



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, March 14, 2019

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

ELDER MARY KUDLAK: [English translation not provided.]

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 176-18(3):
FOSTER FAMILIES PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
FOSTER FAMILY COALITION OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to speak about foster care and the important role of Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories has played, and will continue to play, in partnering with Child and Family Services to improve recruitment, training, and support for foster families.

Foster families perform a vital service to children that must be placed in care. I want to recognize and thank all foster families from across this territory for the valuable support they provide to our children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, for the past several years, the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories has worked to recruit foster families, has offered support, assistance, and training to foster families, has organized summer camps for foster children from across the Northwest Territories, and represented the perspectives, needs, and concerns of foster parents in meetings and conversations with the Child and Family Services System.

The Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories was established by concerned

foster parents from across the territory and provides an important voice for those foster families. Today, the coalition is releasing a new recruitment strategy and video to recruit new foster and adoptive parents across the Northwest Territories. This initiative is in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services.

Using the catchphrase "we need you," the coalition wants to send the message to prospective foster families and adoptive families that they will not begin their journey as foster or adoptive parents alone. In fact, they will become a part of a large team that is working together to ensure children are receiving consistent and quality care with a goal of family reunification and permanency. It is vital that we have more foster and adoptive families in the Northwest Territories so our children have the chance to be placed in a home that suits them best, when they need one.

Mr. Speaker, foster care is one of the key areas identified by the Auditor General of Canada in their report, tabled this past December as needing to be improved, and it is a priority area for the Department of Health and Social Service's quality improvement plan. As part of our quality improvement work, the department has established a foster care quality working group.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to advise that the foster care quality working group will be co-led by the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories.

The working group will recommend improvements to the foster care system, addressing the need to provide more consistent support to foster parents across all regions, and to improve foster care training for all NWT foster parents, so that foster families have better information and strategies as they

respond to the important needs of children in care of the child and family services system.

Mr. Speaker, I want to formally acknowledge our partnership with all foster families, and with the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories that represents the interests and concerns of our foster families. We look forward to continuing to work together with them through the foster care quality working group to improve support, training, and services to foster families so that we can make sure that every child and youth in the NWT stays safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of my favourite things about this job is that every day I learn something new. Obviously, I have had to learn a lot about how laws are made. The specifics of the legislative process aren't as widely known as they could be, so I thought I would share what I have learned with the public.

It all starts with an idea about how to make things better. That idea is developed, expanded, refined, or combined with other ideas, into a bill. Just because an idea gets turned into a bill doesn't mean that the idea was good to begin with, so the legislative process helps us improve worthy ideas and weed out bad ones.

The first mention of a bill in the Legislative Assembly is when the sponsor, which is either a Minister or a Regular Member, gives notice of first reading. Two days later, the sponsor makes a motion that the bill be read for the first time, and Members vote as to whether or not the bill should proceed further.

If it passes, then the bill is reprinted and members and the public can see its contents. Prior to the vote, no one other than the sponsor actually knows what is in the bill. If defeated, the bill never sees the light of day, and its merits are never publicly debated.

Mr. Speaker, because Members don't know the contents of the bill, what they are really voting on is whether or not they want to be exposed to a new idea.

Because it is commonly accepted that the ability to present and debate ideas is an indispensable cornerstone of democracy, first reading is usually just a formality, and many legislations don't even bother with a vote.

However, new ideas can be scary. They can pose a threat to the status quo and to existing power structures, so those who fear change may prefer to censor new ideas.

The ability to kill a bill at first reading is a wonderful tool for partisan governments where suppression of a minority is the key, but I find it oddly out of place in our consensus model.

Perhaps the power to put people back in their place when they step out of line is just part of the colonial baggage that we inherited as part of the Westminster system.

Mr. Speaker, I am optimistic that eventually we will shed that baggage yet, because like I said at the beginning of this sitting, change is on the horizon.

Uh oh, Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to explain the entire legislative process, but I have run out of time. I guess I won't make it past first reading, but I appreciate the common decency and commitment to free speech that you have displayed by allowing me to speak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LICENSED DAY CARE FACILITIES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the basic needs of families and communities is to be able to take care of their children.

Currently, a number of families in Yellowknife are facing a difficult situation. Mr. Speaker, just before Christmas, the Kids Corner daycare in my riding closed its doors. With only two weeks' notice of its closure, about 30 families of kids aged one through four were sent scrambling to find alternative care.

However, they don't have any options, Mr. Speaker. There aren't enough spaces to meet the demand. The Yellowknife Day Care Association, which recently opened its new building, already has a waiting list of nearly 150 kids.

Working with the Yellowknife Women's Society, the affected parents have come up with a solution, but it requires renovations to bring the Yellowknife Women's Society's building up to code for daycare operations. That requires significant capital funding, but the parents have been told that there will be no government support for capital investment. The department has stated in the past that it doesn't want to interfere with a private market-driven industry.

However, Mr. Speaker, the private market isn't providing daycare spaces. Our communities are simply too small to generate a business case for the private market to invest in new infrastructure. There is no return on investment.

Mr. Speaker, we have hit a wall. There won't be more daycare spaces without a government commitment to new capital infrastructure funding. Families will go without an essential service. The department needs to step up and get these facilities built. Once the facilities are there, NGOs or parent cooperatives can take it on management and operations, but, without the actual bricks and mortar, that can't happen.

This lack of infrastructure is also leading to a rise in the number of unlicensed day home operators. That can result in more children being put at risk, and that is not acceptable by any definition.

Mr. Speaker, for young families, it is essential to have access to reliable, safe, progressive childcare. Without it, their ability to pursue a career, achieve financial security, and allow their family to grow and prosper is compromised. That goes directly against our mandate priorities for stronger communities.

Mr. Speaker, a reliable childcare system is an investment in our future. I urge the Minister to consider stronger support for childcare infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, please allow me to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery today with us Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford. As many of you know, Mr. Whitford is a man of many roles: former Commissioner, former Speaker, former Minister, former Member, former Sergeant-at-Arms, honorary Clerk at the table, and member of the Order of NWT. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Whitford to the House this afternoon. It is always a pleasure when he visits the House.

At the same time, Members, I would like to recognize some of the visitors in the gallery, as well. First, we have with us Julia and Max Trennert of Hay River, parents of Brendalynn Trennert, who works in the Clerk's office. Join me in congratulating them on their 58th wedding anniversary, which they just celebrated last month.

Secondly, please welcome, Janek Nowicz, who joins us from the land down under. He is visiting from Elizabeth, South Australia. G'day, mate. Welcome to our Assembly.

Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTION ON BUDGET SESSION

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is our last winter sitting with the budget and legislation deliberations, Mr. Speaker, as we heard from yesterday's retirement announcement from the Honorable Finance Minister R.C. McLeod.

Mr. Speaker, as a first-term Member of this institution, I certainly witnessed many sacrifices made by public officials, endless time away from home, families, friends, for contributions in making a difference to this territory.

Given my experiences on how government operates and the many challenging decisions that must be made in achieving prosperity in all areas such as high cost of living in the family home, the business environment, the classroom, and more importantly, demonstrating to our federal counterparts that we are ready and our ability self-determination.

Mr. Speaker, yes, over the past several financial budget deliberations, we did not always agree. However, the Minister, being from a small community, understands small-community limitations, challenges, and family hardships, due mostly to a lack of jobs in most cases. Along with his career experiences, he has provided knowledge on balances needed in the best interest for the Government of the Northwest Territories and the residents.

Mr. Speaker, we now have the last 2019-2020 budget that will produce meaningful change in job creation while maintaining operational and maintenance delivery of programs and services. In the very near future, Mr. Speaker, when I come to see construction site jobs at the Great Bear River bridge, Tulita health centre, and the children's Colville Lake School, I will certainly think on the past and reflect on the statement, "The best social program is a job."

Mr. Speaker, in building on similar relationships to the principles as set out in the co-management land claim agreements and Intergovernmental Council, I look forward to our committee's community consultations on the pre-approved legislations passed during this sitting.

In closing, I want thank the Minister of Finance for his public contribution and dedication. Now, Mr. Speaker, he can enjoy quality time with his family. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RED ALERT PART 2

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Yesterday, the Premier gave the keynote speech he called "Purgatory and Persistence: The Case for Economic Self-Determination in the Northwest Territories" at the Arctic Oil and Gas Symposium in Calgary. "Purgatory," really? This red alert part 2 negative messaging won't encourage investment in the NWT and the transformative change we need. The Premier is stuck in a time warp where fossil fuels dominate the NWT and world economy. This is not going to happen, given climate-change realities, commodity prices,

and technological change. Blaming the media and southern Canada won't change history.

The revisionist version of the Mackenzie gas project is also not helpful. GNWT bent over backwards to give away our resources. We signed letters locking in royalty rates for the anchor fields at the pathetically low federal rates, signed an unenforceable socio-economic agreement, and rejected most of the joint panel review recommendations to maximize benefits for Northerners. In the end, it was the developers who caused most of the delays. Market forces are what sunk the joint venture. If it had gone ahead, taxpayers would undoubtedly be subsidizing it now and for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, my patience is wearing thin with the megaproject approach to economic development put forward by the Premier and his Cabinet. This only makes us more dependent on non-renewable resource development, vulnerable to commodity prices, open for more control by external corporate interests, and subject to further boom-bust cycles.

An all-weather road into the Slave Geological Province to subsidize mining during a caribou crisis is no example of sustainable or responsible development. Mr. Speaker, there is always money for roads but nothing for the caribou crisis. Despite having a multi-party range plan for the Bathurst caribou developed over more than four years, we seem to be waiting until the caribou are gone, removing obstacles for the road.

Taltson expansion will be a billion-dollar boondoggle, based on the experience of many other major hydro projects across this country. It's not clean power. Just ask people in Fort Resolution about the impacts of today's Taltson.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. O'REILLY: A project based on unconfirmed and hypothetical buyers will divert funding and effort away from building real energy self-sufficiency, especially in our smaller communities.

If the Premier and his Cabinet want transformative change, the message to Ottawa and the world should not be more of the same. We must build the knowledge economy through a polytechnic university, push energy self-sufficiency, and invest in the conservation economy. Non-renewable resource development can and should still play an important role, but, when this overshadows everything else, that's purgatory. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks 201 days until the next election, six months until a new government takes its place to set the priorities for the 19th Legislative Assembly. It is also the last day of our winter sitting. We have passed the last operations and maintenance budget and set the course for the final stretch of this Assembly.

This government has made progress on many issues: mental health programs, housing, 911, an office of the ombud. These past weeks have demonstrated that this government is willing to move, if it is only on the terms of the Cabinet regardless of the consensus of Regular Members.

This government's seemingly number-one priority has been to make political expediency its goal over allowing the necessary time for effective and properly consulted, considered, vetted, and then and only then implemented legislation.

There have been many changes to precedent in the 18th Assembly; our first two-term Premier, a formal mid-term review, a mandate for the government, and now the size and complexity of the bills before committees that is also unprecedented.

This government's work of setting up new regimes for control over this territory's land and resources must not be rushed. It is far too important to the economy, for future generations, and for Indigenous Nations that this House not rush to the finish line and claim

"mission accomplished" just in time for the writ to drop on September 1st.

I have no doubt that there would be room for compromise, for compromise lies at the heart of the democratic process, but the rules of this institution give Ministers an absolute veto over any proposed amendments. This, combined with a rushed committee review process, will directly impact the effectiveness of Members to bring improvements to complex and lengthy bills.

Cabinet has the deck stacked in its favour. They are the banker, they are the dealer, and they have ensured they hold all the best cards up their sleeves. I believe my honourable colleague from Yellowknife Centre framed our current situation best in a recent Facebook post: "Consensus is out the window, replaced with a government overloading committees so they can check commitment boxes. [...] This is not how good legislation is made. [...] In a consensus government, wouldn't the government work with committees to achieve that end? Not in this consensus government."

Mr. Speaker, politics is about people; the people who are elected to this House and the people we all serve. Northerners or Members want a better government; they only need to take action to achieve it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MACKENZIE DELTA YOUTH ON-THE-LAND
EXPERIENCE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to acknowledge the youth of Fort MacPherson who decided, above all odds, to hike from Curtain Mountain some 90 miles through the mountains and creeks to Fort MacPherson.

This idea came from the youth, for the youth. Mr. Speaker, there are many opportunities for our youth to go out on the land and learn. This project is unique, where the youth definitely wanted to be out on the land, but using a different approach to reviving their culture. This is where it all started. A trek would be best, where they would snowmobile through the mountains to Curtain Mountain, and then walk back to town.

Mr. Speaker, the trek took six days; five snowmobiles were spotters. This was challenging and exciting. Each of the youth had mentors. Each day, something new was taught. They learned traditional skills, how to read the weather, but, most of all, basic survival skills.

Congratulations to the following; you have paved the way for more adventures for our youth: Dean Charlie, Marvin Snowshoe, Jordan Stewart, Abraham Stewart, Edwin Kaye, Joe Kaye, John Francis, Robert James Francis, Angel Koe, and Donna Snowshoe. They all arrived home to a warm welcome from the community, safe and sound, happy to be home, and feeling proud of themselves, as they should be. Keep up the good work, as you are our future leaders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR
ACCESSIBLE CHILD CARE

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken many times in this House about the need for accessible and affordable childcare. It is one of our mandate commitments, but during the life of this Assembly there has been a growing crisis of supply of licensed childcare here in Yellowknife.

There are two issues that stand in the way of easing this supply problem. The first is that licensed childcare provides modest income to providers. This is the reason that licensed childcare is usually provided by non-profits. The introduction of JK has taken a toll, even on non-profit childcare. It took kids over three out of the mix, leaving the youngest kids, who need more staff to care for them. The whole sector has downsized. Unless non-profit providers are able to bring significant economies of scale to the table, like the YK Day Care did by offering 100 spaces, it's difficult for them to break even. In short, ECE has disrupted the supply of licensed childcare for children ages zero to three, killing even limited profitability.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue is finding a space for childcare that meets building and fire

code requirements. These are exacting and appropriate standards to ensure our children are safe. I recently learned that there is no space available for rent in Yellowknife that meets these requirements. Renovating buildings to meet the code is expensive. There is often hazardous material abatement involved, as well as improved fire separation, walls, and floors.

Mr. Speaker, if there is no appropriate space in Yellowknife, what are the chances of their being space ready to move into in the regional centres, let alone in the small communities? This is a significant problem, because 11 communities don't have established licenses childcare.

The repercussions of this crisis are significant. Both parents and caregivers can't keep working, and they are taking their taxable income with them. Or worse, they are making plans to leave the NWT so they can continue their careers while having easier access to licensed childcare.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is here is that, in order for NWT residents to access childcare, the government is going to have to invest in infrastructure. The cost of constructing or renovating buildings is beyond the reach of non-profit budgets. The Minister has said she was working on a comprehensive plan to make childcare more accessible. I am looking forward to hearing how. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HEALTH CENTRE PRACTICES REGARDING
ACETAMINOPHEN

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About a month ago my colleague from Mackenzie Delta talked about healthcare in our small communities. He mentioned something that I've heard about before myself; people bringing their concerns to the health centre, only to get sent home with Tylenol pills. It left me wondering not only if people are getting the care they need, but if they're getting the advice they need when it comes to drugs like Tylenol?

Because Tylenol is a common brand and easy to get, and because it's not like other kinds of

painkillers like Advil or Motrin, which can hurt the stomach, you might think that it's pretty harmless. But there are still some pretty serious risks, and I'm concerned that these risks aren't well enough understood.

The main ingredient in Tylenol, as well as many other painkillers, allergy medications, and sleeping aids, is acetaminophen. It breaks down in your body, and one of the by-products is a substance that's highly toxic to the liver, even more so if you've been drinking alcohol. If you take more than you're supposed to, take it for longer than you're supposed to, or drink too much before or while you're taking it, the health consequences can be serious; liver damage, liver failure, or even death, although those cases are rare.

I recognize that we need to take charge of our own health, which means reading dosage instructions and finding out how new medication might interact with current medication. That's good common sense.

Mr. Speaker, my challenge is the kind of direction people in our small communities might be getting from staff at the health centres. These staff have a great deal of authority on their side, and it can be very intimidating to question a nurse or doctor, or to ask for a different option when offered a simple painkiller. Even if you do ask, you're not guaranteed to get the help you're looking for. There was a case like this in Wrigley last fall, and we know from the work that the Department of Health and Social Services is doing on cultural safety that many people in the Northwest Territories often just don't feel safe or respected in our own healthcare system.

I'd like to find out more about the policies and practices in place around the use of these kinds of drugs in our health centres, so I'll have some questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REFLECTION ON BUDGET SESSION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to reflect back a little bit on this budget process. We were off to a late start,

and especially on an O and M budget like this, I believe that we held back a few things, and when we hold back things, we hold back the government, we hold back communities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a capital budget, where we could sit down and lobby, and likely barter with Cabinet. I think this last process, here, the very last one of this Assembly, when you hold something to the last minute, there is no room for capacity, there is no room for growth, and there is no room for any other issues that may come up during this Assembly. This last one proved that, Mr. Speaker. I see in the future, in the 19th Assembly, I hope that O and M budgets get the time that they need to start properly and promptly, so that residents and MLAs who have families, MLAs who travel from out of the capital, have time to do that and stay fresh and healthy while we're going through this lengthy process. That will give us time to focus on the bills that are upcoming this spring. I know we'll all go home and spend some much-needed time with our family before we gear up.

I'd also like to thank all of my colleagues for the hard work that they have done, on both sides. There are a lot of bills, a lot of leadership, and, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things that we can improve on, as well, during this Assembly as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I complained earlier about the progress. Now, I'd like to also commend the finance Minister, the Member for Twin Lakes, for his speech yesterday. I almost had a tear in my eye. If I knew him another year, I would be crying right there beside him. Mr. Speaker, that shows integrity, that shows honesty, and that shows commitment, so I'd like to commend the Minister on that, and I wish him all the best this spring.

Mr. Speaker, I see him finishing very well in this Assembly. I'd like for all of our colleagues here to finish this Assembly very well, and I just wish everyone good health this spring. Thank you to all the Pages who have come, there are a couple from Tuktoyaktuk here, as well as their chaperone and everybody who has supported us through all this time.

Mr. Speaker, our families, our wives, our husbands, and our partners have all given us the strength that we need to move forward, so I would just like to wish everyone a good spring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Item 9, returns to oral questions. Item 10, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I am pleased to draw Members' attention to the presence in the Gallery today, with us is Pascal Borno, Consul General of Switzerland, on the occasion of his second visit to the Northwest Territories.

Accompanying the Consul General is his wife, Mrs. Maria Elena Borno-Kalin. Please join me in welcoming them to the House this afternoon.

On a different note, we did talk about possibly coming back for a third term with the new government, meeting our new government. Masi.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome the following people from the Foster Family Coalition who are with us here today: Dawn Pottinger, who is the president; Tammy Roberts, the executive director, Korry Garvey; Meagan McDougall; and Pat Gallagher. Thanks for all you do.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Max and Julia Trennert to the gallery. It's always nice to have people from Hay River here, especially when we're up here for so long. It really makes it feel like home, so welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to once again recognize a constituent, a Page of ours from Range Lake, Brooke Vallis, and, of course, all the other

Pages who have done a fantastic job. I really want to pick out Brooke because, even though it's the second time I've recognized her, as the Minister of the Status of Women, I'm hoping that this is the beginning of a long-time look at what you can be when you decide. This is a viable career that I'd like you for you to consider, as well, entering politics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Almost a Member's statement. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to take this opportunity to recognize a man of many hats and titles, Yellowknife North constituent, Mr. Tony Whitford. Thank you for being here today.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us. It's always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 697-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for the Minister responsible for WSCC. In the NWT, in Nunavut, the total number of people employed is around 35,000. About a third of those people work for a territorial government or public entity, but those employers only pay one-sixth of all of the revenue WSCC collects from employers. The rest comes from industry, small business, and municipalities, which last year generated \$55 million in revenue to WSCC. In turn, WSCC paid out \$34.5 million in claims to employees from those organizations. That's a difference of \$20 million. I'd just like to ask the Minister: what happens with that \$20 million? Where does it go? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On any given year, you never know what kind of claims you're going to get in within workers' claims. We want to promote workplace health and safety, of course, both here in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Last fall, in 2018, we did develop a 2019 corporate plan, and that was through the governance council which approves the operations and capital budgets on an annual basis. As I said, we don't know what kind of claims we will be getting on a yearly basis. For more detail, I will have to go back to the WSCC and get that information for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I appreciate that. I didn't give the Minister enough heads-up on this. I've got some technical questions here, so maybe I'll just jump to a different question. The Minister mentioned this last time when he discussed this issue, that, in 1993, the OH&S function of government was transferred to WSCC. At that time, not only did government save money by transferring this function to WSCC, the government also has what appears to be preferential rates from WSCC, and it has deep pockets. If it's not compliant, it can usually handle any monetary penalty by throwing some taxpayer money at it. It never has to worry about going out of business, generating revenue, or any of that kind of stuff. I don't like wasting people's time, and I don't like creating plans for the sake of plans, but I would really like to see WSCC put forward a plan to shift these OH&S costs off the backs of private industry and back onto government. This wouldn't necessarily mean GNWT employees would be performing these OH&S duties. It would probably be easier to just adjust the rates for government, but I'll leave those details to the experts. Can the Minister commit to working with WSCC to develop such a plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I had mentioned, the governance council does approve the budget on an annual basis. They develop a strategic and a corporate plan. Moving forward under this corporate plan, they are focusing on increasing the number of employers with an occupational health and safety program, as well as increasing occupational health and safety education in communities for vulnerable workers. As much as the Member wants to

move forward with private industry, we also have to make sure that anybody who does business in the Northwest Territories is also held accountable for the health and safety of our residents and our people in our communities. I did table a document in oral questions earlier during this sitting, and I have committed to informing the governance council of the industry's concerns regarding the rate structure. I do believe that the governance council has recently met, and they have also agreed to review both the rates and the subclasses that were mentioned in questions that were asked earlier on in this sitting. I will stay by that commitment, and I will keep Members who were concerned regarding this apprised moving forward.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not suggesting that we reduce safety in the territory. Everyone is all for safety. The other question I had was: what portion of WSCC's budget is spent on occupational health and safety responsibilities? I understand the Minister doesn't have that information. I was just wondering for a final question: would the Minister be able to commit to answering the questions I've provided in some sort of written form that I can then share with my constituents who have been raising these concerns with me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I had mentioned, we do have a corporate plan that's out there. It's done on an annual basis. There is a budget breakdown within this corporate plan, but, for the specifics on the OH&S, I will have to get back to the Member, and I will commit to providing that in a written document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 698-18(3):

DAY CARE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of us Members today have spoken about the lack of daycare space and the need for capital investment in daycare infrastructure. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment. Mr. Speaker, adequate space for childcare has been an ongoing concern for some time. We all know that. I would like to ask the Minister: does the department believe that the public or market is responsible for delivering the necessary space to house daycares and that entrepreneurs, NGOs, or parents should be solely responsible for the capital investment for these facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do know that, within the Government of the Northwest Territories, we do try not to disturb market communities where there is a viable opportunity to make money. Why would the government be doing that when private individuals could be making that? I adhere to that policy. I agree with it. However, when it comes to daycares, daycares are very expensive. It is difficult to operate them. My own experience operating a daycare for many years previously, we just scraped by. So I think that the government does have a responsibility at this point, and we are trying to help. When daycares start up, there is \$25,000 for a start-up fee that they can get. They can get \$10,000 for health and safety monies. If they are looking at expanding their daycares, they can get money for that. We subsidize a daily rate for every daycare; every licensed daycare provider gets daily rates ranging between per part-time/full-time \$19.81 a day to up to \$49.56 per day per child in communities. So we are subsidizing the daycares directly. We are subsidizing the licensed daycare staff. There is a subsidy that we give, a staff grant, on a quarterly basis to every employee that is in a licensed daycare. So, although it is not everything and we are not providing a hundred percent, we are trying our best to actually support daycares, as well, through our programs.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for her reply. There is no denying that everybody is very appreciative of the department's support through their programs and subsidies for daycare and childcare. That is very much appreciated. The Minister talked about market communities, but we also have non-market communities. In particular, as the honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre

mentioned earlier, we have 11 communities that have no childcare whatsoever. So I would like to ask the Minister: how is the Minister attracting investment in childcare centres in the 11 communities without childcare services?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Eleven communities not having any daycare services, it identifies a problem. It is a bigger problem than that. Many communities, not only do they not have daycares, they don't have any early childhood development support whatsoever. I have said over and over in the House how important it is to have supports for parents and for children. Not all parents have babies and know how to take care of them. I, myself, with my first child, didn't even know how to bathe my baby. We need supports for parents. The 11 communities, however, Mr. Speaker, the majority are smaller communities. The number of children who would be accessing those programs, a licensed daycare centre would not be financially viable for the community to do, so we are really trying to advocate for licensed family daycare homes. Small communities are very community-focused. I have said that many times. We know that there are qualified people who have the right attitude and stuff. We are going to try to support them with the skills. We are actively trying to get people within those communities to provide support. If it can't be a licensed childcare centre, then we are trying to get licensed day homes. Come to us if I can put anything out in the public. Come to us if you are even interested. We will walk you through it. We will help you with the applications. We need to support our children as best as possible.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Again, thank you to the Minister. It sounds like there might be some hope as it relates to possibly starting up at least some daycare homes in some of the communities that have no childcare whatsoever at this time. I would like to mention that this government has been asked in the past to support universal childcare, and, essentially, it has rejected the idea due to the projected annual costs. However, investment in childcare facilities could arguably be a better long-term commitment to the challenges facing adequate childcare, so I would like to ask the Minister: will the Minister make a

commitment to bring a department plan forward to her Cabinet colleagues or to FMB to support additional or new funding for critical daycare infrastructure?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Absolutely. One of the mandate commitments actually within this 18th Legislative Assembly developed by all Members, I have to give credit to all everyone, was to develop a plan for accessible daycare, so I have the full intention to fulfill that commitment. It is a commitment not only that I, as the Minister, but also on a personal level, that I think is important, and, at that point, once we have a plan, I am hoping that all Members will support the plan as we move forward.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's comments there. What I am talking about a little bit more specifically is about a commitment to funding dollars that will actually go towards building infrastructure like daycare facilities, and so I appreciate that that would have to probably be a new ask because, if you were to take that away currently from the department, then some other program or service might have to suffer. I would like to ask the Minister: the investment in new infrastructure of any kind of course is significant. We all know that. If the department or the government can't make the commitment to new money for childcare infrastructure, can the government find ways to support those groups or individuals who might consider it through the form of, say, grants, guaranteed loans, or even federal matching dollar programs that might be available for new daycare facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do appreciate the Member's acknowledgment that our capital budget is being passed. We are at the end of the Legislative Assembly. There will be no new capital budgets coming forward in the term of this Assembly. I mean we have a 20-year capital plan, so, even when I found out there were difficulties with a roof in a school, it was a stress. I had to go for supplementary funding for that. So there is no extra money at this point to actually provide capital for daycare centres. It is quite

expensive. I think that, one, we need to put it in a transition report. I think we need to remember, whoever is in this House the next Assembly, to please put it on a mandate. I think we need to. It is critical. We need to have that, yes, any support we can give. Even with the centre in Yellowknife that was struggling, I met with them personally. I thought of all kinds of ways. Can we give advances towards their operational? Because, like I say, we give between \$19 to \$50 almost a day. Could we advance that kind of funding to support them? Federally, I am willing to look at. I don't know what they can offer, but I am willing to look at it. I am willing. I give the commitment, that my department will do whatever we can do to support any licensed daycare centre or family daycare centre that is willing to operate in the Northwest Territories, to the best of our ability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 699-18(3):
NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March is National Social Work Month. Social workers play a vital role in our communities by supporting children and families. The inspiration this profession brings to our families is always and will always be recognized. Therefore, my first question to the Minister of Health is: what recognition to commemorate his staff is the department doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is providing some funding support to celebrate Social Work Month to all the different health and social services authorities and regional offices here in the Northwest Territories. There are a number of different things that we are doing, and I will just list a couple of the activities rather than going through the comprehensive list. There is a public screening of the National Film Board's film, "We Can't Make the Same Mistakes Twice." It is a very thought-provoking and inspirational film that follows a story of one extraordinary social worker. A health and social services system is asking people to

share their personal stories of positive impacts social workers are having on their lives and their communities. Going along with the national theme, and this year the national theme is "real people, real, real impact," a post on the GNWT Bear Net and the Department of Health and Social Services' website, the Northwest Territories' Health and Social Services Authority are highlighting the important work of social workers. There are a bunch of media things happening in that way through our existing websites, and those are to name just a few. There are a number of other things being done, and not just by the GNWT but by other bodies as well, like the social work association, and those types of things.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for paying that respect to that profession and the staff, more importantly in the smaller communities. Would the Minister also commit to sharing at the regional level or the community level the days set aside within the remaining period of this month to recognize the social workers in the smaller communities?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The recognition that we are providing is not just for Yellowknife or the larger centres, but we are recognizing and attempting to recognize the important work that all the social workers do here in the Northwest Territories. Just as a note, not all social workers work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Some work for the Department of Health, some work for Education, some work for Housing. A lot of social workers are employed by NGOs. I really thank the Member for bringing this up, but it is really important for all of us in this Assembly to thank social workers, and I encourage everybody out there to thank a social worker today for all the important work that they do for residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that statement. It is very comforting to know that the endless hours and the challenges this workforce and this staff are doing would be recognized. My next question, then, Mr. Speaker: what advertising for this profession is being done, at the high school level or at the workforce level, to attract that profession?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I am a firm believer that we need to recruit and retain

local people for local work. To that end, with respect to the promotion of social workers as a career or a profession, we do have a staffing initiative underway, focusing on the retention and recruitment of social workers in the North, activities to encourage youth to choose a career in a health and social services profession, and include things like promotion of health and social services careers during our community living fairs. It is a great opportunity to get into the communities and talk to people about health, wellness, social services, and careers, so we are using that opportunity. We are providing exposure to a number of school-aged children through Take Our Kids To Work, another opportunity to bring young people in to show them what these jobs are and how valuable they are and the type of difference these individuals can make in the lives of people throughout their communities and territories. We are also supporting our returning social work students with summer employment opportunities in their field of study, and this has been a way of encouraging recruitment and positive experiences in the profession. So we are doing a number of things to encourage people to pursue their profession, and, once they pursue the profession, we are doing things to help them come back and practice in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 700-18(3):
HEALTH CENTRE PRACTICES REGARDING
ACETAMINOPHEN

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement to the Minister of Health and Social Services. First off, I know the department has been doing a lot of work with communities, especially on cultural safety. What kind of questions and concerns has the department heard about the use of Tylenol or similar drugs in their own health centres, including issues like the one raised by my colleague from Mackenzie Delta, where people are getting sent home with a few pills? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the Member from Fort Providence raised his questions initially and even before that, and since the Member has raised his questions, I have ask the authority to check to see how many official complaints or concerns have been raised with our quality assurance staff around Tylenol, and, unfortunately, the answer is actually zero. Nobody has actually officially filed a complaint. Now, we do see concerns being raised on Facebook and other social media platforms, and the Member and the Member from Fort Providence has also raised those issues specifically with me around Tylenol, so we do hear it. We haven't seen any official complaints. I would strongly encourage the Member that, if he is aware of people, not only to bring it to my attention but to also encourage people in your communities to approach quality assurance so that we can look into these situations where Tylenol may have been prescribed, if they feel that that was not the appropriate thing to do. We need to learn from our experiences. We want to be a learning organization. Quality assurance is the mechanism to really help that happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Deh Cho, he is referring to instead of Providence.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was moving to another region. I am glad we got that cleared up.

I agree with the Minister, but sometimes they don't feel comfortable in bringing it forth, and we have been trying to work with the Minister on those types of things, and I thank him for this information. Mr. Speaker, what policies or other rules are in place to make sure health centre staff do some basic safety checks for all distributing of Tylenol or other similar drugs? For example, I am asking about alcohol use, liver health, and other factors that may affect dosage.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I do have to remind the Member that all of our nurses are licensed professionals who maintain licences through competencies and training and that they are trained to deal with exactly these types of situations. When a client does present to any healthcare setting with a physical complaint, nurses and other health

professionals are required to basically complete an assessment along with inquiring about the relevant past medical history. This is part of the basic nursing education, and this occurs in any setting where nurses are involved with dispensing medications. The Clinical Practice Guidelines and the Northwest Territories Health Centre Formulary are documents that are used in the community health centres by nurses. These documents provide a reference for a standardized approach to clinical care to assess and treat. Nurses are required to seek additional consultation from other healthcare practitioners if they feel that it is needed.

Mr. Speaker, I think these questions go to the questions that were asked yesterday by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre about the types of questions that are being asked and how we are making sure that people understand why certain questions are being asked, in particular around things like alcohol and the negative impacts of interactions with certain drugs and alcohol that somebody may have consumed. We obviously want to continue to improve in this area. I think our Cultural Safety Action Plan speaks to this particular issue, and trying to make sure that we are asking the right questions at the right time, and have people understand why questions are being asked. As a note, Tylenol is the appropriate diagnosis or the appropriate treatment in some cases, so it is not always the wrong or the inappropriate decision, as may be suggested by some.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that education. I didn't know nurses were, you know, licensed. I never knew that, but I thank him for that answer here today. I understand that, but, when all we are hearing is "Tylenol, Tylenol, Tylenol," that is an issue. I have other questions about the policies and practice around Tylenol and similar drugs. There have been a lot of studies about how racial face affects how healthcare professionals deliver services, even when they are found to be unconsciously, for instance underestimating the Indigenous people's account or experience of pain. How is the department working on cultural safety tracking, especially how healthcare professionals hear and assess patients account for pain?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I feel like this question goes to the very heart of the work that we are doing around cultural safety to make sure that all interactions with healthcare providers are done in a respectful way and recognize both the individual biases that an individual might have, but also the cultural realities that exist within their communities and many of their clients. As part of our work on culture safety, the department is working on piloting different training that encourages healthcare providers to actually reflect on their own experiences and how their own biases may affect the views of individuals in their care, so that we can move beyond that and focus on the human being rather than biases or expectations or beliefs that may exist. We want to provide the best care for our residents.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his answer. The cultural safety that his department is doing, I think it is great. I honestly believe we as a government should all be doing that, but I understand we're trying to work to make sure it works well before moving it on. Now, I know the Minister has talked about this a lot, but it's important for people to know, so I think it's worth hearing again. If people feel that they're not getting the care they need at their local health centres, where can they bring their concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are actually a couple of different ways that individuals can interact with the system. We currently have a network of designated client contacts and quality assurance staff who, if somebody has a problem with the system or the services they receive, they can get in touch with. This often is after the fact, when something has occurred, so that we can actually look into it to make sure, if something would arise, it doesn't happen again. We also have a system navigator so that, if someone is actually having trouble navigating a system and they have some concerns and they have a complex case, we would strongly encourage them to turn to the system navigator, who might be able to help them focus their journey through the healthcare system in ways that will actually give them maximum benefits.

On top of that, I do encourage people to ask your practitioners questions. If you're not sure what they're telling you, ask them for clarity. Our professionals want to be there to help. They are prepared to answer questions. If you don't feel like you're getting the answers that you need, or you're not getting an understanding of what is being explained to you, we have an obligation to do our best to make sure that our residents understand what is being said. If that doesn't happen, you can always go back to quality assurance. I know I talk about it a lot. This is something that we've only been bringing in in the last couple of years, but it is something that will be a game changer over time and allow us to really learn from the challenges that exist in our system, to make sure that these types of things don't happen. That's a responsibility of not just the healthcare system, but everybody who engages with the healthcare system, to share your frustrations with us so that we can learn from them and make sure they don't happen again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. We have with us today Carmen Moore. She is our very own chief of protocol within our government system. Thanks for being here with us and doing a fantastic job. Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 701-18(3):
CREMATION SERVICES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On September 27, 2017, my private Member's bill, the Health Statutes Amendment Act, was passed. The Minister of Health and Social Services said the following: "I commit to working together with the Departments of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources, and Municipal and Community Affairs to develop regulatory changes that may be required"; and, "The department will make it a priority to meet with other departments to map out the work required and the associated timelines." Can the Minister provide an update on what is happening with the regulation on cremation services here in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is still doing the work on their portion of the regulations under the Public Health Act. I have provided direction to the department. I have indicated that I'd like to see the regulations of Health and Social Services under the Public Health Act done within the life of this government. I have been given assurances that, barring any unforeseen crisis or challenges, that work will be done in the life of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. I was going to ask the Minister about a timetable; he's provided one. What additional work needs to be done beyond regulations under the Public Health Act?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I think I need to ask for some clarity on this question. Can the Member explain exactly what he's referring to? I mean, Health and Social Services has a responsibility under the Public Health Act; then, other departments have other responsibilities; and the cities or the communities where crematoriums are being proposed have some responsibilities, as well. Just so I'm clear, what part of that question is the Member asking? Because I'll do my best to answer any of them.

MR. O'REILLY: I know that the Minister loves to answer questions, so what other work does our government need to do to allow for cremation services here in the Northwest Territories?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That does help, and I do like to answer questions, but before I get into some of the work that still needs to be done, I do want to point out that there is no territorial law or regulation that prohibits the practise of cremation here in the Northwest Territories. The Member did move a private Member's bill which, actually, will help strengthen some of the regulations around the public health aspect of providing crematorium services here in the Northwest Territories, but, as we took a deeper dive into this, it became clear that Health and Social Services doesn't need to do anything, or change anything, actually, to allow crematoriums to happen here in the Northwest Territories.

We feel we have an opportunity to strengthen the practise and make sure that it's meeting certain standards, and we do thank the Member for moving that legislation that allows us to do that, and we are committed to getting those regulations done. We have been meeting with the city, as well as the other departments here in the Northwest Territories that might be affected, which include departments like MACA and ENR, and they are working with the municipalities, obviously, to try to find some solutions to questions that are being raised about exactly how crematorium services and the disposition of by-products might be addressed. I understand from my department, and I'll certainly need to seek some clarity, that there is nothing outstanding in Health and Social Services that would eliminate or challenge the existence of a crematorium 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, and I hope that he can share the clarity or insight that he's going to get from his department with me. I just want to nail this down, Mr. Speaker: can the Minister confirm that there are indeed no actual barriers in our legislation or regulations that would prevent the operation of a crematorium in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member is correct; there is no territorial law or regulation that prohibits the practise of cremation in the Northwest Territories. As I said prior to the private Member's bill, the Public Health Act actually provides the Chief Public Health Officer with the authority to take reasonable measures as she or he considers necessary in the circumstances to protect public health. So it existed. The private Member's bill, which is a great example of how to move forward a private Member's bill in this Legislation, is going to strengthen that, but it was available already.

I can say that officials from the Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs, ENR, and Health and Social Services did meet with the city in June of 2018 to determine the full scope of other regulatory changes that may be

required, but none of those exist within Health and Social Services. It's our understanding that, currently, there is nothing that limits it, but the city does have some challenges that they want some questions answered on. I understand that work is under way so that we can, all together, move forward and see cremation occur here in the Northwest Territories.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 702-18(3):
INVESTMENT IN CHILDCARE

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, we are at a crossroads where we have to take serious action on childcare in the NWT. Childcare can no longer be part of the market. It needs to be treated like education and healthcare. The benefits of early childhood education are undeniable, as the Minister knows from the work that she has done. Is the Minister prepared to take this step with childcare and bring it wholly within government? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would love to be able to say, yes, it's going to be a government responsibility, we'll provide the infrastructure, we'll provide the staffing, we'll provide the raises, and everything. I do know that there is a province, Quebec, that has done universal childcare, and I may be wrong, but my understanding is that they are now struggling because the government is taking so much ownership over that.

So if -- when we do this; it's not an if, it needs to happen eventually -- when we do this, we need to be strategic, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure that we've done our research. We need to make sure that it's sustainable. One of the Members asked me before if I believed in universal basic income, and I thought, "Great idea." Then I did the research and realized basic income went for every person, and I went, "\$30,000 times 44,000 people, that's \$1.3 billion. Our whole budget is only \$1.9 billion." So I think we have to be strategic. I

think we need to support childcare, early childhood development, but we also need to make sure that it's sustainable and that we can afford it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I will just say briefly: I am not sure the Minister fully understands basic income. What I want to talk about is childcare. What we know is that the cost of finding and renovating space or building space from scratch for the non-profits who currently provide childcare is not affordable, even with the \$35,000 that the department offers. My question is: what more funding can the government offer childcare providers in order to provide this essential service?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The Member is probably right. My assumption of what guaranteed basic income was based on my own thinking. The research that I have done has mostly been on TED Talks. One of the Members actually shared with me some information on it. I was a little bit startled on it. I am more than interested in meeting with the Member if she wants to sit with me and educate me further on what basic guaranteed income is, because I think it is something we need to look at, as well.

What more support: there is more than just the start-up money, the safety money, and the expanding. There are the daily rates. Right now, I can only speak about Yellowknife. I don't know the rates for all over the Territories. In Yellowknife alone, daycare is ranging around \$800 to \$1,000 a month. Just our operating monies that we provide to daycares from the Government of the Northwest Territories for a full-time infant is \$700 a month. That doesn't include the staff grants that we give. That figure, I don't have on hand. If I just took this \$700 and averaged it on the \$1,000, parents would be paying \$1,700 a month. We are supporting it. It is not only about the start-up grants. It is all the things we do to support on the side, as well. I agree that we need to do more, that we need to do better, but we need to be strategic in doing that. One of the mandate commitments is to develop a plan. I have made my commitment in the House here many times that we will be developing a plan before the end of this Assembly.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for her response. The fact is that, without infrastructure money, we can't create more daycare spaces. It costs tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars to build or renovate spaces so that they meet the exacting code required by childcare. A plan without any money for infrastructure is not going to move the bar on the need for licensed childcare in Yellowknife and in the communities without childcare. Is the Minister going to produce a plan that has money attached to it?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I am absolutely going to develop a plan that has money attached to it. We will have what we are currently paying, what we project that it would cost, and the feasibility of that. Accessible daycare is not only about money that we provide to the daycares. I also want to say that, in partnership with the federal government, we are also providing scholarships. It used to be 10. Now, we provide 30 scholarships for the residents from the Territories to go in and take the early childhood development programming. We have expanded our programming at Aurora College to offer a two-year diploma in early childhood development. Accessibility is not just about the fees that parents pay. It is also about having quality staff to do that. Within the plan that I will bring forward, having accessibility will be not only about money, but it will be also be about having the staff that we need to provide it.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to try to refocus the Minister. The department provides a modest amount of start-up money. It provides subsidies for operators. It provides money for staff. We do not have the space to put the children in. We don't have the space. My question for the Minister is: how is she going to improve the supply of spaces, physical spaces, for children who need childcare? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do have to give credit to this Assembly, all of our Members. The implementation of junior kindergarten has provided free childcare spaces, free early childhood development

programming to all four-year-olds throughout the Northwest Territories. Over 500 children are taking advantage of this currently. That is only a start. I know we still have zero to three to do. It is not only about spaces. Every community is different. That is what is really important to notice. Smaller communities, when they only have three or four kids who might need daycare, does it make sense to have a full centre? Does it make more sense to have a family day home, jobs in communities? Those are things we need to look at with that.

I also have to put it back on the Members in some ways and myself included. When we came into this Assembly three and half years ago, we defined mandates, we prioritized, and we said what we wanted. For the last three and a half years, we have been saying what we need, where are we going with this. It is only within these last few months that I have actually heard about the drastic need in this community, in Yellowknife, for infrastructure to do that. It is almost too late. We have already passed our final capital budget months ago.

I want to think out of the box, as well. That is what I am doing. Do these have to be licensed daycare centres that are standalone as the normal model, or, if you think within an Indigenous spirit -- granted that I am Metis and represent both cultures. Within Aboriginal people, we always say education was the downside of us. They took our children away, and they stole our culture. Yet, Indigenous people are saying education is the key to regaining that culture.

I have already been talking with schools. I have already been talking with my department, saying, "Can we make schools the hubs of communities?" If our people are afraid of education, afraid of school systems, they are not going to bring their children there. Can we make a hub? We are trying to work with Health and Social Services. Together, can we bring the services so that children can go to the school? There is a daycare centre there. They can come for speech pathology. I haven't even talked to the Health Minister, so I am throwing things out there. Can it become a hub? Is the only model a standalone daycare, or is another model we need to look at making it a hub of communities. Those are questions we need to ask. I haven't got the answers yet,

but it is part of the strategic plan that I will be bringing forward. 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 committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 395-18(3):
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING
\$250,000 (APRIL 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2018)

TABLED DOCUMENT 396-18(3):
NWT ECONOMIC SYMPOSIUM – NORTHERN
STRENGTHS, NORTHERN PROSPERITY:
SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY REPORT DATED
OCTOBER 23, 2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 (April 1 to December 31, 2018)" and, on behalf of the Premier, "NWT Economic Symposium – Northern Strengths, Northern Prosperity: Symposium Summary Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 397-18(3):
2019-2020 CONSOLIDATED OPERATING
BUDGET, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
HOUSING CORPORATION

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled "2019-2020 Consolidated Operating Budget, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 398-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
535-18(3): TALTSON PROJECT EXPANSION

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 535-18(3):

Taltson Project Expansion." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 399-18(3):
2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. SPEAKER: I hereby table the 2017-2018 annual report of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Motions

MOTION 36-18(3):
APPOINTMENT OF OMBUD,
CARRIED

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS Section 4(1) of the Ombud Act provides that the Commissioner on recommendation of the Legislative Assembly shall appoint an ombud as an officer of the Legislative Assembly who is responsible for exercising the powers and performing the duties set out in this act;

AND WHEREAS Section 114 of the Ombud Act will come into force on April 1, 2019;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management was tasked with recruiting the ombud and has recommended an individual to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Ms. Colette Langlois be appointed as ombud for a term of five years in accordance with the Ombud Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, as recommended by the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER, that the appointment become effective April 8, 2019. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Masi. Motions. Now, to the Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MOTION 37-18(3):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
MAY 23, 2019,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, this is the moment I have been waiting for. I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on March 14, 2019, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 23, 2019;

AND FURTHER, that, at any time prior to May 23, 2019, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as has been duly adjourned to that time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Masi. Motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 50:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 50, Supplementary Appropriation Act

(Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019, 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 50 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 51:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 51, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019, 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 51 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 52:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 52 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 53:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 53, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Masi. Bill 53 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 48:
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Leg, that Bill 48, Post-Secondary Education Act, be read for the second time.

This bill creates a structure for the recognition of post-secondary institutions within the Northwest Territories. The bill:

- prohibits the establishment or operation of a university without the consent of the Minister and an Act of the Legislative Assembly;
- prohibits the granting of a degree or the offering of any degree program without the authorization of the Minister; and
- allows a college to be recognized under the Act if its establishment or operation has the consent of the Minister and is authorized by an Act of the Legislative Assembly.

The bill provides, with exceptions, that before consent or authorization can be given for any of these things the Minister must have received a recommendation from a quality assurance body. The bill also provides for the recognition and regulation of private training

institutions and private vocational training, including the issuance of certificates of registration for either and allowing for the appointment of a Director of Private Vocational Training.

The bill requires reporting by public post-secondary institutions that receive regular and ongoing funding from the government as well as by other institutions, including those that receive grants or contributions. Public institutions are also required to seek Ministerial approval of tuition fees, regularly evaluate programs, prepare a mandate statement as well as strategic and corporate plans, and prepare and submit annual operating and capital budgets. Finally, the bill contains provisions with respect to information sharing, enforcement, and offences and penalties. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 48 has had a second reading and is referred to standing committee. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 50:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 50, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations to the infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 50 has had a second reading. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 51:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 51, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 51 has had a second reading. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 52:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest

Territories for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 52 has had a second reading. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 53:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 53, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. 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? Motion carried.

---Carried

Bill 53 has had its second reading. Second reading of bills. Item 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; Committee Report 15-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of 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; 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 Member for Mackenzie Delta in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The committee would like to consider Tabled Document 237-18(3), Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits 2018 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits Report, August 2018. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): I call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 237-18(3). I will now open the floor to general comments on the tabled document. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on this matter. In October 2017, an independent commission was established by the Speaker to review Members' compensation and benefits. This review is a requirement of Section 35.1 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and routinely takes place within the first two years of a newly elected Assembly. The 18th Assembly's commission was comprised of three members: Mr. Norman Yakelaya, who was the commission chair; Ms. Donna Allen; and Mr. John Hazenberg.

In August 2018, the commission submitted its report to the Speaker who tabled it on October 11, 2018. The report makes 11 recommendations for consideration. With the exception of a recommended increase to the

compensation for the chair of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to make it equivalent to the compensation of other committee chairs, this report recommends no increases to the compensation and benefits of MLAs.

The purpose of our debate this afternoon is to publicly review and consider each of the commission's recommendations. The recommendations adopted by the House today will be considered by the Board of Management who will use them to make recommended changes to legislation and amend existing regulations and policies. Any changes to legislation will be brought back to the Assembly for consideration in one of the two remaining sittings. Changes to regulation or policy resulting from the recommendations will be tabled by the Speaker. Consistent with longstanding practice, all changes to MLA compensation and benefits resulting from this process will take effect at the commencement of the next Legislative Assembly.

This concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. Once other members have offered their general observations, I am prepared to introduce motions to adopt the commission's recommendations. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Any further comments? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the three members of the commission, Mr. Yakelaya, Ms. Allen, Mr. Hazenberg, for the work that they did. I did meet with them personally while they were doing their work. I want to thank them for the thoughtful report that they put together and just reiterate again that, while we go through these recommendations, none of them apply to sitting MLAs. They will only apply to the people who are elected for the 19th Assembly. Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Any further comments, committee? Seeing none. Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 118-18(3):
 Tabled Document 237-18(3): INDEPENDENT
 COMMISSION TO REVIEW MEMBERS'
 BENEFITS
 AND COMPENSATION 2018 REPORT ON
 MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS –
 EXIT STRATEGY FOR MEMBERS OF THE
 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
 CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that an exit strategy for Members of the legislative Assembly be developed and implemented as a resource for all who are leaving politics.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this recommendation, as well as the next two, address the supports that are provided to Members who do not return to the next Assembly. They propose development of an exit strategy for Members and allow them to access support services for up to a year after they leave office. This particular motion calls for the development of an exit strategy for outgoing Members to address such issues as the avoidance of conflicts of interest in their post-retirement life, the disposal of public assets and equipment, records management and disposal, and an understanding of the tax implications of retirement benefits such as pensions, transition, and retraining allowances. Mr. Chair, I support this recommendation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I support this recommendation, as well. For those who are transitioning out of political life, sometimes, there can be some dramatic changes. What this is proposing to do is to just make sure that there is some guidance in place to help with that kind of transition. We already have a training assistance program that can provide assistance up to \$10,000 for Members as they move back into private life. This is just recognizing, and comes from the members of the commission, that sometimes there are other things that people have to consider in terms of their retirement and pensions and so on. This is just making sure that there is a more holistic approach to MLAs

as they transition into private life. For that reason, I support it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just as yesterday, when we were talking about assisting women to get into politics and I spoke about not knowing the roles and responsibilities as a Minister, I know that, when we first became elected Members, we were given an orientation session, but in all honesty, it was a blur. Things came really fast. I hardly remember any part of that.

One thing I have learned, I have learned my roles. One Minister I have to give credit to, the MLA from Great Slave, who taught me to never do anything unethical, illegal, or immoral. I respect that, and I have upheld that throughout my term here.

I recognize this is for the next Assembly, but I want to make sure that any Members who leave have full comprehension on what they are dealing with and what their obligations were. I fully support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Any further questions, committee? Seeing none, to the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed. Any abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 119-18(3):
 Tabled Document 237-18(3):
 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
 MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
 2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
 AND BENEFITS – RETIREMENT COURSE
 COSTS,
 CARRIED

MS. GREEN: I move that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories should pay for the Planning for Retirement Course or the Successful Transition to Retirement Course

for any Member who is leaving the government at the end of their term.

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

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, this recommendation should properly refer to the Legislative Assembly and not the government, but its intention is clear. The government provides excellent courses to the public service to plan not only for the financial aspects of retirement but also the emotional and lifestyle implications that are often of equal or greater importance. If adopted, the board of management will consider whether the fee for this course will become an allowable constituency budget expense or will be paid by the Legislative Assembly. I support this recommendation, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Next, we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. While I appreciate the comments and the points noted by the previous speaker, I, too, recognize that this particular motion actually should have maybe referenced the Legislative Assembly rather than the Government of the Northwest Territories as the payee. That aside, I am of the opinion that, while I supported the previous motion with regard to an exit strategy and that there should be support provided in that way, I feel that Members who are planning to retire or, in some instances, are not re-elected have the obligation within their own purview to plan ahead and do their retirement planning and take that as their own personal responsibility. Through the time in which they are here in the Legislative Assembly, I feel that they have access to our human resources division, including the Legislative Assembly's director of corporate affairs, here to help them with their planning as it relates to their retirement. For those reasons, I won't be in support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Unlike the previous speaker, I will be supporting this. I think most good employers do actually provide some assistance with pension and retirement

planning, and I don't know why the Legislative Assembly would be any different. I think we should be doing this for the Members who are not returning, so I will support the motion. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with my friend the honourable Member for Yellowknife North on this one. I think there is a distinction between the roles that we play in this Assembly and the benefits and allowances that are afforded to us by virtue of those offices. It's very different than, say, a lengthy career in the public service or with a private employer. Those kinds of transitions are expected and, if you have a good employer, a good job, a good career at that job, you're more likely going to continue on, and receiving that support is a tangible benefit. I don't think that this will have the end result of adding much to, you know, attracting Members to run for office, or anything like that. I think this benefit is properly dealt with, or this issue is properly dealt with, through the individual interested Members. Not everyone who leaves politics is going to be retiring, and I think the nature of our roles, with four-year terms, this doesn't fit as well as some of the other recommendations about leaving politics. I don't think it's necessary, and I won't be supporting it. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 120-18(3):
TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS – GNWT EMPLOYEE AND
FAMILY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACCESS,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that Members of the Legislative Assembly continue to have access to the GNWT Employee and Family Assistance Program, known as EFAP, for one year after their term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly ends.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, Members of the Legislative Assembly, like members of the public service, have access to the GNWT Employee and Family Assistance Program. Access to this program continues for one year after our employees retire. This recommendation reaffirms the ability of MLAs to access the program for one year after leaving office. The EFAP provides valuable resource material and counselling services for a wide range of personal and family challenges that may continue into retirement. Mr. Chair, I support this recommendation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I, too, support this motion. The information that we've received is also that this would cost about \$100 per year per Member who doesn't return and would like to be able to access the service, so it really is a minimal cost and I think it provides the kind of support that some people may need as they leave political life. I am in support of this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's well-known that my degree is in social work, and the basic concept of social work is wellness; mental wellness, as well. Never in my career have I ever been in a position that I have had so many people appreciate my work and so many people hate me for my work. I am a degreed social worker. I have had 20-some years' experience in that. I know self-care, I know where to go for clinical support for myself. I'm not 100 percent sure that other people do have that.

The other issue is that, when you leave here, depending on how you do in this House, you

might not be offered a job. Jobs might not be as plentiful as they come, so I think that, in order to ensure that we are treating our Members properly and that we are caring for their mental well-being, this should be something that is provided. I am fully in support of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. For the record, I do appreciate the work you do. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 121-18(3):
TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND
BENEFITS – PUBLICATION OF MEMBERS'
EXPENSES,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that more detailed information about Members' expenses be published on the government website as a separate document by June 30th of the following fiscal year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, the Legislative Assembly currently publishes details of Members' constituency budget expenditures as an appendix to its annual report. I note that the Speaker tabled the annual report for the 2017-2018 fiscal year earlier today. This recommendation calls for more detailed, timely, and accessible information than what is currently provided, particularly for such categories as travel and office expenditures. Other Canadian jurisdictions, as well as our own Executive Council, have taken steps to provide this information online and in significant detail. If adopted, the board of management will develop a revised policy with

respect to the posting of detailed expenditures online. Mr. Chair, I support this recommendation.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 122-18(3):
TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND
BENEFITS – PUBLIC SERVICE HEALTH CARE
PLAN DUES,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Public Service Health Care Plan dues, at the level available to senior managers in the public service, be paid by the Government of the Northwest Territories for all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

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

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, there is currently a disparity between the health benefits provided to Regular Members and Members of the Executive Council, as well as premiums paid by each. This motion recommends that all Members of the Legislative Assembly be treated equally with respect to health, dental, and disability benefits, and that they be consistent with the benefits provided to senior managers in the GNWT. Mr. Chair, I support this recommendation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank the commission for bringing this to our attention. I didn't know about it as a Regular MLA that there were two tiers of healthcare insurance between Regular MLAs and our Cabinet and the Speaker. I thank them for

bringing this to our attention. As I understand, the information that we've been provided, the cost of doing this for the 11 Regular MLAs, the additional premiums would be about \$9,500 a year. I think that it's only fair that all MLAs should be treated equally. I do support this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 123-18(3):
TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS – MEMBERS' ACCESS TO
BENEFITS,
DEFEATED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that, if it is decided to not pay for the same level of medical travel, health, dental and life insurance benefits for all Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the additional paid benefits for the Speaker and Ministers be removed from their benefit package and the Speaker and Ministers become responsible for paying for that benefit; and further, that all Members of the Legislative Assembly would then receive the extended healthcare benefit and level 1 of the hospital benefit at no cost.

I'm going to explain it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. The motion is in order. To the motion? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that the House adopted the previous recommendation, this recommendation is redundant. The previous motion directed the board of management to make health, dental, and disability benefits and premiums for Regular Members consistent with those for Cabinet Ministers. As a result, this

recommendation is not necessary, and I will be voting against it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 124-18(3):
TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS – INCREASED INDEMNITY FOR
CHAIR,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES,
CARRIED AS AMENDED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the indemnity for extra duty for the chair of the Rules and Procedures Committee be increased from \$3,194 to \$6,296 per year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Mr. Chair, the previous Legislative Assembly reduced the indemnity paid to the chair of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to make it equivalent to that paid to the caucus chair and deputy chairs of Committee of the Whole. This change was made on the understanding that the workload of this committee is less than that for other standing committees of the House. As my colleague from Frame Lake will attest, this has not been the case for the current Assembly. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures was given some very heavy lifting in the first two years of our Assembly and still has some left. I agree that the chair of this committee should be compensated on an equal basis to other chairs. I support this motion, Mr. Chair, but would like to move an amendment to remove the reference to the specific dollar amounts

which are adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index.

May I have permission to amend the motion?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Maybe we'll just take a five minute recess. There's a typo in the motion. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. There is a motion to amend. Ms. Green, do you have an amendment?

MOTION TO AMEND COMMITTEE MOTION 124-18(3),
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the motion be amended by striking out the words "increased from \$3,194 to \$6,296 per year" and substituting the words "consistent with that pay to other standing committee terrace." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. A motion to amend the motion is in order on the floor. To the motion to amend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion to amend the motion is carried.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 125-18(3):
TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS – HEALTH AND DENTAL
BENEFITS FOR CONSTITUENCY ASSISTANTS,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that Members

of the Legislative Assembly who hire a constituency assistant who does not have access to health and dental benefits should provide those paid benefits through Northern Employee Benefit Services as part of the constituency assistance employment package. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Every Member of this House is supported in their work by hardworking and dedicated constituency assistants. These employees are the only ones who work in this building without access to health and dental benefits. The motion allows some flexibility to Members who may wish to tailor the work of their assistants to meet their unique circumstances. If adopted, this motion will provide direction to the board of management to negotiate a benefits plan with Northern Employee Benefits Services that both the Member and the constituency assistant will contribute to. Mr. Chair, I support this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I, too, will be in support. I think that a version of this motion comes forward almost every time the independent commission does their review. I am happy that the commission does recognize the efforts that our constituent assistants put in in support of us as Members. All of us, to some degree, would certainly be lost and very much challenged in the day-to-day work that we do on behalf of the residents of the Northwest Territories if we didn't have the incredible support provided by our constituent assistants, and so, while each constituent assistant's circumstances are different with regard to their hiring arrangements with their particular MLAs, it is still, I believe, incumbent upon this government, in particular the Assembly, to support all staff that supports the work of the day-to-day efforts of the Legislative Assembly. Other than our constituent assistants, virtually everybody has access to these kinds of benefits, and so I think this is long overdue, and I will be in support. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have said again, many times, all over the place, that a society is based by how we treat our most vulnerable in society. I came here to advocate for low-income people, and this, in my opinion, fits that model. Our constituency assistants are paid, on average, just above the living wage that was brought out. Thank you to Alternatives North for bringing that out. These people end up being, many of them, not all, but many of them suffer, and dental is a luxury that many people on low income cannot afford, myself included as a single parent. I've never seen a dentist for years and paid the consequence. I support anything that supports the most vulnerable, the lowest-income people in our society. Therefore, I support this motion wholeheartedly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. To the motion. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, along with what my colleague said across the way, I, too, support this. Mr. Chair, we have constituents living in Yellowknife and some who live in the northern part of the territory, where the cost of living is high, while we are sitting here and we are giving chairs of committees raises and we are not covering the simple benefits that any of our employees should have access to. I think we need to really look at that and take a look deeper into the next Assembly to refine it to adjust to the cost of living. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want to make it clear that the chairs of committees are not getting a raise as a result of the work that the commission did in this Assembly. There may be a small adjustment at the next Assembly, the Members that serve there, but there is no increases for Members' compensation or benefits that were recommended by the commission. Well, we will see how the rest of the debate plays out, but I do support this motion. I think we need to treat our constituency assistants as valued

employees and make sure that they have access to healthcare and other sorts of benefits that are available through the Northern Employee Benefits Services. This is just about being a good employer, and I think we want to make sure that we treat our employees in a manner that they deserve to be treated, so I support this motion. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, we have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think all of my honourable colleagues would agree that our constituency assistants, the people who occupy that role, are very hard-working, capable individuals who are essential to the good functioning of the representation of our constituents. You know, the North often struggles with finding the kind of talent that you need to do well in various professions, whether it is trades or medical or even political work, and being able to provide enhanced benefits and decent wages I think is going to greatly enhance the ability to attract the kind of staff that you need to ensure that, constituency assistants, you are getting the kind of quality you need to have for the best possible service for your constituents. I think this is a very important motion. It is going to help future Assemblies moving forward to attract that talent and to give those workers a greater benefit and greater opportunity as they perform a different kind of public service but no less important than the work of the public service itself. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, support this motion. I think it is a long time coming. I just wanted to thank the constituency assistants that keep our office operations going. You know, they also serve as the link to our communities and our ridings, so I wanted to say thank you for the constituency assistants who man our offices when we are not there. I think this is just timely, and I support it. It goes a long way in terms of helping our people who work for this institution, and it should have been done years ago. It just helps the small communities, especially the economy where jobs are very hard to come by. For those reasons, I support

this step towards bringing benefits to our constituency assistants. Mahsi.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, agree with the motion. I agree with all of the comments from my previous colleagues' statements here. I just wanted to add to this. One of the additional assets that is overlooked by the previous statements is the ability to speak the native language with a lot of the elders and residents in our respective ridings, so that should be recognized, as well. It just makes communication and explanation to a medical assistant or a program assistant that much easier in getting the message of what can be done by our office to the constituents who brought their issues forward. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, will be supporting this motion. What we are looking at for a full-time person is about \$3,200 a year up, to a family, which is about \$5,100 a year, but it comes out of our constituent assistants, or our budgets, which actually are coming out of their help in this, and it is very much needed. We are competing with other jobs that do have benefits that are needed for people to work, and we would like to be able to keep good quality people in place and give them these benefits, as well, so I think this is a good solution to that issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 126-18(3):
 TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(3):
 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
 MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
 2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
 AND BENEFITS – ACCOUNTABILITY FOR NON-
 TAXABLE ALLOWANCES,
 DEFEATED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the current non-taxable allowances (allowance for expenses and entertainment allowance) become accountable allowances.

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

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, last year, the Government of Canada announced that non-taxable allowances paid to politicians would become taxable as of January 1st this year. Currently, all Members are paid an allowance of roughly \$7,500 to cover miscellaneous expenses that are not reimbursable from their constituency budgets. MLAs are constantly called upon to provide financial assistance to constituents, attend public events that charge a fee, purchase raffle tickets, and participate in silent auctions, to name a few items. They are often called upon to buy meals or coffee for constituents or to travel within their constituencies, using their personal vehicles. The fact that these allowances are paid without the need for receipts allows Members to provide unique support services to constituents without breaching confidentiality. In order for these allowances to remain non-taxable, they must become reimbursable only by receipt. This defeats the intended purpose of the allowance.

One alternative to this recommendation is to "gross up" the value of the allowance to make it equivalent on an after-tax basis. This would, however, result in additional costs to the public. Mr. Chair, it is my view that, rather than reduce the flexibility that Members currently have or increase costs, the allowances should remain at their existing levels and be taxed. I will therefore not be supporting this motion. I should note that a second non-taxable allowance is provided to out-of-town Members to reimburse them for the costs of travel to and from work while in the capital as well as other miscellaneous costs associated with running a second residence. I understand that the

Speaker is seeking confirmation from the Canada Revenue Agency that this allowance will remain non-taxable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I find myself in support, and in support of the previous speaker's comments. I feel that we already do have a particular allowance, called the constituency allowance, that is an accountable allowance. That one has very strict rules and guidelines which we have to follow as it relates to expenditures from that account. However, as it relates to what was the non-taxable allowance, having it remain unaccountable or having it not have to hand in receipts, I feel is the proper way in which to manage this. As the previous speaker alluded to, we have a number of requests to support different charities, festivals, even school recreation programs, sporting and recreation events, certain auctions and various fundraisers. I think that those are, by and large, done on the basis of each individual Member's choices, and those organizations that they choose to support are, by and large, their choices. I think Members could be potentially put into an awkward situation if all of a sudden that expenditure becomes public information. Then, Members could possibly start to feel pressure from other organizations, saying, "Well, if you supported them, why don't you support me?" and that sort of thing. I think that that needs to remain the choice of the Members themselves. For those reasons, I will support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. To the motion? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just to be clear, I support the chair of Caucus' position that we vote against the recommendation, which is what this motion is all about. Right now, these allowances are treated as taxable income. We are now paying taxes on them effective January the 1st. We don't have any choice in that matter. That decision was made for us by Revenue Canada. What the recommendation from the commission was and the motion is is that those allowances now become accountable. I think I've heard from all of the speakers that we don't think that that's a good way to proceed. If that's what you

believe in, we should be voting against this recommendation, against the motion. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 127-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND BENEFITS – MAXIMUM REIMBURSABLE
ANNUAL AMOUNTS FOR ENTERTAINMENT
ALLOWANCES,
DEFEATED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just ask my colleagues to bear with me. This is one of these motions which builds on the one before. I move that this Assembly recommends that the current amounts be set at the maximum reimbursable annual amount (allowance for expenses is \$7,484 in Yellowknife; \$14,968 outside of Yellowknife, and \$1,500 entertainment allowance for the Speaker and Ministers). Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given the defeat of the previous recommendation, this motion is redundant. The amounts for the allowances paid to Members will remain at their current levels and will now be taxable. I will therefore not vote in favour of this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 128-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND
COMPENSATION 2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS'
COMPENSATION AND
BENEFITS – DETAILED POLICY ON ALLOWABLE
EXPENSES,
DEFEATED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the board of management develop a more detailed policy specific to allowable expenses to ensure clarity for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, as with the last recommendation, this recommendation is redundant. The expense allowance paid to all Members will remain non-accountable and will become taxable or has become taxable. I will therefore not be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 129-18(3):
INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION
2018 REPORT ON MEMBERS' COMPENSATION
AND
BENEFITS – CALCULATION OF MEMBERS'
SALARIES,
DEFEATED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Members' salary be renewed on April 1 each year, calculated on the current Yellowknife Consumer Price Index or the increase negotiated by the Union of Northern workers, whichever is less. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I am not in support of this motion. Years ago, the annual adjustments to the MLA salaries were tied to the negotiated increases for our unionized employees. This created the perception of a conflict of interest. Under our current system, MLA compensation for an incoming Assembly is established by the outgoing one and based on the recommendations of an independent commission. Following that, these amounts are adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation. The decision to disentangle MLA compensation adjustments from those provided to the Union of Northern Workers has been to the detriment of MLAs over the years. I have no difficulty with this. However, this recommendation re-establishes a link with the UNW increases that I feel is inappropriate. It will ensure that, over time, MLA compensation will fail to keep pace with inflation and will fall further behind the positions of similar responsibility in the public service. The existing system is transparent, fair, and independent. Mr. Chair, I will not be supporting this motion, and I request a recorded vote.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion? Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, as well, will not be supporting this motion. As I have said previously and many times, society is based on how we treat our most marginalized populations. It would be very hypocritical of me to look at any type of increase, no matter what, until society is treating those who struggle to provide food on their table with a decent level of care. I cannot, in all honesty, ethically support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. To the motion? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I will not be supporting the recommendation from the commission which is the subject of this motion. It basically says that we should be taking the lesser of the cost-of-living increase or what the UNW negotiates, tying our compensation to what's negotiated with our workers. I don't think that's a good way to

proceed. It creates an apprehension of bias, and I just don't think that's a good thing to do. The simpler way to do this is leave it as it is where it's automatically increased by the consumer price index. I think that is the best way to do this. I want to leave it that way. I will be voting against this recommendation from the commission and the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): The Member for Great Slave.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): All those opposed, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): The Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. All those abstaining, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): The results of the recorded vote: one in favour, nine opposed, four abstentions. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I wish to thank the 2018 Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits for their important work and for their considered recommendations. As with previous recommendations, we have accepted some

and rejected others. This process of reviewing MLA compensation by an independent commission is consistent with the practice of other Canadian jurisdictions and the process for setting judicial compensation in the NWT. It works. Contrary to recent media reports, MLAs have not voted themselves an increase in compensation above inflation for nearly two decades, despite at least one recommendation to do so from an independent commission in the 15th Assembly.

Mr. Chair, no one in this room entered politics for the money. Many around this room left higher-paying jobs in the private sector, public sector, or with Indigenous governments to seek elected office in this institution. The compensation system for MLAs needs to be fair, open, and transparent. It also needs to be effective. MLA compensation needs to be adequate to draw talented people away from their private employment yet not so low that only the rich can afford to seek office. I think we have struck a reasonable balance, Mr. Chair. Those are all of my comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 237-18(3)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Agreed. Thank you, committee. We have now concluded consideration of this tabled document. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. There is a motion to rise and report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Mackenzie Delta?

Report of Committee of the Whole

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 237-18(3), Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits 2018, Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits Report, August 2018, and would like to report progress, with seven motions carried, and that Tabled Document 237-18(3) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 50:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 50, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member 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 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 Nahendeh, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: Good catch, Mr. Clerk. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 50 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 51:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 4, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 51, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: 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

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): 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 Hay River North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero

opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 51 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 52:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HONORARY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Whitford): The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Hay River North.

---Laughter

HONORARY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Whitford): Oh, he's not here. I'm new at this game.

---Laughter

HONORARY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Whitford): the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Yellowknife South.

---Laughter

HONORARY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Whitford): I'm sorry, Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 52 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 53:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2019-2020

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 53, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member has requested for 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

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith): 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 Nahendeh, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 53 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain that the honourable Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is ready to enter the Chamber to assent to bills?

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Margaret Thom): [English translation not provided.] Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. It is indeed a great honour to be back in this Chamber, and to give recognition to Indigenous Languages Month in the Northwest Territories. By designating March as Indigenous Languages Month, this government believes in the importance of indigenous languages and has the respect to promote its revitalization everywhere possible. I am grateful to be able to speak my Dene language, here in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly Building.

I want to wish you all a well-deserved break, safe travels, and a happy and blessed Easter in just a few weeks. I would like to wish each of you well in the next chapter of your work with, and for, the betterment of all Northerners.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following Bills:

- Bill 50, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019;
- Bill 51, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019;
- Bill 52, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020; and
- Bill 53, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020.

Mahsi cho, thank you, quyanainni, merci beaucoup, koana.

MR. SPEAKER: [English translation not provided.] Colleagues, I would like to extend the appreciation of this House to the

Commissioner, Margaret M. Thom. It was a pleasure to have her in the House today.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for all the hard work that you have pursued and the dedication to this House and to all the people whom we represent.

During the past six weeks, we have achieved a great deal, and you should be proud of the work you have done. We have not always seen eye-to-eye. At the same time, we have had some disagreements along the way, but we have managed to remain professional, respectful to each other and also to this institution.

I would especially like to recognize the Dean of this House, the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, who yesterday announced that he will not be seeking re-election this fall. Just so Members are aware, Robert C. McLeod was elected a year before me. A year after, I was in the bi-election, as well. I guess we were the two old-timers in this House. I know that his decision is not one that he made lightly as we saw yesterday, and I can honestly say that this place will not be the same without him here.

Colleagues, no Member of this House can remember a time when the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes was not here. For each of us, he has been a part of this institution over the years.

He has served many roles in this House. More than that, he has been a mentor to many of us, as we heard from Members' statements, I included, as well. His experience, his knowledge, and his guidance have been invaluable. Without his contributions, this House would not be the place it is today.

Colleagues, over the next few months, we will have many opportunities to say farewell, but I personally want to say thank you to the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes for his dedication, commitment to this House and wish him all the best as he prepares for another journey from public life. I would like to say masi.

Also, to his family who were here with us yesterday, our loss is your gain. Please enjoy your time with him.

Colleagues, I would also like to thank the interpreters, the Pages who have been with us for the last six weeks. Please know that your assistance and your contributions are valued and appreciated. It is a pleasure to share this Chamber with the young generation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind our young people that the Legislative Assembly will be hosting our next Youth Parliament from May 6th to 10th of this year, 2019. This is an opportunity for grade nine and grade 10 students in the Northwest Territories to assume the role of their MLA at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife. The deadline for applications is April 5th. It is fast approaching. You still have time to apply. For more information, please visit the Legislative Assembly website or contact our public affairs team.

Colleagues, I wish each of you safe travels to your home communities as you return to your constituencies.

I know that many of you and many of the people who you represent will be out on the land in the next few weeks, enjoying our land and taking part in various hunts and traditional activities. At the same time, there will be busy times as the committee will be travelling to different communities, as well. We are blessed to live in such a beautiful territory. Please remember to treat it well, with respect, and be safe while out on the land and also into the communities.

With that, Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith): [Translation] Orders of the day for Thursday, May 23, 2019, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgments
7. Oral Questions

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8. Written Questions ---ADJOURNMENT
9. Returns to Written Questions The House adjourned at 5:01 p.m.
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
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
 - Committee Report 15-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of 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
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

[Translation ends]

MR. SPEAKER: [Translation] This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 23, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. [Translation ends]

