that information is being shared appropriately and effectively so that foster parents are not left asking questions or do not know who to go to for help. I take my colleague's point from Yellowknife Centre that it is a two-way relationship. Certainly the standing committee is very sympathetic to that concern and wanted to create this package of recommendations that find new ways and more efficient and effective ways to support foster parents in the Northwest Territories.

We feel that establishing an information-sharing agreement with the coalition will allow for better results and clearly define the boundaries of privacy that the honourable Minister of Health and Social Services earlier spoke of. There are privacy concerns that arise from the often complex nature of these arrangements and of the children themselves in care. It is important that everyone understands what their obligations are and what is appropriate within the broad terms of an information-sharing agreement.

I look forward to hearing the Minister's response to this recommendation, but committee feels that it is crucially important that the coalition be brought closer into the system, again, so that we can ensure that the system is as holistic and collaborative as it possibly can be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department does accept this recommendation. As a note, this isn't something that was contemplated in the existing Quality Improvement Plan in the way that it is articulated here. However, having read the recommendation and having read the report, the department will be adding this recommendation to the Quality Improvement Plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions?

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 103-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– MECHANISMS FOR ANONYMOUS STAFF
FEEDBACK,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services develop and implement mechanisms to enable staff to provide free and honest feedback anonymously. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course, I wouldn't call this so much whistle-blowing as more of a way to support staff who are in very trying circumstances. We have heard the concerns around the burden of reporting, the limited resources, and the limited number of staff to work with. I recognize that there is some new money going into creating some new positions that should help, but for those people who do have issues with either the policy environment or other issues that may arise, they need to have a conduit for that information to flow to the relevant authorities and to ensure that they feel safe in disclosing that information.

This recommendation calls on the government to establish a means to do that, and rather than rely on a larger government approach, like the process that is laid out in the collective agreement, this calls on something specific to Child and Family Services and to the social workers and other staff who are engaged in the system. It is a specific protocol, a specific mechanism, for Child and Family Services that doesn't rely on broader measures that might be in a collective agreement or in legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department has reviewed the recommendation, and we accept it. Just as a note before I go into comments specifically about the recommendation, the GNWT does have a safe disclosure policy. I understand the Member's suggestion that there needs to be something other than that, but I do strongly encourage staff, if they feel that there is something going wrong or something not working the way that it should, they always have the opportunity to use the safe disclosure policy.

With respect to this recommendation, the department does agree with the recommendation and has already actually implemented an anonymous feedback process for staff, including an anonymous Child and Family Services suggestion box, and that was done in September 2018. It is action item 1.17 in the Quality Improvement Plan.

The web link to the suggestion box is included on the monthly all-CFS staff meeting invite, so everybody who is getting invited to that meeting gets to see the suggestions that have been made so that they can have discussions around those suggestions and/or comments in order to effect change in how we are doing our services. The monthly all-CFS staff teleconference is actually being used as a reporting mechanism for the anonymous suggestion box. To date, I can say that suggestions received have actually informed the development of the quality improvement plan. It is feedback from staff that is making a difference.

The department and the authority also provide anonymous surveys for the participants of all of our training events, for example, the CPW core training. We have supervisor and manager annual training. We have assistant director training. Those trainings are identified in action item 1.18. This information that we get, which is anonymous, is used to improve subsequent training events and develop comprehensive training frameworks, which is articulated in action item 1.11.

We do recognize that staff need to feel comfortable in sharing meaningful feedback. We are working to build an organization culture that supports exactly what I feel the Members are asking us to do. Although we agree it is a recommendation, the government Cabinet will be abstaining.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions? Motion passed.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 104-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– ASSESSMENT OF FINANCIAL AND HUMAN
RESOURCES,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services incorporate into its quality improvement plan for child and family services a clear commitment to complete the assessment of financial and human resources required to deliver child and family services, as recommended by the Auditor General of Canada; and further, that this assessment incorporate gender-based analysis, example, via the Gender-Based Analysis Plus tool; and furthermore, that the department share with the committee its project plan for this work, developing subsequent timelines in discussion with the committee; and furthermore, that the quality improvement plan for child and family services be revised and re-released to reflect this assessment upon its completion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is kind of a long-standing issue that has been raised by previous reviews of child and family services. The Child Welfare League was asked to do some work on this in the past, after the last Auditor General report. It stubbornly remains a stumbling block to really understanding how to solve some of the deficiencies within the provision of child and family services. The 2019-2020 budget, there is \$3.5 million additional. My concern at the time and it continues to be a concern is: we know that money can be used, but we don't know how effective it will be.

I have heard many of my colleagues opposite say time and time again that more money does not necessarily solve problems. Committee couldn't agree more, which is why this recommendation calls for a clear assessment of the financial and human resources required. I know that that is not an easy subject matter. This is an issue across Canada. There is no hard-and-fast, scientific-based formula on what is perfect. We have to do something. We have to do something that is more than what we are doing now.

Further, we have made the recommendation to incorporate gender-based analysis. We feel that is an important consideration to make in the provision of these services and that it needs to be a part of the government's work.

Finally, whatever work comes out of this assessment, that it re-evaluate the plan as a result of that. We feel very strongly as a committee that this action plan must address this issue, because it is not the first time it has been raised. If we are ever to understand what the system actually needs to operate as effectively and efficiently as it needs to

ensure the protection of children in care, this assessment is absolutely required.

I hope that the government will meaningfully accept this recommendation and do the work that is being asked of them and that, ultimately, the quality improvement plan will reflect this in its final version. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is hard to overstate the importance of this motion. It is the key motion of all that have been made here. It builds, as my colleague said, on a request that goes back almost 20 years to try to quantify caseloads and workloads for people providing services to families and children who are in care. It is important not only that the government use this information to catch the system up to where it should be now to provide the full range of services, but also there is a plan that will guide the government into the future about the resources that are required. For this reason, it is absolutely essential that this work, although often attempted and incomplete, this time be completed and reported on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department has reviewed the recommendation, and we agree with the OAG as well as the committee that addressing workload capacity within the CFS system is critical, absolutely critical, in ensuring the delivery of appropriate services to children and families. The department has recognized capacity challenges related to workload and caseload issues in the regions. In February 2019, just a few weeks ago, the Minister of Finance released the proposed budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, which, as the Member indicated, included \$3.3 million investment to add 21 new positions to support child and family services.

Mr. Chair, let's be clear. We know that we need to make sure that we have the staff we need to meet children and family services' needs now, but also into the future. We are taking actions to strengthen the recruitment and retention and development of CFS staff across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chair, the department absolutely recognizes the need to conduct the assessment. This is absolutely reflected in action items 1.9 and 1.10 of the Quality Improvement Plan. The department will incorporate the Gender-Based Analysis Plus tool. Staff are currently taking the Gender-Based Analysis Plus course to determine how this type of analysis will impact the assessment of human and financial resources for a child and family services system.

Based on this additional requirement, the department will be extending the deadline for this deliverable to June 15, 2019, giving us a bit more time to do that work. The department absolutely agrees to share its project plan for this work with committee and share a revised quality improvement plan based not only on this recommendation, but all the recommendations. We will certainly get that to committee as soon as we can, recognizing it does take us a bit of time to incorporate the recommendations that have been identified. We agree with this recommendation in principle, and we are going to do the work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 105-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– CASELOAD STANDARDS FOR CHILD
PROTECTION WORKERS, CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services develop and implement caseload standards for child protection workers by June 30, 2019. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Similar to the last, this is a long-standing issue that has only been partially completed in previous responses to these findings. It is crucial that we have a better understanding of how many cases an individual child protection worker should be undertaking and what capacity looks like in a very high-stress, demanding job and what the supports look like, as well. We can't just get to the resourcing question without identifying a standard for caseload.

This is such a crucial, long-standing issue that the committee has placed a firm date in this recommendation. The committee's expectation is that, should this motion carry, the government will follow suit and deliver this new standard by June 30th and, at the very least, respond to our concerns sooner than that if they cannot meet that deadline.

It is crucially important that caseload standards be developed and implemented for child protection workers. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Beaulieu): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is one of the recommendations that we agree on in principle, as opposed to accept. As outlined in the response to the Auditor General, the department does plan on actually developing the caseload standards for child protection workers; however, the deadline of June 30, 2019, would be premature to establish the standards. This is based on a number of things, but specifically, as we move forward and look at new resources that we roll over the next three years, the department is also going to test proposed caseload standards to ensure that they're appropriate.

I mean we can put in a standard which is an academic exercise, but until we test it, to make sure that it's exactly right and does take into consideration that we're not just going to be providing services with one type of professional child and family services worker, we are looking at family preservation workers, we are looking at other support-type positions. There would be a variety of types of positions. It's not going to be just having one type of position doing this work. It's a little premature to come up with a solid and fast standard. We believe we need some time to test, monitor, evaluate, and evolve the standard, recognizing the range of types of positions that we would be looking at.

Although we agree that this needs to be done, and we're going to do it, we're not confident that we can give committee a hard and fast, this will be the plan forever, caseload number on June 30th. We are going to take more time. We need more time. I do accept there is urgency. I do accept that this is something that needs to be a priority, and it is. The timeline that's provided, we don't feel that we'll be able to do it and get it right, so we're going to take more time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions? Motion passed.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 106-18(3):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2018 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES (CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES)
– COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE WITHIN 120
DAYS, CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All in favour? Against? Abstentions? Motion passed.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 12-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 12-18(3). What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I shall rise and report progress. To the motion. Thank you, committee.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Sahtu.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. MCNEELY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 12-18(3), and would like to report progress with 13 motions carried, and that Committee Report 12-18(3) is concurred with; and, Mr. Speaker, I move that committee report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do I have a seconder? Member for Great Slave. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried.

---Carried

Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 31:
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 911 ACT

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 31, Northwest Territories 911 Act, be read for the third time; and, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Member has requested a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

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

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 47:
APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES) 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 47: Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures) 2019-2020, be read for the third time; and, Mr. Speaker, I

would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The member has requested a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le president. Today is the final step in a very long and time-consuming process that began in September 2018, the three-week review of the departmental business plans. Committee of the Whole reviewed the 2019-2020 Main Estimates for 12 government entities from February 20th to March the 8th. We have received replies from Ministers for, I think, three of the departments reviewed so far, so prizes go to the Minister of Infrastructure, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I look forward to receiving the additional information from the other responsible Ministers, as this should have been received in advance of the appropriation bill we are dealing with right now.

For the fourth year in a row, no public consultation was carried out with regard to the budget. Despite my previous recommendations, there were no consultations with Regular MLAs to help set priorities and develop the business plans. Cabinet dropped in very significant changes from the business plans to the main estimates to the order of more than \$20 million with no explanation. We had to ferret out, these changes and seek additional information. Further changes came to light on the floor of this House in Committee of the Whole. For example, Environment and Natural Resources restructured itself internally and reallocated its budget cuts, but provided no notice or revised budget documents for Members to base their departmental review upon. I will still waiting to see that information.

Thanks to our colleague, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, we now know that the budget for post-secondary renewal and the associate deputy minister leading that effort is buried somewhere in the Aurora College appropriation. While I strongly support our move toward a polytechnic university, there should certainly be a clear and transparent budget for that work.

What I learned during the main estimates review: there are definitely some good initiatives in this budget, including a \$3.3 million for Child and Family Services, a territorial midwifery program, and increased resources for autism. Some of the money for the new initiatives is being taken from some other programs, including a \$600,000 cut to homecare services funding.

The Minister of Justice has made a sincere commitment to carry out a comprehensive review of

victim services. I look forward to the results and increased resources and support for these important programs and staff. Additional funding for family violence shelters is also much appreciated.

911 emergency services are proceeding. That is a good thing. A lot more work is needed to achieve the July 1, 2019 implementation date.

I support legally binding land-use planning in the Wekweeti management area. A plan can assist with recovery of our caribou herds through habitat protection. However, I remain concerned that the federal government is not living up to its obligation to fund this effort. I urge Cabinet to work with the Tlicho government to bring the federal government to the table and invoke the dispute resolution process in the Tlicho agreement to settle this matter.

Cabinet has no intention of reviewing the Heritage Fund Act as laid out in the mandate. The fund continues to lose money against inflation and the plan now seems to be to contract out its management rather than provide a role for the public in managing the Heritage Fund.

A very large information system shared services unit of over 70 staff is being created with many transfers from other departments. The purpose appears to be to centralize control within the Department of Finance rather than improve client services. There is no monitoring evaluation framework, but the Minister is now committed to share that framework and a progress report with Regular MLAs.

Environment and Natural Resources is the only department that continues to take cuts in 2019-2020, to the tune of another \$1.67 million. During the term of this Assembly, funding for the department has been slashed by 10 percent. If there was ever any doubt that the environment is not a priority with Cabinet or the Minister, this is the evidence. Very significant delays have been experienced in getting mandate commitments completed, and other work, as well. This is not because of a lack of dedication by the hardworking staff, but a lack of resources in leadership. Responsibilities have increased with the climate change audit, Pan-Canadian Framework obligations, the caribou crisis, and new legislation developed without additional resources, but funds continue to shrink for the department.

The ENR Minister has not been able to protect this department or secure additional resources from his friend, the Minister of Finance. I am profoundly disappointed to see that there is no new funding to address the caribou crisis. Their legal requirements for recovery strategies for both Boreal and barren-ground caribou is these are now classified as

species at risk. There is always money for roads, as we will see with the supplementary appropriations later this week, but nothing for caribou. That says it all, Mr. Speaker. A road into the Slave Geological Province is untenable and not responsible development when there is a caribou crisis with no new money to help with the recovery.

I was astounded to learn from the Minister of Infrastructure that, when it comes to federal funding, the Slave Geological Province Road is a higher priority than the replacement of the Frank Channel Bridge. Planning for a new road should not take priority over public safety. Without a safe Frank Channel Bridge, there is no Slave Geological Province Road.

There has been some progress on increasing community government funding by \$1.8 million in 2019-2020, but we still need the plan to close the gap in the 2015 municipal funding review. Back then, it was a \$33 million shortfall, so this also needs to be updated based on our current needs.

There is no plan for having a single-window service centre in all of our communities. The Minister has resisted calls for such services in reaching those centres and Yellowknife, despite collaborative opportunities with Service Canada. Little to no progress on land rights and negotiations has taken place during the 18th Assembly, and I don't expect that any final agreements will be signed before the fall.

For a government that says it is committed to Indigenous rights and reconciliation, there is so little to show. Little to no progress in contaminated sites management and prevention of public liabilities has occurred, and that was also a mandate commitment. Most of the work should be done by the Department of Lands. Some sort of tracking system has yet to be completed, and a manual on contaminated sites management has been in preparation for what seems like years. There have been no new policy developed, regulations, or completed legislative changes to ensure that we reduce the risk of taking on new public liabilities.

Over the last four budgets, I have offered some thoughts on how to improve the budget process, including early and meaningful consultation with Regular MLAs and the public. I have also recommended a more balanced approach that includes more revenues and a stronger focus on diversifying our economy.

Transformative change can come through the emerging knowledge economy, on opportunities such as the conservation economy with Thaidene Nene. We need solid plans and investments for adequate housing and universal childcare so our residents can engage in the economy. We need to

get our housing out of core need while creating local jobs. We need to provide stronger support for the arts, tourism, agriculture, and the fishing industry. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower the cost of living, and develop a real post-secondary education system. These sectors also create more jobs than non-renewable resources developed per dollar of investment. That is the kind of leadership I had hoped for in this budget in the main estimates.

I was very pleased to work with my Regular MLA colleagues to get some very modest improvements in this budget. While I appreciate and can support many of the activities, programs and services, and some of the new initiatives in this budget, the lack of priority for the environment, housing, and economic diversification continues to move the NWT in the wrong direction. I will not be supporting this budget or the appropriation bill. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

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

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Hay River North, the Member for Frame Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 15 in favour, two opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Masi. Bill 47 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain whether Her Honour the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills.

Assent to Bills

COMMISSIONER (Ms. Thom): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 31, Northwest Territories 911 Act
- Bill 32, Naturopathic Professions Statutes Amendment Act
- Bill 47, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2019-2020

Mahsi cho. Thank you. Quyanainni. Merci beaucoup. Koana.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgments
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 44, Forest Act

- Bill 46, Public Lands Act

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 26, Statistics Act
- Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
- Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
- Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement
- Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services
- Tabled Document 237-18(3), Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits 2018 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits Report, August 2018
- Tabled Document 381-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019
- Tabled Document 382-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. [Translation] This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. [Translation ends]

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:53 p.m.