



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**Day 32**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, May 30, 2018**

Pages 4059 – 4102

**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Monfwi)

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*Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities*  
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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, May 30, 2018****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty):** Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 79-18(3):  
AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW**

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, expanding opportunities for post-secondary education for our residents is a priority of this Legislative Assembly. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is pursuing an ambitious post-secondary agenda that is guided by the mandate of this government.

For more than 50 years, residents of the Northwest Territories have relied on Aurora College for their adult and post-secondary education and training. The college continues to be critical to our economic and social development, but we know we can and must do better.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has been mandated to conduct a foundational review of Aurora College. This foundational review will result in significant changes at Aurora College and provide a clear path for the college's future development.

The foundational review process has two parts. The first part is an independent review report provided by a contractor, MNP LLP, that I will be tabling later today. The second part will be the government's response to the recommendations in the review report, including a clear vision of the path forward for Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, the work done by the independent contractor reveals a number of issues that we need to address, including the need for improvements in the areas of governance operations; academic program processes; accountability; and student recruitment and retention.

However, rather than simply pointing to what needs to be fixed, the report also recommends an ambitious path toward establishment of a new kind of institution that will better meet the needs of residents, employers, and communities. In particular, the report calls for the transformation of Aurora College into a Northern Canada Polytechnic University.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to establishing a stronger, sustainable, and more vibrant post-secondary institution that contributes to stronger communities, an institution that is built for the Northwest Territories by the Northwest Territories.

I have already shared the report with the Standing Committee on Social Development and look forward to working with my colleagues to develop a whole of government response to address the full set of recommendations made in the report, including the possibility of transforming Aurora College into a Northern Canada Polytechnic University. This response will be tabled in the House in the fall.

The path before us is of critical importance for the future of students in the NWT, and the journey must be collaborative. Therefore, I look forward to continued collaboration with the Standing Committee on Social Development around the government's response to the recommendations. We must work together to take advantage of this unique opportunity and ensure future generations have access to a world-class education in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the important contribution that a great number of stakeholders made in informing the recommendations. The independent contractor worked with Members of the Legislative Assembly, representatives from Indigenous governments and communities, Aurora College students and staff, northern employers, GNWT staff, and other key stakeholders from across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that some of the recommendations in the Aurora College Foundational Review Report propose significant changes to our territory's public post-secondary institution. We will weigh these changes carefully. I am committed to looking closely at each of the

recommendations with the Members of this House and considering what we need to do for Northerners to have the best possible adult and post-secondary education and training here in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 80-18(3):  
NORTHERN PATHWAYS TO HOUSING PILOT  
PROGRAM IN FORT SIMPSON

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is working hard to meet the commitments made by this government to advance affordable housing and address homelessness during the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we know that some of our residents experience homelessness in communities outside Yellowknife. Meeting their needs helps us to address the issue of homelessness throughout the territory. The Housing Corporation is working with community groups to develop, design, and implement supportive housing for these residents through the Northern Pathways to Housing Program.

Research indicates that providing social supports alone is often not enough to change an individual's circumstances. The provision of housing plus supports has been documented as an effective method to stabilize a person who is homeless and then start to address needed life changes.

Mr. Speaker, the first of four Northern Pathways projects is now being implemented in Fort Simpson. Through the vision and commitment of the Liidlii Kue First Nation to support this vulnerable population, three people have been housed and supported, and one other homeless person is expected to be housed shortly. Indigenous and local governments know their communities best. The Housing Corporation supports their aspirations to address homelessness through this community-led housing approach.

Under the Northern Pathways to Housing program in Fort Simpson, the Housing Corporation provided four apartment-style housing units and land to support the project. The Housing Corporation also has a three-year funding agreement for participant housing support. This funding supports the community partner to pay for costs associated with the operation of a supportive housing program and to respond to needs of tenants.

The community proponent also provides assistance to program participants in accessing services and available resources from community agencies.

Another Northern Pathways project is starting soon in Behchoko. The Housing Corporation has been meeting with the community government and other community stakeholders to finalize the delivery approach there. In Aklavik, promising work continues with the Aklavik Indian Band and community stakeholders to develop a program that suits the needs of their community. The fourth project, which is in Fort Good Hope with the K'asho Got'ine Housing Society, is currently planned as part of their larger shelter project.

Mr. Speaker, the Northern Pathways program is intended to house people first and then to improve their housing sustainability by addressing the issues that contributed to their homelessness. Northern Pathways seeks to improve participants' social and economic well-being and independence, and to create new service pathways and working relationships with community service providers to address and end homelessness for these residents.

Mr. Speaker, partnership with Indigenous governments is an ongoing part of how the Government of the Northwest Territories does business. The Northern Pathways program is one more example of the kind of success we can have when we work together to meet the needs of Northwest Territories residents and implement northern solutions for northern housing.

Mr. Speaker, this is an exciting time in the Housing Corporation's history. Northern Pathways is just one of the new initiatives under the corporation's strategic renewal, but it shows the progress we are making toward fulfilling our mandate commitments and putting people first. I know how important housing is to our residents, and I pledge to work with all Members to meet our remaining commitments during the life of this Legislative Assembly. Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Infrastructure.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 81-18(3):  
NEW TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

**HON. WALLY SHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has been working hard to fulfill its mandate commitment to secure funding to advance planning and construction of new priority transportation corridors in the Northwest Territories, including the extension of the all-weather Mackenzie Valley Road, the Slave Geological Province Access Corridor, and the Tlicho all-season road.

Last fall, the Department of Infrastructure submitted two comprehensive proposals for funding to the federal government under the National Trade Corridors Fund. In March, I provided an update in the House on the status of our application for the development of the Slave Geological Province Access Corridor. Unfortunately, that project was not selected in the first round of approved submissions; however, we are continuing to pursue opportunities for funding for all phases of the project. It is expected that there will be an opportunity to resubmit an application for the project under a northern-specific call for proposals under the National Trade Corridors Fund to be issued in fall 2018.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on this side of the House and I have urged the federal government to issue the next call for submissions as soon as possible, in recognition that it is critical that we address the North's infrastructure gap, and a timely decision would allow us to make the best use of the short construction season.

As I have said before, the development of the Slave Geological Province Access Corridor will address the lack of access to this mineral-rich part of Canada. The project will also increase our resiliency to the impacts of climate change while significantly reducing associated additional costs and operational difficulties for the mining industry. Once federal funding is secured, next steps would include the application of the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, as well as planning for the protection of wildlife, economic opportunities, and the involvement of Indigenous groups.

Mr. Speaker, work to advance the next steps for construction of the all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway would also bring important benefits to residents throughout the Mackenzie Valley, including the employment and training opportunities that build local capacity. The Canyon Creek all-season access road outside Norman Wells, which is currently under construction and scheduled to be completed this fall, is already seeing increased employment to Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents as well as skill development that will prepare residents to take advantage of the opportunities that would come with the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

Increased traffic volumes and weights supported by an all-weather highway would result in efficiencies in the delivery of essential goods that contribute to stabilizing the cost of living in communities. Economic development would be enabled by increased access to the mineral and petroleum resources in the region and reducing costs of production and exploration for industry. In terms of social benefits, we only need look to the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway to see how enhanced

intercommunity mobility has increased access to healthcare, education, sporting events, and more.

Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that the Government of the Northwest Territories will soon receive an update from the federal government on its application under the National Trade Corridors Fund for the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. In the meantime, the Department of Infrastructure is continuing to pursue other federal funding opportunities for the remaining components of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, as well as the Slave Geological Province Access Corridor. Discussions have been ongoing with the Canada Infrastructure Bank to determine how the two transportation corridors could fit within their program. It is expected that the Slave Geological Province Access Corridor will be viewed favourably, as it is a large transformative project, a matter of public interest, and has revenue-generating potential.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, we are nearing a decision on the future of the proposed Tlicho all-season road. The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has issued its report of the environmental assessment, and a decision from the responsible Ministers is anticipated in the coming months. On December 4, 2017, a request for proposals was issued and the three proponents that were identified through the request for qualifications were invited to submit proposals. Should the project be approved, the procurement process is expected to be finalized in the fall of 2018, which would allow for construction to begin as early as next winter.

Partnerships with our Indigenous organizations will be critical to ensuring the success of these projects. The Tlicho Government has been an active partner on the Tlicho all-season project since 2012 and has played a key role in managing elements of the project description report. Our government has also been working closely with the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated on the Mackenzie Valley Highway. The Sahtu Secretariat's efforts to help lobby for the advancement of the project through the Mackenzie Valley Highway Working Group has strengthened our case with the federal government. With regard to the Slave Geological Province Access Corridor, we look forward to continued discussions with Indigenous groups who have interest in the project on the various partnership models available to us.

Mr. Speaker, the hard work of the Government of the Northwest Territories has paid off so far, but there is still a lot of work to be done. As we wait for important decisions to be made, we will continue to work with its partners and to ensure the people of the Northwest Territories are in the best position to realize the benefits that these strategic transportation corridors will bring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 82-18(3):  
MINISTER LATE FOR THE HOUSE

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources will be late arriving in the House today to participate in the Environment Ministers' teleconference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INDIGENOUS ELDERS IN TAX ARREARS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, across my entire riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh, the land taxation and land-leasing policy has many elders convinced that they will never own their own homes or properties. At this time, some elders owe so much tax and lease debt that they believe that, when they pass on, GNWT would own their homes and that surviving members who move into their homes will not be allowed to remain in them and will have to move out. Many of these family members do not own homes and are reliant on social housing, therefore costing the government about \$20,000 a year to house them.

Mr. Speaker, as the government of the people of the Northwest Territories, we must work diligently with elders and their families to help them resolve this huge systematic issue as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the Lands division must not only look at this through the lens of legislation, policy, and regulations to determine the best course of action. Mr. Speaker, when the treaty in my riding was signed, the Dene people were left with the impression that the treaty was signed so that both the government and the Indigenous landowners would share the land as equal partners. How did we get to the stage where the original landowners are now being billed thousands of dollars for their own land? What has transpired to make this possible, and how did the ownership transfer to the GNWT? The GNWT was not present at the Treaty 11 signing.

Mr. Speaker, one elder told me it was like somebody asking you to provide them a place to sleep for one night, only to wake up to find that individual repairing their unit and suddenly starts charging you rent.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous people have used this land for thousands of years. Within the last hundred or so years, the government has taken all of their land away and is charging to live on their lot, in their homes, in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, now we have come to a situation where a trapper must pay hundreds of dollars for a trapping cabin. If things do not change, the GNWT would own everyone's trapping cabin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
LAND LEASE RATE CHANGES

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on being elected, we spent a good amount of time working together to come up with the mandate for the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. One of the mandates was to reduce the cost of living for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Well, I guess I must have missed something or did not understand what we meant by "reduction of cost of living." On March 15, 2018, during oral question period, I asked the Minister of Lands about the difference in lease rates between Commissioner's and NWT's lands. We were informed that the NWT's lands rates were going up to a minimum of \$840 so there would be similarity between minimum rates on both leases.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, they sent a media notification that there was going to be a briefing about Commissioner's and territorial land payments. Commissioner's lands were going down by 5 per cent. This was a good-news story. However, NWT land lease payments were going up from \$150 to \$840 upon the renewal date. This is either a 336 to 560 per cent increase. There was no plan to implement an increase over a period of time. It was bang, here you go. The funny thing is that there is no reference to cutting the cost to seniors. They have a hard time paying \$250 presently.

When I looked into this new directive and how it affected Nahendeh communities, especially designated authorities, there were going to be over 170 leases affected. This included traditional cabins that are part of residential traditional hunting and trapping areas. This could mean people would have to pay additional money to the government to hunt and trap.

In an interview, the Minister of Lands said that it was based on cost-of-living index the last time the payment was raised. I find it very interesting that this government is willing to use this formula when they want to generate revenue, but don't use this when they are calculating income support.



It is my understanding that it is common practice that these ideas are vented through Cabinet before coming to the floor. This makes me wonder if we truly care about small communities with these types of decisions.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding after post-devolution a commitment was made to the Legislative Assembly and the people of the Northwest Territories that changes would not be made to the way leases were structured or lease rates were calculated. Unfortunately, this has changed.

Mr. Speaker, I have reached out to my residents and told them of this news. Not surprisingly, a lot of people did not hear about this and were not engaged about this potential increase. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of Lands about this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF FORT PROVIDENCE FIRE DEPARTMENT

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, fire protection services in the NWT are reliant on volunteer firefighters. The dedication, time, and effort that volunteers invest in keeping our communities safe are invaluable.

The Fort Providence Fire Department currently has 14 active and engaged volunteers. I am pleased to see community members stepping up to take the new positions with the fire department, and have no doubt that they will continue to protect the community from harm.

Mr. Speaker, new volunteers have had three team meetings to clean and organize the fire hall. Firefighter Level I training took place May 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>. Firefighter Level II training is scheduled for July 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>. Plans are in place for air brakes training and first aid courses.

Pending the successful Firefighter II training in July, the volunteers will be ready to return to a response community. Until that point, we are still a non-response community.

Mr. Speaker, as a new group of volunteers come in, we must also say thanks to those who served before them. Previous fire chief Andy Sapp, Malcolm Tosh, Kelvin McLeod, and Jimmy Nadli have invested years of service in keeping Fort Providence safe. Thank you to those who have served in the past. I wish the best to the new intake. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATION RENEWAL

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I rise to speak to an important issue that is integral to the development of our territory: the education of our children and young Northerners. Earlier this month, in a CBC article, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment confirmed that the educational achievement of our school children is lower than hoped for.

The article reported that just over half of grade 6 students and about 47 per cent of grade 9 students met an acceptable standard in English. While, in math, this was shown to be worse than 43 per cent achieving acceptable standards in grade 6 math and 39 per cent in grade 9.

Mr. Speaker, underperformance in student achievement is a long-standing issue in the NWT. As far back as 2010, the Auditor General of Canada indicated that, between 2004 and 2008, there was limited or no progress in grades 3, 6, and 9 in math and in grades 6 and 9 in language arts.

As an MLA but also as a parent, I find the lack of progress on this issue deeply troubling. Mr. Speaker, the Education Renewal Initiative was launched in 2013 to much fanfare. From the outset, the initiative specifically identified student achievement as an area that required improvement and even noted that the existing approach to student achievement wasn't producing the desired results.

Well, here we are five years later, halfway into the 10-year cycle of education renewal, and still we hear that the results are not up to the department's expectations. I understand that many of the actions take time to bear fruit. However, after five years, I would think it is safe to say we should be seeing at least modest improvements. Instead, we appear to have stagnated at roughly the same levels we had in 2013.

On top of that, evaluation and reporting on the goals of education renewal is scant to non-existent, in spite of the department's own website claiming that results need to be shared with the public and different interest groups. This leads many members of the public wondering what fundamental impact the Education Renewal Initiative has had on the school system to date.

Mr. Speaker, the goals of the Education Renewal Initiative are commendable. I admire them for setting such ambitious goals. We need to empower children and young Northerners and provide them

with the tools to succeed, not just in academia, but also in life. Later today, I will be asking the Minister responsible what she is doing to make this vision a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2030 ENERGY STRATEGY

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we approach the last few days of our spring session and starting our summer season until our next October sitting. Mr. Speaker, planning is an essential and prudent principle to any initiative, program, or project, given this fundamental component and potential overlapping idle summer time.

Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraged by the Department of ITI 2030 Energy Strategy or plan when consideration is given and taken into account energy planning, developments, and security. This past Monday, Enbridge Pipelines held a public meeting to update the community of Norman Wells for the Line 21 Segment Replacement Repair.

Mr. Speaker, one proposal in advancing our NWT energy strategy and post-devolution responsibilities is in supporting a Post-Devolution Summer 2018 Sahtu Energy Conference. This will only add to other existing NWT Regional Strategies.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the timing is appropriate for all stakeholders in sponsoring a strategic discussion for the resource legislation amendments on engagements for unlocking the Sahtu energy potential.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer sit idle, but rather encourage and initiate engagements of support for the Northwest Territories in becoming a major contributing player in both non-renewable and renewable resource developments. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Later, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister of Infrastructure's optimism in his statement earlier today, but 75 cents of every dollar we have comes from the federal government. In this Chamber, we are all aware of the dependence on the federal purse.

For years we've been working with Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, signing on to devolution and managing

more of our own affairs here at home. We're trying to be fiscally responsible while moving forward on our mandate priorities. We've been focusing on land rights to provide certainty for all levels of government and potential investors in our resources.

We even signed on with the federal carbon tax, even though there are lots of reasons not to do that. We do these things because we are team players. We want to work collaboratively with our friends in Ottawa. What are we working toward? I go back to the words of Arthur Laing, a previous federal Minister of Northern Affairs. In the 1960s, he articulated a vision of northern economic, social, and political development with the goal that "the territories underwrite their own expenses, and eventually contribute to the economic growth of Canada." He wanted to convince industry that northern investment was "no long-shot, but rather a sound investment in Canada's future."

Mr. Speaker, the 60s was the old days. A lot has changed since then, mostly for the better, but we should realize that we still hold the goal of growing and developing our territory to be able to pay our own way. In order to do so, we are still in the business of attracting investment to our territory. Berger told us to settle land rights, and we have made significant strides in that regard. McCrank told us to get our regulations in order, and again, we have made significant improvements that Northerners and industry see as fair.

The recent federal decision to delay support for some of our crucial infrastructure projects is disheartening, Mr. Speaker. Those projects could have set us up to attract new investment in exploration, new developments in tourism. These would have helped create the base we need on which to continue building toward self-reliance.

Mr. Speaker, we've worked in good faith towards our own self-reliance, but at times, it seems our federal partners aren't completely on board. To continue to lessen our dependence on Ottawa, we need confidence that we are sharing the same vision, and are equally committed to a strong and respectful relationship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE SOBERING CENTRE OPERATIONS

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been an enthusiastic supporter of the efforts by the City of Yellowknife and the GNWT to tackle social issues downtown. The Safe Ride Program and the sobering centre together reduce the harm

intoxicated people may do to themselves, and they have made the downtown a more hospitable place for all of us to live and work. These initiatives respond to requests by residents of Yellowknife Centre to take action on what seemed to be then an ever-expanding problem.

Today, I want to focus on the operation of the sobering centre. The NWT Disabilities Council operates the centre on contract with the GNWT at the Salvation Army. The contract for the sobering centre and the day shelter together is worth \$1.4 million a year. Both are expensive and essential services. Mr. Speaker, my expectation of the sobering centre is that it would be a destination of last resort for intoxicated people, an alternative to going to the hospital emergency room, a stairwell, or a heating vent, but the reality is that not everyone is welcome there.

The NWT Disabilities Council has been known to ban people from the sobering centre. Clients may be banned for yelling, possession of alcohol, and physical aggression. At the staff's discretion, each action is accompanied by escalating penalties that range from being directed to go for a walk to a three-month total ban from the premises. Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge there's a fine balance between protecting the staff from the harm by clients and protecting clients from harm by staff by being kicked out, especially in the cold weather. The NWT Disabilities Council has a special duty of care to ensure their staff are trained in harm reduction for this group of clients, and they deliver services that are trauma informed, from a trauma informed perspective that views addiction as a disability. Surely it comes to no surprise that clients who are drunk are often difficult. It is the nature of this service.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the NWT Disabilities Council is struggling with this balance, and the most vulnerable people, those who are intoxicated and have no other resources, are at risk of further harm because it turns out that the sobering centre isn't a destination of last resort, but yet another place to get kicked out of. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services about how to get the sobering centre back on track. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FIRE BREAK FUNDING TO COMMUNITIES

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as summer approaches, concerns over this year's fire season start to emerge. We are already seeing conditions getting dry, so the chances of having a busy fire season are higher.

Last year, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic experienced a few local fires, but luckily, the wind pushed them away from the communities. Mr. Speaker, my constituents are concerned about the current status of firebreaks in their communities. Over the last few years, we have observed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources put the onus of fire smarting on communities. This means that ENR has stepped away from maintaining firebreaks. Communities have had to spend their own funds on fire smarting. This takes away from other community needs, leaving them with fewer opportunities to improve critical infrastructure.

In February, when we reviewed ENR's 2018-2019 Main Estimates, I raised similar questions, noting that only \$75,000 was available for fire smarting for all communities in the NWT. This is not enough, and the Minister confirmed that this fund has been oversubscribed in the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, capital funds should be for capital projects. Forest management is the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and as such, with their expertise and operations budget, they should be the ones maintaining firebreaks in our communities. I will have questions for the Minister of ENR later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARBON PRICING

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The federal deadline for a carbon pricing plan has come and gone, and the public has heard almost nothing from our Cabinet colleagues on an issue commanding priority attention everywhere else. I pointed out this gap in this House on February the 12<sup>th</sup>. Nothing meaningful has been revealed since. On July 26<sup>th</sup> of last year, the Minister of Finance released a discussion paper and public comment on carbon pricing, and that public comment period closed on September the 15<sup>th</sup>. A public survey was also conducted.

Where are the results of the public engagement? Here we are, eight months later, and our government hasn't even bothered to compile a "what we heard" report. There has been no policy direction, no legislative proposal, nothing in the budget. There is hardly a mention of carbon pricing in the Northwest Territories Energy Strategy or the Climate Change Strategic Framework, which makes no sense at all.

The federal government released its proposed legislation for carbon pricing on January 15<sup>th</sup> of this

year. Letters were also sent to all the provincial and territorial Premiers on December 20<sup>th</sup>, setting a March 30, 2018 deadline for choosing the federal backstop, or developing their own system to be in place by the end of 2018. The federal government backstop in carbon pricing will kick in on January 1, 2019, and we still don't even know whether our government has responded yet.

The federal carbon pricing system has two elements:

1. A charge on fossil fuels (e.g. gasoline, diesel, propane, natural gas), which would be paid by fuel producers or distributors; and
2. An output-based pricing system for industrial facilities with high levels of emissions.

What will our government do with regard to carbon pricing? Earlier in this sitting, I called on the federal government to reject Cabinet's climate change plan that is masquerading as an infrastructure proposal. Is this government finally committed to accept our responsibility, live up to our national and international obligations, and act on climate change through a carbon pricing system? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Finance. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NUNAKPUT HOUSING ISSUES

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, housing continues to be a large issue affecting the remote northern communities of Nunakput. In the Northwest Territories, reducing core need in housing is vital to reducing the many social problems associated with the poor quality of housing.

The previous Housing Minister stated that, although the yearly decline of the CMHC funding will end by the year 2038, CMHC will provide no funds to Northwest Territories for maintenance and operations. Mr. Speaker, it is important that we stay on top of housing, and that we act strategically so that there is sufficient housing support, especially for those who are at risk of homelessness, as well as for those who are struggling in their current homes.

Mr. Speaker, evictions are not the answer, and we need to take care of our residents during the times they struggle, especially with the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, the recent work that led to the corporation's report On Level Ground was a great start. Now, the government must plan for the strategy to interact

with the federal National Housing Strategy, which is where new funds and new opportunities will be in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories must continue to strengthen its working relationship with the federal government, as well as Indigenous governments, to mitigate housing issues and improve the quality of life for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, later, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to Ernie Bernhardt, who is a former Member of the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Welcome to our Assembly. Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Ernie Bernhardt, who is also a constituent of the Great Slave riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize two Pages from my riding, two Pages from Fort Resolution, Alexa Mandeville-Pasowisty and Santina Vanloon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize a Page today from Yellowknife North, Page Ramanda Castillo. I thank all the Pages for the great work that they do on our behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, also, would like to recognize Mr. Ernie Bernhardt and welcome him to the Legislative Assembly. He has given a lot of useful advice and encouragement over the last few year, so welcome to Ernie. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do want to recognize Ernie Bernhardt, on

another note though, in terms of being a very strong advocate, a coach, a promoter, and helping us revitalize the Arctic sports not only here in the Northwest Territories, but through the circumpolar region, and just thank him for all the work that he does in that area. Thank you, quana.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a Page from my riding of Kam Lake, Rhuwina Javier. Thank you very much for your hard work this sitting. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to our sitting. It's always nice to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Member for Nahendeh.

### Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 9-18(3):  
HERB NORWEGIAN, GLEN DAVIS  
CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP PRIZE

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the Grand Chief of the Dehcho First Nations, Herb Norwegian, who received the Glen Davis Conservation Leadership Prize on May 24, 2018. The World Wildlife Fund of Canada and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society awarded Mr. Norwegian for his decades of work on the Dehcho Land Use Plan. Mr. Norwegian takes pride in his work and is humbled by receiving this award. I would like to personally congratulate and thank the Grand Chief for all the work he does, and for the work he will continue to do in the future for our region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 324-8(3):  
NUNAKPUT HOUSING ISSUES

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke about the housing issues and noted that CMHC will no longer be providing O and M funds to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation by the year 2038. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if there are any plans to restore this funding or otherwise mitigate this loss so that we can maintain our public housing programs across the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most recently myself, along with my territorial, provincial and federal counterparts, have been working to endorse the Multi-lateral Housing Partnership Framework. We continue to negotiate with Canada, through the National Housing Strategy, and our current next step is to work on signing a bilateral agreement with the Government of Canada through the Northern Housing Fund. We didn't get our fair share of that funding, so we are negotiating with the Government of Canada to address those issues, and that agreement hopefully should be signed this fall so we'll be able to have a better understanding of how those dollars are going to be spent.

I can let you know at this time, however, that we have been successful in convincing the federal government to support the sustainability of social housing for the next 10 years, which is the life of the National Housing Strategy, and we will continue to work with the federal government and keep them apprised of the housing needs that we have in our communities, and how can we work together to address them. As you have heard me say in this House before, it's not only us as a government, but working with our Indigenous governments, our community governments, and our NGOs to address the core housing needs throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate the response. According to the federal budget, the Northwest Territories will receive \$36 million over the next 10 years for housing-related matters. Mr. Speaker, how will these funds be used to address Northwest Territories housing needs?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** In my previous response I did say that we're continuing to have bilateral negotiations with the Government of Canada, so we're hoping that we'll see an increase in the amount of funding that we can disperse out into the communities to address some of the housing needs. However, the current funding that the Member had asked about, it is a flexible fund that can be used for a number of social or affordable housing purposes. We're allocating the funding from the Northern Housing Fund toward the operations and maintenance costs of public housing, and toward the demolition of units slated for disposal, which will free up land for future development to address some of the aging infrastructure that we have. We'll also be using it to support the community housing support initiatives and working with our apprentices.

Although this funding is helpful, our government believes that the amount provided is nowhere enough to address the needs that we have throughout the Northwest Territories, and as I said previously, that's why we're negotiating with the

Government of Canada, and hopefully we'll see a substantial increase in our housing funding to address some of the housing needs throughout the Northwest Territories.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** That sounds promising, and I look forward to the Minister's work in the years to come. Mr. Speaker, there are NWT residents who have remained on waiting lists for public housing, sometimes for years at a time. It is essential that new units are built to meet these needs. Mr. Speaker, what plans are there to construct new units and expand housing options in Nunakput communities?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As you heard in my Minister's statement, one great project, that's a pilot project that we're rolling out in these four communities, is the Northern Pathways to Housing Program. It's not only going to be housing some of our homeless residents, but it's going to give them the opportunity to get the wrap-around services that they need. We also will be expanding our home ownership supports, which includes launching a new home program targeted at public housing tenants, which has been mentioned by the previous Minister, and how we can work with our tenants who are in good behavior, in good standing, and help them look to owning their new homes, which is also a very great program.

We're also exploring direct delivery, repair, and maintenance services so that we can get some of our housing units back up to code and standards, so we can get our residents and tenants in those programs, into those housing units, as well as other programs and initiatives that I've mentioned in terms of a Core Housing Needs Action Plan.

I know working in partnerships with our Indigenous governments, in particular in the Beaufort Delta and Nunakput region, we are working with invaluable regional corporations, where 12 new units are being constructed; four in Paulatuk, four in Ulukhaktok, two in Sachs Harbour, and two in Tuktoyaktuk. Additionally we have the community housing support initiative, where communities have come forward with innovative ideas on housing for single individuals, and we'll continue to support a lot of these programs, but it's going to take partnerships, Mr. Speaker, much like with IRC, and working to address these housing concerns.

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

QUESTION 325-18(3):  
LAND LEASE RATE CHANGES

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on May 25, during our oral questions, I asked the Minister of Lands about lease increases

and consultation with the communities, and he said: "I think the proper consultation was done, and the changes that we have made are reasonable." I find this very interesting, to say the least. After devolution, Lands actually increased rates from \$100 to \$150, which was a 50 per cent increase, but now the Minister and the department has raised leases up by 336 per cent to 560 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain how he feels this is reasonable, to see lease payments go up this high? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had mentioned previously, these rates have not been changed for many years, and we wanted to have consistency with our leasing rates, so therefore these changes which the Member opposite is alluding to were felt to be reasonable. Costs have increased considerably over the last 15 or 20 years, and we thought that these increases, which are significant, are reasonable. Thank you.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for that answer. I guess his definition of "reasonable" is not what my definition of "reasonable" is, so maybe we will have to get his dictionary and I will compare it with my dictionary. Can the Minister please explain how this huge increase is helping residents in my riding deal with the high cost of living when some find it very difficult to pay the lease payments as they are presently?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** As mentioned previously, there had not been an increase in a considerable amount of time. Listening carefully to the concerns that had been raised in this House, we did implement a reduction of residential lease fees to 5 per cent of assessed value, down from 10 per cent, so we felt that that was assisting those residents, most of whom would be living in their own houses on those properties, so that was an actual reduction in fees.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I will probably have to follow up on what he was saying in his answer there. So, Mr. Speaker, when I compare both Commissioner's and NWT leases and the department trying to bring these two leases together, will the department be looking at a 50 per cent reduction for seniors and elders in regard to NWT land, similar to what they do with Commissioner's lands?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** There is, of course, no seniors' discount currently on territorial lands, but the department is looking at implementing similar provisions for residential leases on territorial lands as is currently available on Commissioner's lands. So it's a question of, really, bringing together the two types of leases, and they should be similar, at least, so we certainly are looking at the change

which the Member opposite has proposed. Certainly, there have been increases, but, as I mentioned, there was a reduction in residential lease fees on Commissioner's land from 10 per cent to 5 per cent of assessed value.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer. I understand we reduced Commissioner's land from 10 per cent to 5 per cent. Great, but the seniors still get a 50 per cent reduction in that, so I am hoping the department will actually look at that and start implementing it, as they are doing it right now for Commissioner's lands, for NWT lands. My next question, though, is in regard to the engagement. How did the department engage these people, the 170 lessees in the Nahendeh riding? How were they consulted about this change of fees?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** As I mentioned previously, there had been, in questions asked by the Member opposite last week, considerable discussion about this issue and including, I believe, a story in the press. Each leaseholder was advised in writing by the department of the changes to lease fees, so they were advised on an individual basis. Now, the fees will be determined by the nature of your lease, so, if there is a lease for a period ending, let's say, in the year 2020 at the current rate before April 1<sup>st</sup>, that will still be in effect until the year 2020, so the increase in rates will not occur until that time.

Now, last week, in dealing with this question and dealing with questions from the Member opposite, I referred to a pre-gazetting period that had taken place and a period of consultation. I may have misunderstood the note I received from Lands on that. It appears that the pre-gazetting period and the items filed in the pre-gazette or noted in the gazette in the pre-gazette period did not refer to the increase in lease fees, but rather other fees. I am looking into this further and certainly will deal directly with the Member opposite if he has any questions concerning that. So, again, there has been considerable discussion in the House. There have been discussions in the press. Again, individual leaseholders were advised in writing by the department of the changes to lease fees. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 326-18(3):  
EDUCATION RENEWAL

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For over a decade, the NWT has had problems with student achievement. After five years of education renewal,

there is still little improvement in student achievement. Can the Minister comment on the state of the situation for student achievement and whether or not she believes education renewal is working? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The education renewal was to take place over a 10-year span, from 2014 to 2024. Some of the initiatives have been implemented; some of them are just in pilot stages; and some of them are still in development. Are they working? I think that, yes, some of them are working. Do I think that it is acceptable that we have a low achievement in the territories, still? No. That is absolutely not acceptable. It breaks my heart when I hear that children are dropping out, that people are having to do upgrading, so, no, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's acceptable that we have low achievement rates. I think we still have a long way to go.

**MR. TESTART:** You know, I appreciate the Minister is relatively new to this portfolio, and it's good to hear that she believes it's unacceptable. So what is she going to do? What kind of tangible, quantifiable changes can the Minister point to that have taken place, specifically in the way we approach student achievement, that the department has undertaken to date?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I did take note when the MLA did his opening comments and he said that success isn't only academic; it's also succeeding in life. He is absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. It's not just about whether you get an A, B, C, or a D, or if you drop out. It's about can you succeed in life, and so there are some things that we have done that I am really excited about.

We have done a Healthy Food for Learning. There is a direct link that says that children who are not fed properly do not learn well. Every school in the Northwest Territories now has food in it. That is incredible for me. The northern distance learning, I am going up to a graduation in Ulukhaktok, I think it's next month. I have lots of grads. It's one of the most exciting communities I am going to, not because it's a special community, but it's special because three of those students, through the distance education learning, are graduating and going to post-secondary education in the South without taking upgrading. Yes, it's incredible.

What else are we doing? The community mental health pilot project; we know that mental health is linked to student success. We are expanding that in partnership with Health and Social Services. We are getting counsellors into the schools to work with children. Great initiative; I could not ask for better.

Supporting teachers, the instructional practices, I mean, that is just new. We still have to wait for it to come out, but teachers cannot be overworked and expected to do everything in an eight-hour day. It does not work, so we need to give them space. I am excited to see what will happen with that.

The Northern Pathways, one of the most exciting things I have heard yet, we are working on it. We are expanding it. We need to reach children younger, before they drop out, to kind of see where they want to go in life and give them the tools to get there. So there are initiatives happening. I could go on all day, Mr. Speaker, but I know I have to wrap it up.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Minister is very passionate about that file.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and, I agree, the Minister could go on all day, but let's get back to the business at hand. Another comment, you know, perhaps when the media is enquiring into the low achievement, the Minister could be the one to respond instead of her department, because that is a lot more optimistic than the message that the public is getting, which is things are not moving as far as they should. The action plan for education renewal is extremely ambitious. It has around 200 targets that were supposed to be met by this point in time. Of those 200 targets, how many targets have actually been met, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I take that as a compliment, that I could go on all day. I am excited about this portfolio. How many of the targets have been met? As the Member stated, I am just new to the portfolio. I have talked about a few that I have heard about that I am totally passionate about and said, yes, let's go further with those. I have not yet gone through the whole 200 of them, but I am working diligently to go through them, and I promise, I will go through every one of those 200 ones and make sure that we are on target. Keep what's working, expand what's successful, and throw out what's showing not to be successful.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to getting an update on those results. On to the reporting of the action plan. There has been little to no reporting of this action plan that ended in 2016-2017. Will the Minister commit to providing Members of this House, and also the public, with an update that clearly articulates what education renewal has achieved and what the department is going to do moving forward? There are no updates on the website, which is where the public are going to get their information. Can the Minister commit to

fixing that, and getting information out to the public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes, education in the Northwest Territories should be about best practices. Best practices does talk about transparency and accountability. I have already been working on them about accountability. Transparency, I will commit that, the next session, we will provide an update to standing committee. I will do a Minister's statement in the House to talk about where we are. Websites are not my strong point, but I will push the department to actually make sure that our website is updated before the next session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 327-18(3):  
YELLOWKNIFE SOBERING CENTRE  
OPERATIONS

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my statement, I talked about my expectation that the sobering centre provide shelter of last resort to people who are intoxicated rather than another place for them to be kicked out of. Can the Minister tell me whether the contract with the NWT Disabilities Council enables them to turn people away from the sobering centre and, if so, under what conditions? Mahsi.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the sobering centre aims to ensure that those experiencing effects of alcohol or drugs have access to a safe place to sleep it off. By safe place, that means safe for both the clients as well as the staff of those facilities. While the staff of the centre are trained in first aid, CPR, non-violent crisis intervention, and trauma informed care, I understand that there are circumstances where good training alone cannot eliminate credible risk of real violence to clients, themselves, as well as staff.

Through the duty as an employer, and consistent with the arrangement we have with the provider through our contract, and in an effort to provide the level of safety that clients themselves are seeking, policies have been adopted to restrict access to the centre. The sobering centre consulted with their clients, and I think that's important to note, and they helped develop structured policies around unacceptable conduct and the related consequences. Restrictions are meant only for situations that are outside of the norm and may threaten the care, welfare, safety, and security of a person, as well as staff, as well as other clients.



Restrictions to services are rare occurrences, and are used as a last resort.

Mr. Speaker, if the Member is aware of situations where clients are being banned that go beyond the established criteria, I am happy to learn what those are, and hear what those are, and work with the provider to address them.

**MS. GREEN:** I am aware of a number of people who have been banned, both in the short term, meaning a day or two, and over the long term. I do not have an accurate, current number, but my question for the Minister is this: when the Disabilities Council turns away a client from the sobering centre, where are they supposed to go? Are they supposed to go to the hospital, which you worked so hard to get them out of, or where exactly? If this isn't the last resort, what is it?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We want to have a sobering centre that is safe. We want to make sure that the clients in there are safe and aren't at risk at other clients. We also need to make sure the staff are safe. There are some guidelines that do restrict individuals on a short-term basis. Some individuals could be restricted for half a day, one evening. Some, depending on the nature of the incidents that have occurred, might be restricted for a longer period of time.

I do take the Member's point. If a client is under restricted access due to violence or aggressive behaviour, the NWT Disabilities Council works collaboratively with other shelters and agencies to ensure that they have a safe place to go. The Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT Health and Social Services Authority have hosted a touch point meeting every six weeks with different organizations to look at ways to collaborate, ensure a seamless access to services, and look at quality improvements. Partners in this are the authority, the RCMP, the city, Centre for Northern Families, the NWT Disabilities Council, which are one of our contractors, emergency room representatives, as well as department representatives. We get together on a regular basis to figure out how we can address those few individuals who may have been restricted on a temporary or a longer-term basis.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. Let me ask the Minister if he has any current information about how many intoxicated people are being turned away from the sobering centre, or how often that happens?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** As I indicated, any restrictions are sort of a last resort, and they try to work with the clients to resolve issues that may exist. We do know that 317 people have accessed the sobering centre, and that about 33 per cent of

those clients use the centre on a regular basis, on a reoccurring basis. To date, there have been 30 people who have had restrictions applied to them. Restrictions, as I have indicated previously, are usually about three hours to a maximum of a week. They can go longer if situations don't improve.

As a note, Mr. Speaker, there have been 73 referrals to Stanton Hospital ER by ambulance for further assessment and/or treatment, so some of the individuals who do show up at the sobering centre aren't granted access because they have some other issues that need to be dealt with. Most of these referrals are for things like mental health issues, acute psychosis, suicidal ideations. We had a few with cardiac-related issues, so we wouldn't consider those a restriction, but a referral. Some people do end up going to Stanton. The majority of admissions in the centre, just as a note, occur between about 7:00 p.m. to about 9:00 p.m.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was some good information in that answer. Of course, I am not talking about people who are referred to the hospital. That's not the situation I am talking about. I am talking about people the staff are sending away because their behaviour is deemed unacceptable. Finally, my question is whether the Minister feels that the sobering centre operations are meeting his expectations and providing value for money? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The sobering centre's goal is to provide a safe place for non-violent intoxicated individuals to sleep off the effects of the drugs or alcohol. It is also to provide better care to persons with addiction through clinical assessment and intervention to improve health outcomes. It is also to assist clients with system navigation by linking them with appropriate social service agencies. It is also intended to decrease the inappropriate ambulance trips to emergency department for homeless alcohol-dependent individuals, and to decrease the number of inappropriate emergency room visits from homeless people who are suffering from alcohol.

I am pleased to share that, with the establishment of the sobering centre, there has been reduced strain on other organizations such as the RCMP, who have reported a 12 per cent decrease in calls for service for social disorder, and there has also been a decreased number of visits to the emergency room.

Having said that, obviously, we must continue to learn and evolve as time goes on. If the Member and committee have thoughts or suggestions for improvement, I am obviously open to suggestion.

When it comes to individuals who are restricted, there are guidelines. They are posted at the sobering centre and the day shelter. If the Member or any other Member is aware of individuals who they feel are being restricted outside the guidelines, please let me know so that we can look into those with our contract provider and the authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 328-18(3):  
ENERGY INITIATIVES IN THE SAHTU REGION

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Industry, ITI. My first question is: I noted with interest that the statement from Minister Schumann yesterday indicated that \$180 million in funding is being invested in the energy infrastructure as part of the three-year rolling energy action plan that is expected to be released during this session. What is the GNWT doing to support the Sahtu region to benefit from this windfall? Mahsi.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about what we have done just lately in the Sahtu region. We have installed a biomass heating installation, as well as complete energy retrofits in the Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita and the Chief T'Selehye School in Fort Good Hope, as well, and we have installed a 400 kilowatt boiler in the new health centre that is going to be opening in Norman Wells shortly. The federal government is also going to be helping us with a program where we are going to do a wind monitoring tower in Norman Wells to re-examine the wind energy in the region and the resource there, near the community. We have funding available from the federal government to support the Tulita Land Corporation for the new 45 kilowatt solar array that is going to be installed in Tulita, and, as part of the new energy action plan, we have new funding included that will help replace the existing power plant and add a megawatt-scale wind generation in Norman Wells.

**MR. MCNEELY:** That puts a smile on my face. Thanks for the response. My second question: the Mackenzie Valley Highway has been a long-held priority of residents of the Sahtu and is identified in the mandate of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, yet the project still has not commenced construction. What is the Department of Infrastructure doing to advance this priority?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As I said in my Minister's statement today updating on all the

corridors, the Mackenzie Valley Highway application is in the National Trade Corridors Fund application. We have not heard anything on that submission, but we expect something in the coming weeks on that. Hopefully, we will be able to secure funding on some portions of that highway, and we will be able to move on to the next planning stages of that and the environmental studies for the project as we prepare for whatever key phases are approved through that funding process, be it the Bear River bridge or sections of the highway.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thanks to the Minister for that progress response. That is great news to hear. My next question: how is the GNWT working with Sahtu residents to ensure they are able to be equal partners in the economy?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As the House is well aware, with our application for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, that is not only going to open up the region for communities and transportation of goods; it's going to be able to open up an area that has a vast wealth of natural resources, be it bitumen petroleum reserves or the mineral potential that is unexplored in the area. So we are working hard to advance that along with the Sahtu secretary, who has been a great partner in us trying to advocate the federal government to put some federal dollars into this.

We are also finishing up the Canyon Creek road, which a number of Members, I believe, had an opportunity to tour when they were up there this year. This is something similar to the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, where there was great local participation and training opportunities for people in the area and the Northwest Territories. The numbers that I have around that are very similar to what happened in the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk situation. Roughly 84 per cent of it was local and northern employment, and, at peak employment in March, there were roughly 81 people being employed on the project, 28 of whom were from the Sahtu, and 36 were from the North.

So we are doing our part to help improve the economy in the Sahtu region. Hopefully, with a positive announcement coming out of the federal government, we will be able to continue to move on some of these priorities.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister. My last question: will the Minister, sometime during this summer, support a Sahtu energy strategy conference?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** After session, I am actually going up to Inuvik, here, right away, for the

Arctic Energy Conference, which is in its second inaugural year, which we will participate in. If he wants to have a discussion with the Member as a sidebar of what kind of opportunities we can have around having a conference in Norman Wells, I would gladly sit down and have those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 329-18(3):  
CARBON PRICING

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Finance on the issue of carbon pricing. I would like to start with something simple. The federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada wrote to all her provincial and territorial counterparts on December 20, 2017. She requested a response by March 30, 2018 on whether each jurisdiction would implement its own carbon pricing scheme or rely on the federal government. Last time I asked the Minister of Finance, in April, we still had not responded, so can the Minister tell us and the general public if he has written a response, and, if so, can he table it in this House without delay? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did send a letter to ECCC with our planned approach to carbon pricing, and we also told them that we do not intend to use their backstop. So we will be having discussions going forward, and, when we are in a position to, we will release the results of our findings.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I would like to thank the Minister for that information. He did not answer the last part of my question, whether he was willing to table that letter in the House without delay, so I would like to repeat that question.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I will be making it available to the public, including tabling. I can table the letter, but what I need to do before that, out of respect for a consensus system, is share. We have a briefing with committee, and I want to give committee an update before I am in a position to release anything publicly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I look forward to the briefing and getting the letter tabled so that we can tell the public what is going on. Our government apparently participated with federal government experts to prepare some sort of a study on the impacts of carbon pricing on the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister tell us whether that study has been

completed and, if so, when it will be publicly released?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of work that went on on carbon pricing since the federal government came up with the initiative to implement carbon pricing, whether it was welcome or not. Our challenge was to do a lot of work, a lot of background work, to see what the effect would be on the people of the Northwest Territories and try to mitigate the effect on the people of the Northwest Territories. I think we have come up with a fairly good proposal in doing that. That is why we told the federal government that we will not be using their backstop. We did some numbers using their backstop, and it was going to add on to, significantly, the cost of living in the Northwest Territories. We have a product that is made in the North, by Northerners, and I think it will be well received by Northerners. Because the carbon pricing was going to be implemented with or without our participation, our challenge was to mitigate the impact it was going to have on Northerners.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to thank the Minister for that response, but he did not answer the question, again. This study that was done in collaboration with federal government experts on the impacts on the Northwest Territories of carbon pricing, is it done, and, if so, can he share it publicly?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I will share anything publicly, but, out of respect for the consensus system, I need to share the information with committee first, because we have seen what happens if we somehow release some information to the public before we get it to committee. So, once we have the discussion with committee and we have our discussion with Ottawa, I will be more than happy to release anything publicly so people out there can realize and know what a great job that the officials within the Government of the Northwest Territories did mitigating the impacts of carbon pricing on the people of Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 330-18(3):  
FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES IN  
COMMUNITIES

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, about two years ago, the Auditor General of Canada tabled his report entitled "Support for Communities for Municipal Services in the

Northwest Territories." That report was basically highlighting 13 recommendations. The critical piece of the report was that MACA did not adequately help communities. In the case in Fort Providence, where we have a community volunteer fire department, what role does MACA have in supporting and establishing and maintaining a local fire department? Mahsi.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Coming out of that report, there were some highlights, and MACA will continue to work with the key partners as well as our hamlets to develop and maintain the fire protection services for Northwest Territories communities. With that said, I just want to say that, as the Member made congratulations to his volunteer firefighters in his community, I want to thank all the volunteers across the Northwest Territories for their commitment to keeping our communities safe.

We have also done a creative assessment tool across the Northwest Territories. Currently, we have 19 community fire department assessments that have been completed to date. It addresses what is working, what challenges there are, any inadequacies. With that, we are able to come up with a fire protection plan that identifies short- and long-term goals for the community. We will continue to put those assessment tools in place with all communities across the Northwest Territories and are willing to work with our hamlets and municipalities on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** The Minister stated that they will continue to work with hamlets. Of course, this is the Government of the Northwest Territories and this is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Who is responsible for fire protection services? Is it this government through MACA, or is it the local governments?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Right now, it is just the local governments that are responsible. We provide the support. We provide the training, as the Member alluded to in his Member's statement. From May 25<sup>th</sup> to May 27<sup>th</sup>, we had a Part I defensive-level firefighter course that took place. I believe there is going to be a follow-up coming in June. We continue to work with all our municipal governments to ensure that fire protection plans are in place for the community, and we do provide the supports.

We also have a community fire protection video as well as a presentation, which we have done in 18 community government presentations that have been conducted to date. As I mentioned, this is a responsibility of the local governments. We are

here to provide the support to ensure that they are operating at a high standard and with the right training available to make sure that our communities are protected and kept safe.

**MR. NADLI:** In some communities, the fire departments have been rendered non-response departments. They have been put on hold, and there are no fire protection services available to the community. He has stated very clearly that his department is providing support. How is his department providing support to local governments to ensure their level of fire protection services is available for all residents of the NWT?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** If the community or the hamlet has a fire chief, we will work with them to help them develop a volunteer fire team where volunteer firefighters will provide the training and the support for those volunteer firefighters to get the proper training that they need. We will also work with the SAOs of the hamlets in terms of working to get these fire protection plans in place, but also get the right training for the volunteer firefighters.

As I mentioned, we have developed a fire department assessment tool that helps us to identify any, like I said, inadequacies or any challenges that need to be taken into account to help develop that fire protection plan for the community. We are willing to work with all the communities across the Northwest Territories to ensure that each community has a fire department, has a fire protection plan in place should something happen in that community.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for his replies, as well. Could the Minister outline to the House in terms of a target or a specific timeline that his department has of ensuring that all 33 communities, at least, have local fire departments and fire protection measures in place? Mahsi.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Right now, we can't really set a timeline based on the resources that some of these communities have. As I mentioned, we have a fire protection action planning tool, as well, that was developed in 2017. It identifies priority activities, monitors progress, works toward a safe, effective, sustainable fire service. We have 13 community action plans under that planning tool.

We will continue to work with the NWTAC LGANT as well as the NWT Fire Association. We will be meeting with them at their upcoming general meeting 2018 to give them an update and see how we can work together collaboratively to address some of these communities that don't have either a

fire protection plan or an adequate fire service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 331-18(3):  
FIRE PREVENTION AND MUSHROOM  
INDUSTRY IN MACKENZIE DELTA

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement; I am hoping the Minister heard parts of it. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier in my statement, we had a large fire in my riding last year. We are fortunate there was no damage to any infrastructure in the community or the water plant in Fort McPherson. I would like to ask the Minister: what is ENR's plans for fire prevention in the Mackenzie Delta this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I apologize for missing the Member's fantastic statement. I hear the Member's point, and I have seen pictures of the fire that they had. Let us hope that we don't have those types of situations again this year. We try to work with the communities in fire smarting their communities.

I believe there was a local FireSmart representative workshop that was held in Yellowknife recently in March. I am not quite sure who the participants were. I understand there were 24 attendees from Communities, Lands, and a few other departments. I will work with the department to find out the outcomes of that workshop, and I would be glad to share it with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** I am glad the Minister mentioned the fire smarting. That leads me to my next question: can the Minister commit to fire smarting communities in the Mackenzie Delta this year so that the communities can use their capital funds for other critical infrastructure needs?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I want to be diplomatic, Mr. Speaker, but I am just going to say no. The responsibility of a lot of that work in the community was devolved to the communities a number of years ago. Most communities have done really well with it. There are other programs, I am sure, that they can access to help with some of the work that needs to go on.

Through the Small Community Employment strategy through the Small Community Employment Committee, or Small Community Committee, I think there were dollars that were given to every

community in the Northwest Territories. Part of that could be used for programs such as this. The goal of that thing is to put people to work.

**MR. BLAKE:** The fund that the Minister is talking about is in the neighbourhood of \$30,000 per community. There is not very much fire smarting you could do for that amount. Maybe a couple of weeks of work or a month at the most, but Mr. Speaker, I will just leave that there and find another route to that. I will ask the Minister a different question. Are there plans to encourage people to pick mushrooms in my riding where we had a large fire last year, like they did here in Yellowknife? They did a lot of promotion in this area for mushroom pickers. Will that be done in my riding as well?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I am not sure about the plans, but a lot of those folks out there who are in that type of industry, they know where some of the fires were, so there is an opportunity for them to go into the riding. We would hope that members of the constituency would be the first ones to try and go take advantage of the harvest, but I am sure that those who are in that industry, those who pick them, do know where the fires are, and if there is an opportunity, they would go there and pick them.

As far as promoting it, I would have to check with my colleague at ITI to see if there is anything in the works on promoting this type of industry.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the winter, there were a number of people that I spoke to who were thinking of actually going out this summer on their own to pick mushrooms, but the process needs to be explained: how to dry them, how to clean them, and all that. Will the department ensure that someone is there to pick them up, just to make sure that everything is done properly, and maybe a little short course here in the first part of June once the ferry is open? Mr. Speaker, will the department ensure that that is done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We would be glad to help the community. This is a new industry in the community, and there is some knowledge that needs to be gained. I will work with my colleague at ITI, and we will see if there are any opportunities for us to collaborate in sending somebody into the community and giving a short course as the Member had asked for. I will work with them. We will see if we can get someone in there as quickly as possible to give a course to the community so, that way, they can go harvest the mushrooms in their riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 332-18(3):  
COMMUNITY TAXATION

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Lands. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Lands if the terms "tax-based" and "non-tax-based" communities are still being used in the department? I know it is a new department. It may have been used by MACA previously, but I would like to know if the Minister of Lands can tell me if that term is still used in the Lands department. Thank you.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware as to whether the difference between tax- and non-tax-based communities is used in the Lands department. Perhaps the question would be more properly addressed to MACA, but I will check on that. Thank you.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Prior to devolution, April 2014, the federal government had responsibility for the federal lands, or Crown lands, it was referred to as, in which harvesters were on the land with cabins harvesting whatever, whether it be furs or they were hunting or berry-picking or fishing, whatever the people using the cabins were doing. The federal government was not taxing them. I would like to know why the decision was made to start taxing cabins.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I am not aware of the situation when the federal government was in control of those lands referred to by the Member opposite, and I am not certain when a decision was made, if, in fact, there was a change, to tax those lands by the territorial government. I could consult with my confreres in Finance and MACA to determine that, but I wasn't aware of the tax situation prior to devolution.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I would like to ask the Minister of Lands if it would be possible to take all of the tax bills and return them back to the Department of Lands so that department can deal with the individuals. What is happening now, Mr. Speaker, is that it is de-linked because Finance has now taken responsibility for it.

Finance doesn't know the reason why the tax is there, how it built up, nothing at all. All they know is that there is a bill and they are going out to collect it. I would like to know if the Minister of Lands can talk to the Minister of Finance and transfer that responsibility back to Lands so that it can be dealt with from the department, with all of the clients who

are now stuck with those huge tax bills that I spoke of in my Member's statement.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I know that there certainly are large tax bills. I became very aware of that on a personal basis when I was out in Behchoko, and many people came to me with large bills that they had received from MACA. I am not certain if I want to bring the responsibility for collecting those back from Finance to Lands, but I will discuss with the Ministers of MACA and Lands these issues.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was more or less asking that the responsibility be brought back to Lands for the purpose of negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if there was any discussion at all during negotiations about the tax bills, if there is any specific table that he is involved with or his department is involved with on the taxes that are accumulated in the communities by the residents of the non-tax-based communities. Thank you.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Certainly, the issue of taxation of cabins has come up in our discussions with Aboriginal groups, in particular the Metis. I can't speak to how that issue has been dealt with at negotiating tables, because I am not directly involved at that level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 333-18(3):  
TERRITORIAL FINANCING FORMULA AND PAN-  
CANADIAN FRAMEWORK ON CLEAN GROWTH  
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance. Earlier today, I spoke about the importance of our relationships with the federal government and strengthening those relationships.

I just want to ask the Minister of Finance: I know that, at some point here in the future, we are going to have to start talking about our territorial financing formula. I would like to ask the Minister: where are we at with that? Are we evaluating that agreement? Are we in talks with the federal government already with regard to re-evaluating our TFF? If we are, what's the update? When will it be concluded? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the discussions on the territorial

financing renewal are well-advanced. It is important to remember that this is described in federal legislation, as opposed to an agreement that is negotiated.

Currently, there is a general agreement on a renewal, and the changes proposed by the federal government are minor and relatively technical in nature. We were pleased that there weren't any significant changes that would reduce our grant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for the reply. Mr. Speaker, we know that we have an infrastructure gap in the Northwest Territories in the billions. Communities have identified a \$40 million annual shortfall. As new mines come on stream, some of our old ones are going to start to close. Our own source revenue becomes that much more important to us.

I am wondering if the Minister can let us know: as part of the TFF assessment, is there an opportunity for us to reduce clawback from this agreement so that, when we generate our own source revenue, we're not actually going to see it taken away from us on the other end?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** It is important to remember that the formula is designed to fill the gap between expenditure need and our own source revenue. The federal government view is that we are not penalized when the grant goes down if our revenue increases, and as the gap changes between need and own-source revenue, the grant should change. As the Member knows, the formula is very complex, and there are components built in to ensure that we benefit as our tax base expands.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Well then, that means we have to dust off the old plan to make sure that we're looking to grow our population, because that is where it's going to make a difference for us when it comes to the TFF, or the Territorial Financing Formula.

Mr. Speaker, the other question that has been highly debated as it relates to our relationship with the federal government is our agreement to sign on to the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. There were questions earlier today from my colleagues with regard to carbon pricing. Yesterday, we talked in this House about Taltson, and we have a \$200,000 commitment that we're going to spend toward pre-planning; \$150,000 of that is coming from the federal government.

I would like to ask the Minister: does that mean the federal government is buying in to Taltson, that they believe in Taltson as being a good project that is

somehow going to support the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Early indications are, for the federal government, this is one of the projects that meets their vision. When we put a good business case forward, I think the federal government will be receptive to helping us to see this project come to fruition.

It is something that fits into their mandate, and it's something that early indications are they have kind of looked at this project favourably. Whether that translates into significant investment remains to be seen, but we have to ensure that we have a fairly solid business case going forward.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Member for Frame Lake.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 11-18(3): TALTSON HYDRO-ELECTRIC EXPANSION PROJECT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

The Executive's 2030 Energy Strategy and a Climate Change Strategic Framework relies heavily upon greenhouse gas reductions, supposedly resulting from a major expansion of the Taltson hydro-electric system.

Could the Minister describe the phases of the Taltson hydro-electric expansion set out in the 2030 Energy Strategy, including the following:

1. Identify the timeframes of construction, how each phase of construction will be financed, and to whom will the energy be sold;
2. Power to be generated and whether any impoundment and/or flooding will occur;
3. Greenhouse gas reductions anticipated for each of the phases and in which jurisdictions those reductions will take place; and
4. Anticipated costs for each phase, including a breakdown of hydro facilities, power lines, and related infrastructure, including roads. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the

review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents.  
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 198-18(3):  
AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Aurora College Foundational Review." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents.  
Government House Leader.

TABLED DOCUMENT 199-18(3):  
2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT ON  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANDATE OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "2017-2018 Annual Report on Implementation of the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 200-18(3):  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT  
CORPORATION NWT 2018-19 CORPORATE  
PLAN

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Business Development and Investment Corporation NWT 2018-19 Corporate Plan." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents.  
Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 201-18(3):  
2018-19 CORPORATE PLAN - NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES HYDRO CORPORATION AND  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER  
CORPORATION

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "2018-19 Corporate Plan - Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and Northwest Territories Power Corporation." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 20-18(3):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO  
OCTOBER 11, 2018

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 1, 2018, I will move the following motion:

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on June 1, 2018, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, October 11, 2018;

AND FURTHER, that at any time prior to October 11, 2018, 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 it has been duly adjourned to that time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 19:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS  
ACT

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, be read for the second time. This bill amends the Revolving Funds Act to increase the authorized limit of the Liquor Revolving Fund. 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. The motion is carried. Bill 19 has had its second reading. It is now referred to standing committee. Minister of Finance.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 74(2) and have Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted



**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds, is moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Masi. Second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 6, Cannabis Legalization and Regulations Implementation Act; Committee Report 7-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations and Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of Bill 6: Cannabis Legalization and Regulations Implementation Act; Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns; Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process; and Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act.

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 7-18(3), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

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

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 7-18(3), Report on the Review of Bill 6: Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Implementation Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. I am sure most Members have a copy of the report, which was read into the House yesterday. The way that these are dealt with, just for those people who are watching at home, is that there are recommendations in the report that are moved as motions, and there is discussion surrounding those.

The report is Committee Report 7-18(3), Report on the Review of Bill 6: Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Implementation Act. I will turn to the chair of the standing committee which authored the report for opening comments. Since this was a joint committee, there are two chairs. I believe both will be making comments. First, I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to provide opening comments.

Bill 6 is the product of the Government of the Northwest Territories' efforts to develop a legal cannabis regulatory system with the coming legalization of the substance through action taken by the Government of Canada. One thing that was very clear from the onset is that there was some hesitation, and not just from the executive council, but also from the honourable Members on this side of the House, towards how this initiative would roll out and how best to craft a legal system for cannabis in the Northwest Territories.

Given the significance of this issue and that it represents a fundamental shift in how we have dealt with cannabis in our society, not just here, but in every province and territory in Canada, the standing committees decided to work together and adopted a formal motion to adopt this unique process where we could combine two committees together. We actually had representation from 10 out of the 11 Regular Members and were able to work together and provide the expertise that we all have, based on the uniqueness of our ridings and our own expertise as Members of this House.

The committees then undertook to do the most extensive consultations that we have undertaken to date in this Assembly, and to do that effectively, we split into two groups. One group went to the northern regions of the territory, Sahtu and the Beaufort Delta, and the other went to the southern territory.

I was chair of the group that went to the north. My honourable friend from Nahendeh was the chair on the southern group, and I will allow him to speak to his experiences there, but one thing that we found in the north was that cannabis is not a foreign substance. It is very much alive and well in every community.

Whilst we were in Ulukhaktok, which is one of our most far-flung and isolated communities, one young person said that he believed that 80 per cent of the community was actively consuming cannabis, which is a shocking statistic. That just goes to the significance of what we are trying to accomplish here through this legislation, and that is to address a system that doesn't appear to be working, and that is the system of prohibition.

Well, we heard the concerns that "should government really be getting in the business of legalizing a drug, a narcotic, for consumption in our communities when we have such dire problems with addictions that we are all very much aware of?" I think the committee took those concerns to heart, but ultimately, if we are thinking whether what we have been doing, which is prohibition, has been effective, we know from our first-hand consultations that it is not effective, that cannabis is getting into our communities, and it is being widely abused by

young people and by adults. It doesn't matter the size of the community or the remoteness of the community. This is a substance that is very much part of our communities, and government now has an opportunity to take a different approach to dealing with it.

That being said, there is a wide degree of variation in the communities we spoke to in how they wanted cannabis to be managed in their communities. It ran the full gamut from "let's open a cannabis store and have the revenues come to our local government" to "let's ban it altogether because we don't want it here."

It was particularly rewarding to speak to young people. In some of the communities, the young people didn't say very much, but they did attend, and they would speak privately with committee members. Hearing their expertise on the subject, again, just shows how real it is for our communities. Young people in particular understand this drug and have a great deal of experience with it, which is exactly why we need to address it with a legal framework that seeks to curb the abuse of the substance by young people, as there is significant evidence to show that the health effects can be concerning for those under the age of 25.

All in all, I believe that the committees did their due diligence and not only researched the issues extensively, but combined that research with their own personal expertise and extensive public consultations in 16 of our communities and six of our schools. That leads me to believe that the improvements that the committee has proposed to the bill that are contained within this report come from a place of good credibility, and they are not kind of offside opinions that Members are bringing forward that are not representative of the people we serve. They are very much near and dear to the hearts and minds of Northerners and to communities across our great territory.

Now, this report contains several recommendations that address the policy issues. As much as people wanted the legislation to reflect the unique needs of their community, we found, time and time again, more of the issues that came up were around resourcing a legal cannabis regime. Who is going to enforce it?

We were in Tuktoyaktuk, which is one of the communities we visited. The community told us, "Well, we haven't had a bylaw officer in a decade or more. How are we going to enforce any bylaws we put in place or any restrictions we put in place at the community level?"

We heard concerns around public smoking. Who do we turn to? Are environmental health officers, which

is something the government has proposed, really enough to manage the smoking prohibitions?

For the Motor Vehicle Act amendments that have zero tolerance for impaired driving, who is going to enforce those? What we understood at the time of our consultations was that the RCMP would be integral to that effort, and drug recognition experts would be required to ascertain impairment, but there are only two of those currently located in G division, which is the RCMP regiment that polices the Northwest Territories.

These were the kinds of concerns around spending, and also, any revenues that are raised by government vis-a-vis the sale and taxation of cannabis, where do those revenues go? That was a question we were asked often, and although we didn't have the answer then, the suggestion that we received is that it should go back to the communities. It should go back to public health. It should go to public health research, and that, too, was an opinion that was widely shared across the Northwest Territories.

The substance of what we are debating today is largely those policy issues that were outside of the legislation, but, nonetheless, of crucial importance to Northerners, and I look forward to having the debate on the floor in these Committee of the Whole proceedings. I am sure my honourable friends on both sides of the House will have plenty to say, and I look forward to the successful adoption of our recommendations because, again, they come from a place of sincerity and a place of good evidence and solid engagement with the people whom we serve. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. More general comments than opening comments. Mr. Thompson, do you have further opening comments?

**MR. THOMPSON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as my honourable colleague from Kam Lake identified, I was the chair who got the opportunity to travel with Members from Deh Cho, Yellowknife North, Hay River North, and Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. We hit nine communities, three schools. Of those nine communities, six of them were part of the original discussion that the government did the consultation process through.

We also, like I said, hit three schools; Deninu, Diamond Jenness, and St. Pats. It was very interesting, and listening to the youth, I guess the biggest thing is we were talking about a difference, you know, raising the age to 25, and the youth were very clear in telling us that no matter what age you're going to do it, if they're going to want it, they're going to find it. So we listened to that and

we took it very clear that's what they're telling us, they're going to have access to it.

One big challenge that we heard, and this here was prevalent, I guess, in all the communities is: here goes the government, again, giving us an challenge, and issue, i.e. cannabis, and no resources to do it. I'm not saying the territorial government; this is the federal government that's handed this down to us, and we heard that very clear. You know, you're giving us an issue with no resources to it.

The honourable Member from Kam Lake identified a number of those things, there. I'm not going to expand on those, except that this report reflects the people of the Northwest Territories' concerns. There were 16 communities, and this is their voice, this is what people said to us. There were written submissions to us.

The committees north and south did a really good job of consulting, listening to people, educating people, even though we weren't trying to; it wasn't our responsibility, but we ended up educating people on the bill, and as I said, with a little bit of humour, I learned more about cannabis than I ever thought. CBD and THC were letters of the alphabet to me at the very beginning, but when it was all said and done, I understood that it was related to cannabis.

I would like to thank the people who came out to our meetings. We had huge turnouts in all the communities. We had very traditional communities, like Samba K'e, Lutselk'e, and Gameti, which are very isolated. As well, we went to Fort Liard, which really has an impact because of their closeness to BC, so I would like to thank the committee, and, again, everybody's commitment to working here. At this point in time I will turn the floor back to you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Thank you to the chairs for their opening comments. I will now open the floor to general comments, just reminding Members that there are eight recommendations that we will be speaking to in detail. First, I have Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I do want to start with some general remarks. It was a real privilege to travel to seven communities outside Yellowknife as part of this joint effort. I went to Ulukhaktok; that's the first time that I've had a chance to go to that community. We were made welcome in all the communities, and I want to certainly thank everyone for their assistance with the travel and logistics, and especially those who provided their input during the process.

I'm not going to speak at length about what's in the report, but I do want to note that this does represent a fundamental change for many of our communities. This was a decision that was made by the federal government that we really didn't have a lot of input into. This was not about promoting legalization, or even legalization; that decision has already been made. This was about reviewing the bill that Cabinet had prepared.

I've been on the public record saying that we're not going to get it right. It's the first time we've tried this; we're not going to get it right. So that's why I think one of the most important provisions in the changes that the committee put forward was to require a mandatory review of the bill and its implementation into the next Assembly. That's going to be a very important review when it takes place.

We had to grapple with some very difficult issues. There's a divided opinion out there, and I do support the work of the committee, except for three important matters that I want to speak about briefly. I don't think it was a good idea to get rid of the advisory committee provision in the bill. I think that that committee could serve some legitimate purposes and I would have preferred that the committee itself would have been reconfigured, and membership would have been specified, and so on. So I didn't really support that, but I understand the rationale for the committee recommendation and the changes that were made to the bill.

Most importantly, though, I believe that the consumption age for cannabis should be 21 years of age. We heard from people in communities wanting the age to be 21 and/or higher. We heard from the medical community evidence that use of cannabis by youth can affect brain development. We had some interesting discussions and debates internally about this. I do note for the record that there are eight states in the US that have legalized cannabis; their consumption age is all set at 21, and the evidence that's been provided to me by medical professionals and their associations is that, in the US, certainly where there's a minimum age of 21 for purchase of tobacco, it has reduced adult smoking, smoking-related deaths, and has reduced youth smoking as well. That's with regard to tobacco, and I believe that the same trends would occur with cannabis use if we had a higher age limit. So I support a higher age limit. That's not what the committee recommended, but that's where I'm coming from, and I'll be bringing forward a motion that might help to deal with that issue in our proceedings tomorrow.

The other matter that I wish the committee had dealt with a little more clearly was the issue of plebiscites. It's my view that, where a cannabis store has been operating in a community and issues or concerns arise, that a community should

still have the ability to influence the use of cannabis in their own community. I have prepared, and I'll bring it forward tomorrow, a motion to allow communities to enter into a plebiscite process for a restricted quantity system, even if there is an operating store with some other conditions that I'll go through tomorrow when we discuss that.

I do want to go on record as supporting the other recommendations made by the committee, and I'll be speaking to each of them as they come forward. I want to thank all of my colleagues for their very hard work in doing this. We did this under incredible pressure and timelines, and I think it's a good piece of work, and I look forward to the discussion and debate that's going to take place over the next couple of days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I, too, would like to share my thoughts on this report that's been tabled in the House, the Cannabis Legalization Regulation and Implementation Act, or Bill 6, which is the effort of this government to legalize marijuana or cannabis. I think we all understood that the draft legislation that we were given was the result of the federal initiative to legalize marijuana at the national level.

Going forward, the understanding that we had, for myself, was that the federal government had initiated this whole process, and we're basically following suit as the territorial government for the Northwest Territories. So, in that exercise, our task was to review the draft legislation, or Bill 6, and consult with the public, which meant that we travelled extensively. I travelled with my colleagues who travelled to the southern communities, and was chaired by my colleague Mr. Shane Thompson. The communities that we travelled into were a majority Indigenous people. Of course, we are challenged with the high rates of social issues, as well, whether it be crime rates or alcohol-related charges or offences, and, of course, we had a mixture of modern and traditional values that continue throughout our communities in the NWT.

I serve four communities, and those four communities are mostly situated on the highway system. We have access to one liquor store. One of my communities that I serve has a prohibition in place, which means that there is no alcohol allowed in the community. The leaders in that community explained why, why they put a place of prohibition in their community. They spoke very clearly and passionately because they care for their people. The young people who were in the audience, and the young people were saying that, well, this is 2018, and that the use of cannabis and marijuana is

widely accepted. It is a matter of time that it is going to come into our communities.

The reality is that we already have cannabis and marijuana. It is used in our communities already. The stage was set for us to go into those communities, consult with people, hear people, and, in some instances, it was very passionate. In some instances, we didn't have the interest of people coming out to our meetings. As a result of that, we have this report that we tabled in the House, those recommendations. Key recommendations that are in response to the draft legislation before us, and those key recommendations basically talk about improvements, how this committee feels that we have reflected upon the opinions that we have heard, and the concerns that we have heard from people.

I look forward to those discussions and debate that will likely happen within the House in the next couple of days. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Anyone further for opening comments? Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like many of the Members, it was great to visit the communities and hear the communities' concerns on the bill. For many of the communities that we visited, the residents, this is the first time they heard that legalization was going to be pushed forward for July 1<sup>st</sup>, was the date we are given, possibly as early as June 21<sup>st</sup>, but the date we were given was July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Many residents were asking us, why are you forcing this upon us, like it was committee that was bringing this forward, and we had to make it quite clear that this is a direction that was given to the Department of Justice from the federal government, and the federal government should have taken some onus on this as well. Gone out to the communities, done some sort of public consultation. I know it was an election promise, but this is a huge step to undertake and then just to pass it on to the provinces and territories to see it through, and without adequate resources, as mentioned by my colleagues here.

There are a lot of unanswered questions that, most likely, we are going to be the ones who are going to have to pay for things. Some of the things that were asked for were public consultation, like public awareness. Going into the communities, speaking to the youth, even going into the schools and speaking. What we heard was, what people want to see is more education for youth, whether it is taught in the schools or having someone hired like a youth coordinator to go around and educate young people on the effects of marijuana to their health.

As mentioned, marijuana could affect the brain up to the age of 25, and many of our residents felt that that should be the age where it becomes legal, is 25. Then again, on the other side, we will have the black market targeting that age group because that's pretty much the only way they are going to be able to make money, and there are also concerns out there already that people can mail order, whether it's shard or other drugs like this in the mail. It is happening today. That's what people want to see in our communities, more awareness; but then again, there is also a cost added to that. The federal government needs to ensure that they work with our government to make sure that we have adequate resources to fund this.

Some of the other things that we've heard was, because it was so new to the communities at the time, the communities that we visited, they were sort of leery of having a place in the community where they could purchase marijuana, whether it was some thought possibly in the Northern or the Co-op, or somebody might start up in the community. A good example is one of the communities that we visited which was actually in my riding, the community leader brought this concern forward. Since then, they have changed their mind after speaking with their council. With other drugs that are finding their way into the community, they feel that it actually might be safer to have a place in the community now.

The more the communities learn about this, maybe a little more willingness to have those changes in the communities. That's one thing that I mentioned, was, these are the early stages. We have one more month here before this is going to be legal, and over time, I'm sure we are going to see a lot of changes to this. Like most legislation, which is very hard to make changes to them, I'm hoping that this is not one of those cases, that it's a little easier to make changes to the legislation, because it's so early here. Those are just some of the concerns that we heard.

Some people are very open to it. We had some people in our meetings who wanted to start up their own business, and seeing that opportunity. In our briefings, what our Minister wanted to see, from what I took away from it, anyway, was it is better to wait to see actually what kind of revenue is going to be generated out of this. I could see that we don't want to see our small businesses set up to fail. We want to make sure it is adequate to provide this service.

I have mixed feelings myself about this, but like I mentioned, it's forced upon us here, so we are just here to deal with it. We had a lot of good conversations in the communities. We actually went until about nine o'clock in some cases here, a good four to five hours. A lot of questions, we were

forced to answer as best as we could without making any commitments. All we could commit to was bringing these recommendations forward, and I look forward to seeing how everything works out here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Next, Mr. Nakimayak.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I won't reiterate what my colleagues have said. I know both committees have done a lot of good, hard work in the southern part of the territory as well as the northern part. I was able to travel to the northern part.

Being from a small community, growing up, you definitely see the effects of alcohol as they become more prevalent in those communities and more accessible. With marijuana, I believe that this younger generation that lives in the smaller communities and all over, I guess, across the territory, are pretty much adapted to it, and I think education on behalf of elders and youth is important.

Giving Indigenous groups time and working with Indigenous groups in the territory is very key. Some of my colleagues mentioned research. Indigenous groups in specific regions can get very accurate results working with the health centres and with the Indigenous governments that work in the region to get better results and, as well, to make better discussions down the road. As well, there are economic opportunities for Indigenous groups. I hope that the federal government and the territorial government will actually work with Indigenous groups to sell and to ensure that is brought out as best as possible in our region specific to where we live.

Other than that, I don't have much to add to what my colleagues have said, more or less. As for age, I think 19 is an appropriate age in the territory. Some may agree; some may disagree; but this is what we have going on with alcohol. The black market, as some colleagues mentioned, is going to thrive, but some other things like that may fall through the cracks that we need to pay attention to.

With our enforcements, I know that, in smaller communities, the bylaws are ill-equipped to work with this, and I think we need to rely on the police force more and more. I think that's something we need to educate our youth and our hamlets and our community governments on.

As well, work with other governments. Mr. Chair, there are a lot of other governments that work in the territory, Indigenous governments that we need to take into account, as well, and look at the capacity there and help build that as well into the

communities. That's all I have to say right now, Mr. Chair. Thanks.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I travelled with the southern group. I guess the main thing that I just want to touch on a bit would be the education or research aspect of cannabis.

We went to three schools. We talked to high school students in three different schools, as you know, Mr. Chair, and it appeared as though the students themselves were fairly up to speed on cannabis. It is very easy for students to do research, not like when we were in high school. We had to go through a lot of books in order to educate ourselves. Now students see a lot of things on the Internet, and it is easier for them to go to a link to learn about things like cannabis.

There still is a lot of education to be had and a lot of education that will come as a result of legalization because they will be able to do research. It is a lot easier to research a legal product than it is to try to accumulate research on illegal products. I think that is an important aspect of it.

I think that cannabis, marijuana, or whatever we wish to call it, is definitely in the communities. I am not sure that the legalization of cannabis will increase the usage. I am not talking about individual uses; I am talking about the number of people who choose to smoke cannabis. I am not sure it will increase. I guess we will wait and see what happens, but it appears as though the one thing that the students wanted was some education.

Now there is an opportunity for government or other organizations to research and study the effects of the usage of cannabis, and the different levels of usage, also. If there is chronic usage of anything, it's not good for you. Even with alcohol, some people have no issue with alcohol. Some people can go home and have a drink almost every day, or every day, and they're not affected by it, because that's what it is, a drink, and some people can't stop at one.

If marijuana is a product where individuals, I'm not necessarily talking about the population as a whole, but individuals, are unable to stop at one point, then they are going to be spending all of their money on that, and it could adversely affect the family unit, no question about it.

The other thing that we found that was interesting is the economy of it. The economy with the grow operations of it, and even the retail of marijuana. People don't have a really good sense of it,

because, so far, all of the people making the money are making money illegally, so they're not reporting it.

At some point, when the reporting becomes mandatory that, in order to sell marijuana, you're going to have to get a licence, and once you sell marijuana, you're going to be taxed on it, by the amount of taxes paid out, it will indicate how much marijuana would work itself into the economy. I am not 100 per cent sure, but I know that there are countries that were in deep economic trouble, and then recognized that it appeared as though they should be in worse condition than they actually were, and the reason was because of the illegal trade of cannabis or marijuana or products from that, whether it be hash oil, butter, whatever you make out of it, food that has cannabis in it, but that's kind of like an economy. It is capable of driving an economy.

In the NWT, we're not a huge population, but we don't really know how much it plays into the economy. We know that there is money in there, and there is money changing hands. We know that for sure. I think everybody knows that, but how much would be something that we are going to know. Probably a year after cannabis becomes legal, we are going to know how much it plays into the economy. I think, at that point, individuals would have more research and more information about exactly what the impacts would be, positive impacts on themselves as businesspeople, if they were to get into the retail or the growing of cannabis.

Also, on a personal note, just from my own history in the Northwest Territories, what I have seen was that marijuana was a pretty good product when you compare it with other types of products that are out there, and I am talking about alcohol. In my hometown, it was a pretty rough place when I was a young man growing up in Fort Resolution, and there was a lot of alcohol. There were a lot of issues. There were a lot of serious issues. There were a lot of deaths as a result of alcohol, and a lot of those people replaced the usage of alcohol with smoking pot. I would rather be hanging around a bunch of pot smokers than a bunch of drinkers any day. It is a lot safer. That is what I think people have seen in the community.

A lot of individuals are talking about the fear of mixing the two, and things like that. That doesn't really happen. You have a drinker. He's a drinker, and he's going to party. They are going to go to the bar. They are going to drink. They are going to drink at home, do whatever. It does become an unsafe situation. They do create unsafe situations. The North Slave Correctional is filled with people who have committed a crime while consuming alcohol or as a result of having consumed too much

alcohol. The same with down in Hay River with the South Slave Correctional Centre.

Sometimes, when you really think about it, and if it displaces alcohol, then I think it could be a good substitute if people choose to pick up the pipe or whatever as opposed to drinking alcohol. Some people just can't handle alcohol, but most of the people who have been in trouble and things because of alcohol have smoked marijuana and are doing a lot better.

I think, when it becomes a legal product, this fear about how marijuana is going to be adding to the problem of alcohol I don't think is there, but you never know. We will find out in a year. My guess is that, if it displaces the amount of alcohol, maybe the alcohol sales will go down. Through the revolving fund, we will see that we are not recovering as much money in the revolving fund from alcohol as we would be from marijuana. Wait and see, I guess. I think that is all I have to say. I think I have said enough, actually, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. We will take a brief recess and reconvene in 15 minutes.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. We were hearing general comments on Committee Report 7-18(3), and we will continue with Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank both committees for taking the time to go out on the road and listen to the concerns of leaders, youth, students, elders, and the general public on our cannabis tour. I was involved in the northern group, and it could be said that this society is being modernized to what is here already. As we heard from our previous colleagues' presentations, cannabis really exists in all 33 communities, and, because it's a federally imposed legislation, we are trying to craft this legislation to design the society and the cultures and the aspirations of the people we serve.

Right from the start, we were limited through lack of resources. The evidence of lack of resources really gave us the ability to only go to 16 communities of 33, so, having said that, it only shows that there were limitations right off the start. I think we can all agree that we are trying to serve the best interests of what is best for our communities and within the community, whether it's the elder, the middle-aged, the working class, the students, the teenagers, and the infants. Some of the things that we heard, I really cannot add more to what was already said other than we are entitled to our own opinions on

this delicate situation, but some of the respected elders that I have talked to, on and off the committee tour, all agree that, yes, cannabis is here, and what we need is more resources for education.

As a government, we have employees. There is an impairment factor to consuming cannabis, and R and D research does not really dictate what that impairment level is, and some job sites currently support zero tolerance. Is that the zero tolerance of this government and the employees we have?

So those are my only few comments that I have, and I look forward to moving on and allowing us to make forward the adequate resources so that we can reach out to all 33 communities. Unfortunately, our resources only allowed us to visit one of the five communities that I represent. I am hoping that we would not determine ourselves that this is enough, we pass legislation, however it's going to turn out, but we have an action plan through the education of cannabis as a carry-forward for several years to minimize the impacts of cannabis on and off the job site and from our homes, from our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Next on the list, we have Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also travelled with the Members who travelled in the southern group. It was a very eye-opening experience, and we learned a lot.

This is a monumental undertaking, and I think that that really hit me as we were going to the communities. You only lift a prohibition on a substance less than once in a generation. I always like to strive for excellence in everything we do here, but with this being so important, it was very important to me that we get it right. Unfortunately, it looks like, to paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld, "You legalize cannabis with the legislation you have, not the legislation you want." I think we could have done a much better job with this, and that was really borne out by our community visits.

A lot of what we heard wasn't contemplated by the legislation that was given to us. There was a strong desire in the communities for different methods of purchasing and selling cannabis that this bill just doesn't even consider and doesn't have the framework to undertake. There was a desire for licensed premises that this bill doesn't have the framework to undertake. If the department had gone out and done some more consultation the way the committee did, I think we could have gotten a much better bill, and this is something that we can use to learn in the future.

The highlights of the tour, I think, what I saw the most of was a desire for education. From the youth to the elders, people wanted to be educated about cannabis and its effects. I think, as other Members have commented, with it being legal now, we will be able to get some better education out there. When it's an illegal substance, I think the message is abstinence. "You abstain from this." I think, now that it is legal, there will be more of a focus on getting legitimate information out from a harm reduction perspective.

Education was one of the highlights. The other one was the desire to use this opportunity to create a legitimate economy, especially in places where there is not much of an economy. We heard that especially from young people, and that is really what hit me. There are young people in these communities who want to stay in the community and want some sort of a reason to stay, economically. Like I said, the legislation doesn't contemplate that.

This also highlighted to me some existing inadequacies of our system, especially in terms of mental healthcare and addictions treatment. I do appreciate what the government does when it comes to addictions treatment. One of the committees toured the treatment facilities in the south that the GNWT has contracts with, and I think they are fantastic and they do a great job, but there still is a desire for northern culturally-appropriate treatment options.

People were very concerned about abusing cannabis and abusing alcohol, and they are often lumped together, but I think that the issue isn't treating the addiction. The way I see it is: why do people feel like they need to get high or get drunk? Why do people need to feel like they need to get out of their head? There is something underlying that. Drugs aren't the problem; they are a symptom of a problem. In every community we went to, there was a sense that treating that underlying problem isn't easily done, because there aren't the resources for it.

I hope that this isn't just legalized and forgotten about. I hope that we remember that and use it as a chance to really put a focus on mental health. We talk a lot about infrastructure, but we have to focus on our human infrastructure as well, I think. Those are my takeaways from it, and I just wanted to make those points before we get into the details. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next on the list, we have Ms. Green, then Mr. Vanthuyne. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this prohibition could have ended in one of two ways:

the government could simply have walked away from the prohibition and allowed the situation to be unregulated; and the other possibility was to go for maximum regulation. To no one's surprise, both the federal and the territorial governments have gone for maximum regulation, so that we are looking at a system where cannabis is regulated to the maximum extent of alcohol and tobacco jointly. Now people are worried about how there will be resources in place to make all of these regulations stick, and that is a valid question: how are all those regulations going to stick?

What struck me most about the tour was the generational divide. Students wondered why we were there. They consume cannabis, not necessarily chronically, but occasionally. They would appreciate a safe supply, which they won't have access to as minors. They could not see what all the fuss was about. The elders were very frightened about the prospect of legalization because they recall the legalization of alcohol. They have seen the devastation that that has done to their communities, and they are concerned that this devastation will be repeated by cannabis. Then we interacted with parents who were very scared for their children. They are concerned that they will become chronic users and that they will suffer poor health effects, poor outcomes as a result of being chronic users.

One of the other ironies we experienced was that people who were in favour of prohibition were also in favour of profiting from this product. That is a very, as I say, ironic situation, where people, even in the smallest communities, were interested in having cannabis stores. Their argument was that there is an economy there now, so they might as well make it a legal economy and benefit from it in order that those profits may be turned to treatment.

What is clear is that, if we go with the liquor commission system, which I know the government is promoting, then I don't think that we have much hope of disrupting the illegal market in the small communities. I think the dealers who are there now will be there afterwards, and they will continue to sell to whoever their customers are now. I don't know whether that is good or bad, but I think that that is just going to be the reality of it.

I don't agree with the government's attempts to try to regulate the market rather than having the market regulate itself. The Minister said to us the other day that there would be a cannabis store on every corner, like a coffee shop. Well, we don't have coffee shops on every corner. We're not going to have cannabis stores on every corner. The market will regulate itself. If there is no business case for all of these cannabis stores, there won't be a whole bunch of cannabis stores.



Where I came to on this whole bill was the importance of harm reduction, particularly for youth. Youth are vulnerable in this situation, obviously. They are currently at the mercy of dealers who might be selling them contaminated products that do them much more harm than they ever anticipated. I think that we have done a poor job generally of educating youth about illegal substances. I understand that they are illegal, but I think the fact is that many youth do use cannabis and alcohol without any acknowledgement of what the risks are, and that is an area that we really need to pay attention to.

The report tries to roll all of these different issues together, and I really appreciate the staff support we have received to digest the many hearings, written submissions, and other ways that people have told us what they think we should be doing with this legislation.

I appreciate the diligence of my colleagues in going to all of the different communities that we went to, I was with the south group, and to sit and listen until the last person was finished telling us what they think. Some of those communities I haven't seen in 10 years, and I was really struck by how little has changed in them in 10 years, which is good or bad, depending on your point of view. In any case, I appreciate the efforts that people made to reach out to us and tell us what they think of this legislation. I look forward to the discussion about the rest of the report today. Thank you.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I might be the last to speak on this today in general comments, but I think it is still important to repeat the common themes and messages. As the chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, I was not a member of the joint standing committee that worked together to review Bill 6.

However, I have taken a keen interest in the work of my Regular Member colleagues on the review of this proposed legislation. I have done this as the Member for Yellowknife North on behalf of my constituents, who care about the impacts that cannabis legalization will have on their community. I have also paid close attention to this work as the chair of EDE, who wants to see this initiative translate into business opportunities for Northern entrepreneurs and will clearly support economic diversification as outlined in our mandate.

Mr. Chair, before I speak more specifically to the findings of the joint committees, I want to start by acknowledging the fine work that they have done to undertake a comprehensive review of this extensive

omnibus bill under a very tight timeframe. Given the circumstances, I think they have done a very good job of engaging with Northerners and of reflecting their feedback in policy recommendations contained in this report and a series of motions to amend the bill, which are designed to make this legislation the best that it can be.

I understand that we will be discussing proposed motions to amend Bill 6 tomorrow. For today, I will limit my remarks more generally to the committee's report. As impressed as I am with the work of the joint committee, similar to my colleague from Hay River North, I am somewhat unimpressed with the effort the government put into the development of Bill 6. I have reviewed the "what we heard" report, which indicates that a slim majority of respondents support the liquor commission model. I don't believe a slim majority constitutes a mandate for action, however. I can't help but feel that the GNWT had already decided on the liquor commission model out of the sense of panic and the demanding timeframe for legalization set by the federal government, and out of the desire to retain full control of any profits generated by cannabis sales.

Mr. Chair, I will have more to say on the GNWT's work to develop Bill 6 tomorrow when we discuss further motions to amend Bill 6. Suffice it to say for now that I hope further improvements can be made to this bill before it receives final assent.

Mr. Chair, I mentioned the effort of the joint committees to make this legislation the best it can be. I have been paying close attention to the lessons learned by Colorado in their move to legalize cannabis. Their situation is admittedly different than ours, given that they are a jurisdiction producing legal cannabis in the midst of other jurisdictions where it is still illegal. Nonetheless, there are valuable lessons to be learned. One key lesson is that it is very hard to roll back activities and programs related to cannabis legalization once they are authorized by legislation and the legislation is put into force.

On its consultation, the joint committees hear that people support the overall intent of the legalization to minimize and inhibit the illicit black market trade in cannabis. Residents of the Northwest Territories said that, to do this, government needs to make cannabis cheap and plentiful. The failure to do so, whether out of misguided morality that still feels cannabis is taboo or by a motivation to control the revenues that cannabis sales will generate, a tight rein on the sales of cannabis will only serve to promote and support the existing illicit cannabis trade.

That is why it is vitally important to get the legislation right from the outset. The Colorado experience demonstrates that, once the legislation

is up and running, there are certain genes that can't be put back in the bottle. I believe that the liquor commission model, which will see cannabis retailing only in a maximum of seven existing liquor stores in six communities, is, in fact, one of those genes. It will never be put back in the bottle.

The joint committees heard broad support for private sector cannabis stores and the potential entrepreneurial and job opportunities that will come with them, especially in our smaller communities, where every job is desperately needed. This reflects what I heard personally from my constituents. The people of Yellowknife North also want the opportunity to get into the retail cannabis sector at the ground floor, not two years from now when the liquor stores have solidified their hold on the market. This was voiced strongly by the Yellowknife and NWT Chamber of Commerce when the joint committees held their Yellowknife consultation.

The joint committees noted that a regulatory framework for licensed establishments is outside the scope of the bill. This is unfortunate. It is also a demonstration of government's short-sightedness in failing to look upon legalization as a potential economic opportunity for Northerners, as outlined in our mandate. I believe the bill should have provided for this type of establishment, which would provide a legal place for people to consume cannabis in a regulated setting, away from minors. This may not be an opportunity that is of interest to all communities, but I can assure you there are businesspeople here in the capital who would have welcomed the opportunity to explore this as a potential venture.

I remain hopeful that all Members, including Cabinet, will give full consideration to this opportunity now as we debate this bill, and not two years from now, when the trenches will have been dug so deep we can't get out.

Today, I understand that the committee chairs will be moving seven substantive motions related to policy recommendations on Bill 6. I support these motions, which, among other things, would require the GNWT to develop a fully costed plan for the implementation of Bill 6 to form an interdepartmental working group to prepare for the future regulation of cannabis-based and high-potency products and licensed establishments for cannabis consumption, and which would require the GNWT to develop economic development programming to support northern entrepreneurship related to cannabis sales and production. This is the kind of comprehensive policy planning and development that northern residents need and deserve as the country moves closer to legalization. Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. It appears we have concluded general comments. Mr. Blake somehow made it back onto the list. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one thing I forgot to mention: it was really surprising that the RCMP didn't really know their role in all of this. It is really surprising. They should have been one of the first ones to know what their role is in all of this.

The other thing was: communities, especially Tsiigehtchic, one of the communities I represent, they were really concerned that more onus is going to be put on the bylaw to enforce a lot of these bylaws or rules that are set aside for the communities, like smoking in public places. The bylaws will most likely be the ones having to police this. That is more added resources and funding that is going to need to be given to those communities, whether it is to hire another bylaw officer or do more training in this field here. I just wanted to make sure that I raised that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. It is my understanding that the chairs will now be moving a series of motions. For those following along at home, the motions relate to the recommendations found in the report. The first recommendation is on page 18, and they continue through to the end of the document. Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 51-18(3):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION AND  
REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT - FULLY  
COSTED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN,  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop a fully costed implementation plan for Bill 6, Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Implementation Act, including multi-demographic public education, enforcement planning, and expected cannabis revenues;

And further, that this plan be returned to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and the Standing Committee on Social Development for review prior to legalization day;

And furthermore, that the final plan be made available to the public. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion on the floor. The motion has been distributed. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the biggest concerns, as I mentioned in my opening comments, is how cannabis, the regulation scheme, is going to be resourced and whether not, and my honourable friend from Mackenzie Delta just mentioned this, whether or not communities are going to have to pony up cash from limited community-level resources to pay for new regulatory officers or inspectors like bylaw officers. The RCMP are concerned, as my honourable friend also mentioned. They do not believe, the conversations I had, there is some skepticism whether or not they have the resources to implement this. So, ensuring that we have proper resources in place to keep communities safe, to understand where the revenues are going to come from, how much they are going to be, and how we can use them to better equip the public with knowledge and tools to keep their communities safe is of paramount importance.

I was disappointed to see that there was no cannabis spending plan in the last operations and maintenance budget, and further disappointed that the supplementary appropriations that we debated yesterday also did not seem to include clear and costed cannabis-related expenditures. So this motion calls on the government to bring forward a fully costed implementation plan before legalization day, and it is, again, borne out of the consultations we did with communities, and it is an attempt to allay their concerns that they will not be left out in the cold when the laws are passed and these regulations require new funding. So I hope to see my colleagues support this motion. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Question has been called. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I support this motion. I have been asking for this kind of information for over a year from our Cabinet colleagues. I raised it during business plans, and we still do not have anything. The effect of this motion is to ask that that plan be developed and given back to the standing committees. Look, I recognize that this is something new and that it's evolving, but, if you do not even have a game plan, how are we going to do it? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. To the motion. I will allow the mover to close debate. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I think this is an important piece of the puzzle that we

need to resolve. I would like to ask for a recorded vote. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for the Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: nine in favour, zero opposed, six abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Anything further on this committee report? Mr. Thompson.

#### COMMITTEE MOTION 52-18(3): COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING COMMITTEE REVIEW ON GOVERNMENT OPERATION AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT – CANNABIS AND ALCOHOL HEALTH AND SAFETY EDUCATION, CARRIED

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop curricula to deliver evidence-based health and safety education respecting both cannabis and alcohol, through the territorial education system. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. During our consultation, and especially going into the schools, when we were talking about the education

system and getting this material information out there, as some of our colleagues here said, you know, the students were well-informed, but it was based on the Internet and that. Then, when we asked the question in trying to get a good clear direction of it, they basically said that this was not part of the education system. Alcohol and drugs were not part of the education system, and they all said that they should be. It was really interesting listening to the students. They said they would love to see this in the system, evidence-based on the process, so this is where the motion is coming from. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to request a recorded vote, as well, please.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

#### RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for the Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (MS. KAY):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: 10 in favour, zero opposed, six abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Testart.

#### COMMITTEE MOTION 53-18(3): COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING COMMITTEE REVIEW ON GOVERNMENT OPERATION AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT – INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON REGULATION OF CANNABIS-BASED PRODUCTS AND LICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS, CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories form an interdepartmental working group to prepare for the future regulation of cannabis-based products, including high-potency cannabis products and licensed establishments for cannabis consumption. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion on the floor. The motion has been distributed in the motion packages, which actually include all the recommendations. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As our report notes, the committee worked with the government to amend the bill to remove the provisions for a cannabis advisory council, as there was no clear indication of what it would be used for and there was a concern that it would allow an unelected body to weigh in on policy decisions that are more properly vested in the standing committee in our unique consensus system. However, there still is need for an internal government approach to future cannabis-based products, high-potency cannabis products, and licensed establishments for cannabis consumption.

As we have already heard in debate, the scope of the bill did not allow the standing committee to amend the bill to allow for cannabis lounges, and that has left us in a predicament where there are extensive regulations on where cannabis can be consumed publicly, but no legal place aside from your private property to do so. So it is the hope, by establishing a working group, that the GNWT will be in a better position to weigh in on these decisions, to take the time to develop how they are going to work, especially in regard to edibles, which are coming in 2019, and high-potency cannabis products, which many jurisdictions that have legalized cannabis have also brought under their regulations, as the existence of these products can have serious human health effects if they are not properly controlled. First, the committee hopes that this recommendation will carry and that the government will work to establish this group. That concludes my comments on this motion. However, I would like to ask for a recorded vote at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I will support this motion, but this is exactly the kind of task that could have been assigned to an advisory committee, had the committee been given the proper mandate and membership and so on.

You know, I served on the Waste Reduction and Recovery Advisory Committee to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources for 10 years. I chaired it for a good part of that, as well. It was made up of a number of representatives with expertise in various areas, and it did provide, I think, good advice to the Minister. I think it has also allowed for the waste reduction and recycling efforts to improve in the Northwest Territories over a period of time.

This is the kind of thing that should have been given to an advisory committee; but, given that, I will still support the idea of a working group. It would have been my preference to have had an advisory committee to allow for representation outside of the government on such a working group. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is an important recommendation. We are describing cannabis as a recreational product, and yet we have set up the regulation, as I said in my opening remarks, so that it's not possible for people to consume it in a recreational setting. They're told as well it's not advisable for them to consume it around their children, which I appreciate, but the fact is that, if we're going to legalize the recreational substance, then we need to authorize recreational places to consume it. My hope is that this will be a primary concern for this group, this interdepartmental working group, that they figure out how to make recreational consumption in public places possible. Thank you.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have a little difficulty supporting this motion because, in our community visits, I didn't hear that communities wanted licensed establishments. Actually, there are two people who kind of felt that that encouraged or maybe sent the wrong message to our youth, which I see where they're coming from on this. Maybe further down the line this may be all right, but for now, I find it difficult to support this one because of what I heard in the communities. You know, it may be different here in Yellowknife, but

the smaller communities feel that this is an issue. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the motion, Mr. Nakimayak.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with the previous speaker. I have a hard time supporting this, as this recommendation could be easily put into the following one, and it would take care of the same thing. I think the differences between the communities and the capital and other regional centres are very different, and I think we need to respect that there are many professionals who are working on this, I'm sure very hard right now, and I think mixing these two together would make more sense than having three and four together. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. To the motion. Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a problem with this motion here. Consulting with the four bands through the Sahtu Dene Council here in my area, I know they're interested in the commercial side of privatization, but given their interest in the terms of reference that may be developed for this working group, this may defeat the initiative. At the same time, what is going to be discussed tomorrow in supporting education and a timeframe allowing education? So I see their wishes, siding in my discussions with them, compromising or having difficulty with this motion here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** I'd like to close debate, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate, I certainly appreciate my honourable friends sharing the thoughts of the communities that they represent; however, I would like to point out that this motion does not call for the act to be changed to allow for licensed establishments for cannabis consumption, nor does it call for including high-potency cannabis in the act, nor does it call for edibles. All this motion is calling for is an interdepartmental working group to prepare for future regulations. Of course, this working group could produce advice that says, "Do not allow for licensed establishments," or it could go the other way, but to have an expert body within the GNWT to undertake this work and to provide advice to government and to provide advice to the standing committees, I think, is very important.

So for my colleagues who do have concerns around licensed establishments, I just want to reassure them that this motion does not call for their implementation; it merely calls for a working group to assist government and Members of this

House in the future on these sorts of issues. If you could take that into consideration when you cast your vote, and please consider giving your support to this working group, so we can all be better prepared to deal with the future of legal cannabis in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Testart. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for the Deh Cho, the Member for Yellowknife North.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, 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 Nunakput.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: seven in favour, zero opposed, nine abstentions. The motion is carried.

-Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 54-18(3):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING  
COMMITTEE REVIEW ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATION AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION  
AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT –  
INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP ON  
CANNABIS-RELATED ENFORCEMENT  
PLANNING,  
CARRIED

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories form an inter-agency working group to address cannabis-related enforcement planning. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There is a motion on the floor. The motion has been distributed and is in order. To the motion. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Throughout our travels, we heard the issue about enforcement being an issue, whether it was members of the public, community councils, or even enforcement officers. So they were asking these questions and, by having this committee, we can ensure that the new laws are clearly communicated and that we would be able to encourage discussion and information-sharing and provide additional supports to communities with limited resources, i.e. the smaller communities that I'm representing in my riding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to acknowledge the additional information that we did receive from the Minister of Justice on enforcement, and we had a discussion around this in the clause-by-clause review. It does appear that our Cabinet colleagues and their staff have been doing some work to try to clarify the issues around enforcement, but obviously there's still a lot of confusion out there, and that's why I think this is a good idea and I will support it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. To the motion. Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Speaking to this motion here, when I'm talking about the Sahtu land claim, there are elements in the land claim which already exist on an intergovernmental working relationship to achieve these types of concerning issues there for the existing claim corporation which allows for program delivery. In my view, the element towards leading to this already exists. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. McNeely. To the motion. I will allow the mover of the motion to close debate. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to have a recorded vote. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Sahtu.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. The results of the recorded vote are: nine in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 55-18(3):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION  
AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT –  
RECORD SUSPENSION FOR CANNABIS  
POSSESSION OFFENCES,  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the Government of Canada and other government partners to resolve outstanding questions on record suspensions for offences related to cannabis possession. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the issues that was raised quite frequently in the communities was the issue of young people getting charged with cannabis possession charges, and having it serve as a barrier for future employment, for travel, and that the prohibition system has largely set many of our young people out to fail. With the changes made to the record suspension system by the previous federal government, record suspensions are much more time consuming and expensive. It is difficult for everyday citizens who are suffering from relatively minor offences such as cannabis possession to access a record suspension that might allow them access to greater employment opportunities.

With the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in our correctional system, in our justice system, this issue hits very close to home. As a result, it is limiting the futures of many young people. However, the record suspension system is

administered by the federal government, and this government does not have the ability to directly speak to it.

Rather than being prescriptive on how the government approaches these issues, the committees wanted to raise this in a meaningful way that allowed the government to find their own solutions while working with the Government of Canada, and potentially other provinces and territories and Indigenous governments, to ultimately find ways to relieve Northerners of the burden of a cannabis possession record that might be limiting their ability to work at the mines, to work for the government, or any other kind of work, or to travel abroad.

I encourage my colleagues to support this motion so we can work together to find ways to help people who are unduly burdened by low-level criminal records that will be irrelevant after cannabis becomes a legal product moving forward. At the appropriate time, I would like a recorded vote. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Beaulieu, to the motion.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a complex area, and considering we are talking about, I suppose it's the Criminal Code of Canada, and that it would take some doing. That is the reason we are calling for this government to work with the federal government. It is certainly not a simple procedure. It is not a simple procedure, like I said. It will involve more than just a criminal record of an individual who could have a charge or two for possession of marijuana, but then, it's quite possible that individuals have other criminal records. We really have to clearly define which record it is that would be worth a suspension that currently is preventing individuals from obtaining employment.

This is a very focused type of recommendation, and it focuses in on individuals who have one particular type of criminal record, and that being simple possession of marijuana, or other products, cannabis products. It is something that we certainly had a considerable amount of discussion on, and I think it's worthy of an examination for sure by both governments. We're asking our government to work with the federal government to work with those, to remove those barriers for, otherwise, individuals who would be good employees, and who could have a pretty positive impact on our economy.

Many people I know who go through the system, and we have allowed, like income support, for example, have indicated to us that they would pay to have a criminal record suspended for individuals who want to look for work because, in order to get

your records suspended, you have to have meet a certain criteria. There's a time period in which you can't be charged. There is a certain type of charge that you can't get suspended. All of those factors are involved when an individual is looking for work, so this is not really a simple -- it's a recommendation, but it's not a simple work. It is a lot of work. The only way that this committee could think of getting this work done is by asking our government, GNWT, to work with the federal government to look into the records. We're thinking that it may not be a high number. Although complex, it may not be a very high number, but it could be very valuable to people who would get their records suspended through this process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know it came up in the communities, and it was made quite clear to us that we couldn't go back years, say a couple of years back, if somebody got charged for possession while driving or something. It made it quite clear that this starts from July 1<sup>st</sup> onwards, so I'm going to make that clear. I don't see why everybody can't support this one. As I mentioned, it came up in the communities. It wasn't quite clear how we will move forward, so I guess some work needs to be done with the federal government on how they're going to move forward on this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Nakimayak.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some friends who also asked about this. As the previous speaker said, this is something new going in. This is something that maybe should be looked at during a time of a review. I think right now, it would be so costly and so many things in the air that we would kind of be making false promises to people who don't understand as much, possibly.

I know a lot of people who wanted to travel to the States but are prohibited because of marijuana at the border. I think we may become flooded if something like this happens, and people may be flooding from provinces to come to the territory and drain the legal system for something as simple as this. I think a time of review would be more of an adequate time to look at something like this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. To the motion. Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, brought this up in one of the communities, or several of the communities, in trying to educate the

students. We want them to take it seriously, to have a clean abstract before entering into the workforce, and to maintain that, I see this motion supporting that, to do more consultation to have it in plain English straightforward on what it is going to take to have an offence on your abstract. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

#### RECORDED VOTE

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith):** The Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for Sahtu, and the Member for Yellowknife North.

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

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith):** The Member for Nunakput.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those abstaining, please rise.

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, and the Member for Thebacha.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: nine in favour, one opposed, six abstentions. Motion is carried.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 56-18(3):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING  
COMMITTEE REVIEW ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATION AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION  
AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT –  
NORTHERN ENTREPRENEURSHIP RELATED  
TO CANNABIS SALES AND PRODUCTION,  
CARRIED



**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop economic development programming to support northern entrepreneurship related to cannabis sales and production. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Government of the Northwest Territories has several strong and successful programs to support entrepreneurship and economic development opportunities, including the Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development, SEED, Policy.

The government has done some really good stuff and good work on there. This motion here is to encourage the government to repeat that Northerners are eager to pursue the economic benefits of legalization and to target programming addressing cannabis-specific planning and programs that would help local businesses. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You heard me say in my opening comments that I would like to see this initiative, this bill, translate into business opportunities for northern entrepreneurs, and this committee motion supports that.

As the report alludes to, committee heard in a number of communities that they wanted to see the opportunity for economic diversification. A number of the communities are in situations where employment is in dire need. This could be seen as an opportunity to help vet that.

We also understand that this is an opportunity in which we can make cannabis use a little bit safer. If the only avenue that we are going to undertake is selling cannabis through a handful of stores managed by the territorial government, then you can bet that the back channels of illicit sales and black market activities will continue.

The government, I think, can look at this as also the opportunity to generate additional revenues through taxation. The more opportunity that we allow for the market to get into the retail of cannabis, then certainly this is going to become a revenue generator through permits and taxation.

This clearly supports our mandate as a government as it relates to economic diversification, as it relates to support for even manufacturing, and most certainly for small business and entrepreneurs, but

most importantly, this also will have our government develop programming, and that programming will help to further inform and educate those people having an interest. One can envision, potentially, BDIC having specific programming to do just that. For those reasons, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The laws of supply and demand have a particular relevance to illicit substances such as cannabis, or any drug for that matter. Narcotics are easy to produce, especially cannabis. It is a weed; it grows just about anywhere. It is easy to produce, and the price point of cannabis is, in fact, created largely by its illegal status, which has fuelled the profitability for organized crime and low-level dealers to make a living off the sale of illicit cannabis.

To deal with that market, because clearly the demand in the Northwest Territories is very high, as it is across the country, the correct way to disable this market and this illicit trade of cannabis is to control the prices and make it preferable to purchase a regulated source of cannabis for recreational use outside black market channels. The only way that we are going to get there is if we can ensure that the price point is low enough that we can keep the prices down.

Recent economic analysis, which isn't complete because the consumption of cannabis is largely underground, shows that price point as somewhere around \$7.50 on grey market and black market sales. The proposed rule in Canada is at least a starting point of \$10 per gram. Yukon, our neighbours, have announced that it will be \$8 per gram. Our government has not announced anything yet, and my fear is that the wholesale price for cannabis will come in much higher than we can effectively make the price affordable and accessible, and we will continue to see people go to their drug dealers for cannabis.

Economic analysis also shows that there is a lot of price sensitivity toward cannabis from chronic users. As much as a dollar in price difference will keep people from buying legal cannabis. Price controls are crucial. If we are relying on southern wholesalers, which appears to be the case, I am skeptical that we will get the best possible deal, just because our market is so small compared to Alberta, compared to British Columbia, compared to Ontario. If we can't effectively control the wholesale price, then we can't pass that off to consumers without massive subsidies, which this government, quite frankly, can't afford or is not going to prioritize.

How do we get around this? Well, we privatize as much of the components of the retail system and the production system as possible. Production is regulated by the federal government, but that doesn't mean our government can't provide support and be an agent and advocate for people with licences in the Northwest Territories who want to grow and supply our retail market. If the supply chain is short enough to be located in the Northwest Territories, I think we can at least offset some of those costs and keep the wholesale price low, which will, in turn, keep the retail price low, which will get cannabis off the streets and into the regulated market. If we do nothing and the wholesale price remains too high, then nothing is going to change, and that is the worst-case scenario, so we need to do more.

In addition to it being about entrepreneurs and about supporting entrepreneurs who are willing to take a risk, this is about achieving our public safety goals, about ending prohibition and developing a system that works and that works to keep our people safe. It is not going to be easy. It is going to mean taking some risks and a government that is willing to take risks and bet on Northerners. I encourage this government to do exactly that.

Finally, anyone who wants to be either a retailer of cannabis or a producer of cannabis is going to have to take a risk because the market is untested. Right now, people who are looking to do that across this country are being advised to talk to hedge fund managers and investment analysts because there are risks involved, but people are still willing to take these risks. I know that there are people in this community who have licenses from Health Canada to grow cannabis. They are federally licensed to produce medical marijuana. Those people are willing to step up to the plate and get involved in the production here in the North if the government is willing to take them up on that offer and support their ambitions.

I hope that the government will take this motion seriously, that they won't wait until 120 days later to say, "We thought about it, but we're not going to do it," but take this seriously because the benefits to the public are going to be a lower price point for wholesale cannabis, which will be a lower price point for retail cannabis, which will take it off of the streets, out of the black market, and into the regulated market, which is exactly what we are trying to do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Mr. Chair, my questions have been answered.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Nakimayak.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't reiterate too much; we've gone through this a lot. I would like to think about the federal government and also Indigenous governments, as well, while this is being said. I think some parts of that are left out, so we need to look at those other entities, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I know this came up mostly here in the southern part of the territory, not too much up in the northern section. As, you know, for the most part, these are the early days of legalization; there wasn't really an issue. Well, really, I've never even heard it mentioned, the need for programming or anything like this. Moving forward, possibly, I'm sure that's why the government wanted to put this under the liquor stores at the start of this process, to ensure that businesses and people didn't fail trying to get into this business. The way the government sees it is it's not a money maker, it's not a cash grab, which most people feel it is. At the price that it is being sold for, there is really no room for profit, you know, with shipping and everything like this, so it makes it kind of difficult for me to support this.

I know it is developing programming, but what is coming along with that programming? Are there going to be funds expected to come along with this? That is my concern here, is it is not even legalized yet, but we're trying to put funding available to start up stores and everything like this, but in my riding, for example, it's difficult enough just to get any programs available like this, and it kind of makes it difficult. It would be different if it came up in every community that we needed programs and economic opportunities for people to start up in the communities. I know two different individuals that brought it up in a couple of different communities, but it just makes it a little difficult for me to support this one here. So, with that, Mr. Chair, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Is the House ready for the question? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I'm going to support this, but I think that the expectations of some, in terms of the economic opportunities from cannabis sales, are not going to be nearly as significant as some folks seem to claim, and I am worried that we are setting up some people to fail by raising some very high expectations around this. I do think that there are probably more significant opportunities available around local production, but that is going to take a bit of time to sort out, as well. We do have programs under SEED that could support both, I think, sales and production. Having cannabis special programs to target cannabis sale

and production, I'm not sure we need to go that far. At the end of the day, I will support the motion, but I do have some reservations, like my colleague from the Mackenzie Delta, about this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Mr. Nadli. To the motion.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I agree with my colleague, too, that I think we are kind of raising the expectations pretty high, if I could put it that way. In one instance we're going to study an established working group and study the idea of the entrepreneurial and economic aspect of this initiative. Then here we are kind of jumping, taking a leap in terms of establishing economic development programs and then supporting northern entrepreneurs, so there are expectations that are really high, and we need to ensure that we are fairly consistent.

I think a colleague had expressed that, in the communities that we visited, there were a few people who spoke in favour of the business or economic aspect of cannabis legalization. For the most part, what I've heard, at least from my communities, is an overall social concern in terms of how it will impact the community; but, in saying that, I will support this motion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. I will allow the mover to close debate and ask for a recorded vote if he wants. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate everybody speaking on this behalf. I guess this recommendation is being proactive instead of reactive, so we are trying to be proactive and are trying to move forward. We've heard that there is the potential of it to fail and there is potential to be successful, but it is no different than any other business. If you do a good plan, you are going to be successful, you know, and right now that's what we are trying to do, is we are trying to develop programs that will help the people be successful that put a good plan together. That, to me, is what we are recommending. I appreciate everything, just what I've heard from my riding, and I've had letters that they want to do businesses and they want to have production. Is it feasible? I'm not sure, but there are people who are already starting to work on it. So I thank everybody for their comments, and, yes, I would like a recorded vote, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith):** The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, and the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (MS. FRANKI-SMITH):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for the Sahtu, the Member for Nunakput.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: seven in favour, zero opposed, nine abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-18(3):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING  
COMMITTEE REVIEW ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATION AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION  
AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT –  
DISBURSEMENT OF CANNABIS-RELATED  
REVENUES AND REPORTING ON CANNABIS  
SALES,  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories consider specific spending targets for the disbursement of cannabis-related revenues aimed at public education, public awareness, and public health research related to cannabis use;

And further, that the Liquor Commission report on cannabis sales in its annual report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, this addresses the concern we heard from the public, even in communities that did not want cannabis or that did not want cannabis opportunities or did not see any side of the economic equation but were merely looking at it from a public safety / public health equation. I believe all or at least the vast majority wanted a share of cannabis revenues,

either to help them with enforcement, to help with public education. In Inuvik, for example, we heard someone say all of the cannabis revenue should go to community public infrastructure to close the infrastructure gap there. So, clearly, there was a lot of concern. Whether or not you wanted business opportunities, there was always a constant concern about revenue sharing and how the revenue was going to be reflected in community-level priorities and public health priorities. So, the committee tried to find a balanced approach and recommend that cannabis revenues be used in the most appropriate way, and this motion identifies those.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** If I could just get Members to quiet down and maybe turn off their mobile devices. There have been quite a few distractions during this debate, and it's important material, so I would appreciate if Members on both sides of the House would comply. Thank you. Sorry, Mr. Testart. Please continue.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your intervention. Further, as to what I was saying, the three areas that we identify here as a committee; public education, public awareness, and public health research related to cannabis use, were felt to be the most appropriate uses for any potential cannabis-related revenues, and these are areas that largely are underdeveloped.

Obviously, we have only begun public education; public awareness is also in its early stages; and public health research is very limited. It's hard to study an illicit substance, and the limited information we have is not a complete picture of cannabis use. I contrast that with tobacco usage, where we can look at a tobacco smoker from an entire lifetime compared to someone who does not smoke tobacco and compare health outcomes, but we cannot do that with cannabis. So, by funding these activities, I think it will ultimately result in a more informed and better-educated public when it comes to legal cannabis.

Further, my notes from our consultation said something that kept coming up each and every hearing we had: public education is key to responsible cannabis usage. So I think the people very much understand, the people we serve very much understand, that public education is going to be the most important responsibility of this or any future government in dealing with cannabis or any other addictive substance.

Finally, to get a better picture of the market, the consumption rates, the recommendation is also that the Liquor Commission report on cannabis sales in its annual report and that can be reviewed by the Assembly and by the public, as well. I hope Members will be able to support this committee motion that was developed by both standing

committees, and I would like a recorded vote when the time comes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I realize the government is hoping that cannabis will be a huge seller so that they can use all the revenue to fix the road to Tuktoyaktuk and build future roads, as well, but, really, the better use would be to use it for the purposes for which my colleague has just described.

I want to demonstrate some support for this idea from the youth who were here for the youth Parliament earlier this month. They passed a resolution that says this:

"Whereas the Northwest Territories has above-average rates of drug and alcohol use and abuse by youth among Canadian provinces and territories; and whereas heavy use of drug and alcohol has been demonstrated to contribute to irreversible harm in terms of mental and physical health outcomes;

And whereas youth are especially vulnerable to long-term effects of drug and alcohol use and abuse on brain function and development; and whereas the Government of the Northwest Territories earns millions of dollars annually from the sale of alcohol within the territory and is expected to earn additional revenue from the pending legalization of recreational cannabis;

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake," --- as unlikely as that seems,

---Laughter

"the Youth Parliament 2018 strongly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment work collaboratively to ensure that youth wellness and mental health professionals be made available to all youth throughout the territory;

And further, that a portion of revenues from the sale of alcohol and cannabis be dedicated to developing and promoting educational materials on the risks of drug and alcohol use and abuse by youth, and that these materials become a component of the health curriculum delivered in all Northwest Territories schools."

Passed on May 17<sup>th</sup>, right here in this Chamber. What I want to demonstrate by that is that I think there is awareness of the need to supplement education and wellness funding in the addictions field, and that there is an anticipation that this

should include cannabis as well as other issues, primarily alcohol-related, that are dealt with now.

I think that we should listen to the youth and to the people who we heard on our travels who thought that this special-purpose fund was a good idea. For that reason, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I will be supporting this motion. Part of the problem here is that we do not even have a plan for implementation of cannabis legalization. We have asked for that. I know we dealt with that in the first motion, but we do not even know what the costs are going to be. You know, the Regular MLAs who travelled to the communities, we were put in the position of having to explain that all the revenues were just going to go into the consolidated revenue fund. There is no guarantee that any of this money, revenues from cannabis sales, is actually going to get spent on health promotion. We do not know, in fact none of us really knows, what it's going to get spent on because it goes into the general pot, and that's different than the approach that is being taken by some governments.

The federal government has said that the revenues that they get they will put into health promotion. That is a good commitment. We do not have that from our government. I have also heard that some of the provincial jurisdictions are looking at sharing as much as 40 per cent of revenues with local governments, because their costs will be increased in many ways. I am also aware that, in New Brunswick, the provincial government has negotiated with their suppliers to set aside 2 per cent of the gross sales value into a special fund that will be used for health promotion. I understand, you know, we don't know what the sales levels are going to be here, but I would urge our Cabinet colleagues to look at the approach that New Brunswick has adopted.

You know, governments are notoriously opposed to targeted revenues. They just hate targeted revenues, because it ties their hands, but we heard this in all the communities that we went to. You know: what is the money going to be used for, and is any of it going to be directed specifically to healthcare, education, and so on? We don't know because there's no plan.

So my preference would have been to have something in the legislation itself deal with this, to ensure that there was a requirement that at least part of the revenues would be spent on health promotion, research, and public awareness, but we couldn't get that in the bill because that's not the

way it was crafted, and it's outside the scope of what's already been put together. It's a financial matter, so we couldn't make that kind of change. So this is a poor second cousin to that, but at the end of the day, I do support this motion. Hopefully our Cabinet colleagues are going to respond to this in a meaningful way and ensure that some of the revenues are actually spent to supplement the existing monies that are spent for these purposes. Thanks, Mr. Chair

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this did come up in communities, and the big question was: who is going to pay for public education, public awareness? Also there was, I think, one or two people who actually brought up the health side of things, which we didn't really look at. They asked some good questions, like long-term impacts on our people's health and who is going to be paying that.

So our residents felt that a portion of the money that is being raised through whether it is taxes can be set aside for paying for some of this, and I'm sure it will be going to a lot of our programs, anyway. Even some students brought up that through the education system a little bit more targeted towards the use of cannabis or marijuana, a little bit more education on that front that needs to be put into our curriculum. A little bit of what they picked up was whatever they found online. Because they were given notice that we were going to meet with them, some students actually read up on it on their own. I believe it's in Tuktoyaktuk, the students mentioned that it's really not brought up through, say, Health, for example, or through the courses that they take. Just more education. So a little tweaking on the education front, what's been provided in the schools, more public awareness. So I have no trouble supporting this one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. I will allow the mover to close debate. We have Mr. McNeely.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I heard, and as I said, education is going to be a vital component in moving forward after legislation is passed. It's not just passing and then it's over and done with; there is going to be a great deal of after-care taken through education, and I'm glad to see that wording of revenues aimed at public education, public awareness, and on the health side of educating the public to the side effects of consuming cannabis. So I support this on the principle of what I heard and what I said on education. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Does the House wish the question to be put to them? The question has been called. The Member has indicated he would like a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member Nunakput, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: 10 in favour, zero opposed, six abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 58-18(3):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(3): STANDING  
COMMITTEE REVIEW ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATION AND STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF BILL 6: CANNABIS LEGALIZATION  
AND REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT –  
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO REPORT  
WITHIN 120 DAYS,  
CARRIED

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that the Assembly recommend that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will request a recorded vote. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There's a motion on the floor. To the motion. Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, Member for Nunakput, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay):** The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The results of the recorded vote are: 10 in favour, zero opposed, six abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu. I apologize for that. Does committee agreed that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 7-18(3)?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. This concludes our consideration of Committee Report 7-18(3), Report on Review of Bill 6, Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Implementation Act. What is the wish of committee now? Mr. Beaulieu.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There's a motion to 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. Thank you, committee.

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

**Report of Committee of the Whole**

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 7-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations and Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of Bill 6: Cannabis

Legalization and Regulations Implementation Act, with eight motions being adopted and would like to report progress and that consideration of Committee Report 7-18(3) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Do I have a seconder? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, the orders of the day for Thursday, May 31, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
  - Motion 17-18(3), Review of Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project
  - Motion 18-18(3), Appointment of Members to the NWT Honours Advisory Council
18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 20, Ombudsperson Act
- Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act

#### 19. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Bill 6, Cannabis Legalization and Regulations Implementation Act
- Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
- Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns
- Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process

#### 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

#### 22. Third Reading of Bills

#### 23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 31, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

