



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019**

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**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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### Speaker

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**

(Monfwi)

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*Minister Responsible for Seniors*

*Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

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(Kam Lake)

**Mr. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendeh)

**Mr. Cory Vanthuyne**

(Yellowknife North)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 6, 2019****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, budget address. Minister of Finance.

**Budget Address**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome to all those in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the 2019-2020 budget for the Government of the Northwest Territories. This budget continues to invest in our people and our territory to achieve, as set out in the very first sentence of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly mandate, our vision of a territory where all our people, communities, and regions share in the benefits of a healthy, just, sustainable, and prosperous society.

In presenting the final budget of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, I want to thank Members for their collective efforts over the last four years to address the mandate priorities within a less than ideal fiscal situation. Our choices have not always been easy and we have not always agreed, but together we are all trying to do what is in the best interest of all residents.

At the start of this Assembly we knew we had an unsustainable fiscal situation. Our revenue growth was slowing, our operating expenditures were continuing to grow at a high rate, and our short-term debt was accumulating rapidly. It was clear that, if we wanted to invest in our priorities, we would have to do a better job managing our existing expenditures. We rose to this challenge with a fiscal plan that required accepting difficult but necessary steps to manage expenditures and find savings while also protecting our existing programs and services so that we could invest in our other priorities in support of this Assembly's mandate.

The fiscal plan we have followed over the last three budgets has allowed us to achieve substantial progress on the Assembly's priorities and make

inroads in our long list of infrastructure needs. Our measures to reallocate resources and find savings have let us build for the future, even with the \$81 million decline in our revenue over the last two years.

**Fiscal Strategy and Budget Highlights**

Each budget talks about our fiscal strategy, which, simply put, is to not spend beyond what we can afford. Today's programs and services must be paid for by the revenues that we have today and should borrow responsibly for infrastructure that delivers benefits for our residents today and tomorrow, with a clear plan to repay that debt.

Aligning our revenue growth with expenditure growth has been particularly challenging over the past two years where revenue has declined by \$81 million. Managing this type of decline required taking a longer-term view of our fiscal plan. If we were to have taken more drastic steps, it would have compromised our ability to maintain existing programs and services. However, even careful expenditure management was not enough to prevent the decline in our operating surpluses and increase our short-term debt over the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

This Assembly has met our Fiscal Responsibility Policy guidelines to ensure that we are borrowing wisely while we start to address our infrastructure gap. We have the oldest infrastructure in the country and a significant infrastructure deficit that creates challenges for economic growth and contributes to our high cost of living. Our careful financial management has provided the means to partner with the federal government on cost-shared opportunities. By the end of this Assembly, we have invested \$1.1 billion in the territory's infrastructure, to help deliver government programs and services, support the economy, and leave a legacy for future generations.

**Expenditures**

Mr. Speaker, in 2019-2020 we propose to invest \$70 million for new initiatives and \$17 million to enhance or maintain existing programs. The new spending will be offset through \$20 million in savings and \$30 million in new revenue from federal sources and the new carbon tax.

We propose in this budget to spend a total of \$1.873 billion in 2019-2020, of which \$1.1 billion is directly invested in our people through education, health care, social services, housing, policing, and corrections. We will pay for our operating budget with an estimated \$1.933 billion in revenues, leaving a projected \$60-million operating surplus to directly fund a portion of the 2019-2020 infrastructure budget approved last October.

### **Community Wellness and Safety**

In the first three years of this Assembly, we have invested almost \$64 million in the health of our residents and to enhance safety in our communities.

We have to do better to support children and families, and this budget proposes to accelerate plans already in place to improve the Child and Family Services program by investing an additional \$3.3 million to add 21 new positions. This investment will improve our children and family services program's ability to meet our responsibilities by reducing caseloads and improving capacity to provide better support for children and their families.

We propose to continue our efforts to reduce poverty and address its consequences by adding \$4.9 million targeted for our people that need help. This includes \$2.6 million to establish a day shelter and sobering program, to hire more support personnel, and to increase emergency shelter funding across the territory. We propose to strengthen Income Assistance with an additional \$1.7 million and to provide \$615,000 in additional support for low-cost housing.

Non-governmental organizations are important partners in the delivery of services to residents of the Northwest Territories. Funding of \$350,000 proposed in this budget will double this Assembly's support for the NGO Stabilization Fund and will bolster non-governmental organizations' ability to serve our communities.

We are including \$15.2 million in this budget to operate the new Stanton Territorial Hospital that will open in May of this year. This new hospital will better serve today's residents with modern, state-of-the-art healthcare and diagnostic services, and it is intended to meet the demands of our health care needs for the next thirty years.

We propose to invest a further \$5.9 million for other health services to support Northwest Territories residents and their families. These new investments will further enhance rehabilitation services for children, enhance support for children with autism, expand the midwifery program, and improve chemotherapy service delivery at the Stanton

Territorial Hospital. This investment will also provide increased funding for benefit programs, diagnostic laboratory services, and medical supplies, and will cover increases in the standard physician contract for 2016 to 2021.

Strong communities look after their elders and disabled residents. This budget includes \$2 million to better fund long-term care facilities and to increase income support for disabled and aged residents, including \$1 million to operate the new health centre and long-term care facility in Norman Wells. Following the first review of maximum allowances since 2002, this budget provides for increasing the allowance rates for disabled and aged residents from \$300 to \$405.

Addressing mental health issues is one of our territory's biggest public health tasks. To better meet this challenge, we propose investing \$1 million to continue implementation of the *Mental Health Act* and provide increased contribution funding to Indigenous governments for mobile addictions and substance abuse treatment and aftercare for individuals and families through the On-The-Land Healing Fund. This collaborative effort helps support Indigenous governments to deliver culturally relevant and safe healing programs to their residents.

Work to support our children's mental health is more effective when tied to education programs and services. The \$2.1 million proposed in this budget to implement the second phase of the Northwest Territories School and Community Child and Youth Care Counsellors initiative will add more counsellors and mental health support services to support mental health wellness for children, youth and their families in the Beaufort Delta and Sahtu regions.

A further \$379,000 is recommended in this budget to establish a specialized territorial support team to help teachers and school administrators use clinical assessment information to create learning support for students with complex needs from conditions such as autism and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

This budget proposes to continue investing in initiatives that have demonstrated their effectiveness, including \$432,000 to further expand the Northern Distance Learning Program, which has proven successful in helping students to gain more credits and achieve academic success. This budget also enhances the Northern Studies program with a \$315,000 investment in a made-in-the-Northwest Territories curriculum to broaden grade 10 studies and to develop programs for grades 11 and 12.

Building on the work started in 2017-2018 to implement a territory-wide 911 service, this budget

proposes a \$1.3-million investment to complete its rollout in 2019.

The budget proposes to shore up its support to the RCMP, to continue to deliver quality protection service to our communities, with an additional \$1.4 million for mandatory training and to cover unavoidable administrative cost increases.

### **Economic Growth, Labour Development and Land Management**

Over the last three years, in order to develop the economy in an environmentally sustainable way, the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has made diversifying our economy and supporting new industry that provide good jobs a priority with over \$29 million in new investments. This Assembly has also made labour development a key long-term mandate priority with \$22 million in new investments over the last three years towards early childhood development, post-secondary opportunities, cultural and Indigenous languages programming, and skills capacity building in our youth. Over the past three years of this Assembly we have protected our economy by investing \$21 million to reduce the cost of living and avoiding major tax increases.

Budget 2019 looks to continue this investment with another \$14 million to support the economy, labour, and land management.

Recognizing that resource development leads to opportunities for well-paying employment and supports local businesses, we will be investing \$1.7 million in new funds to encourage increased investment by the resource sector. This investment includes \$1.2 million to increase our knowledge of the mineral potential in the Slave Geological Province through new high-resolution airborne magnetic data and funding geophysical studies.

These funds also include \$375,000 to take action under the Northwest Territories Petroleum Resources Strategy to sustainably revitalize the petroleum sector. The Mining Recorder's Office will receive more support to help mining prospectors and developers with information on mineral rights, maps, and legislation and regulations.

We are continuing our efforts to diversify the economy and reduce our reliance on the non-renewable resource sector by proposing an additional \$375,000 to support activities related to the knowledge economy. We must make better use of the incredible amount of knowledge and expertise that resides in the Northwest Territories to transform our economy into one that relies on its people, rather than non-renewable resources, to provide a good quality of life and healthy communities. Funds in this budget will help develop a knowledge economy strategy and explore the

feasibility of building a centre of excellence for northern research and development that generates revenue and jobs through production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information.

Building our economy also requires a strong commitment to developing our workforce, and this budget includes \$3.6 million in investment for labour market development.

This includes the support related to the Canada-Northwest Territories Workforce Development Agreement, including improving literacy and work-related skills, providing a suite of needs-based services to maximize the effect of training, working with employers and other stakeholders to promote job opportunities, and tailoring skills development programs to employer demands. We are continuing our support for our post-secondary students by increasing the Student Financial Assistance course reimbursement rate from \$500 to \$800 and increasing the lifetime limit on course reimbursements from \$5,000 to \$8,800.

The growth in the number of visitors to our spectacular territory over the past five years has been an outstanding testament to the efforts of our tour operators, tourism associations, and local governments. Building on these efforts, we propose to add \$1.2 million to support our tourism industry, including an \$800,000 increase for large-scale tourism marketing and resources for the Northwest Territories Film Commission to market and promote our territory's stunning scenery to film and video producers and \$208,000 to maintain the quality of our territorial parks.

We propose to continue our support for the arts and culture sector with \$689,000 in maintenance funding for the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre and \$200,000 in ongoing funding for the Northwest Territories Arts Council to promote creative artistic projects.

A total of \$1.3 million in operating expenditures is proposed to support the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan in 2019-2020. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a long list of capital projects of all sizes across the territory, and this additional funding will ensure that we have the right information to put our infrastructure dollars where they will provide the most benefit and will also help expedite the opportunities to take advantage of federal funding.

We have to ensure that we have the resources to maintain our new infrastructure so it lasts as long as possible. To that end, this budget includes an additional \$2.1 million to protect new capital projects that are coming into service this year, to increase maintenance and dust control measures

for roads, and to add funding for ferries on the Mackenzie, Peel, and Liard rivers.

Uncertainty over land use rules is a major obstacle to getting anything done and is hindering economic development. We propose to support land management with a further investment of \$2.6 million. This investment includes \$753,000 to support a government-to-government Wek'eezhii Land Use Planning Committee that will lay the groundwork for a land use planning process for public lands in Wek'eezhii. This investment will also support other land use planning, including increased geomatics analysis and increased capacity to manage equity leases and address untenured and unauthorized occupancy.

### **Environment and Climate Change**

Mr. Speaker, we are seeking to turn the rapid changes to our environment caused by climate change into economic development opportunities as we help guide the territory to a high-tech, low-carbon future with a diversified economy and healthy environment. Budget 2019 provides \$21 million in spending to support our efforts to transition to a low-carbon economy. This support reflects our commitments under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and continues the work of this Assembly to address our mandate obligations.

Last July we released our proposal to participate in national carbon pricing with a carbon tax starting July 1, 2019, on all petroleum and natural gas fuels except aviation fuel. This carbon tax is intended to provide a price incentive to reduce the use of carbon-based fuels and not necessarily to raise revenues for government programs.

Therefore, our carbon tax proposal includes returning most of the carbon tax revenue into the economy in an approach that attempts to encourage carbon conservation and substitution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while minimizing the effect on the local cost of living or creating additional barriers to economic development.

Of the \$16.2 million in carbon tax revenue expected in 2019-2020, this budget proposes to return almost \$7 million to residents and business through a 100 percent rebate of the tax paid on heating fuel and fuel used to generate electricity and cost of living offsets for individuals and families. Large emitters will receive about \$5 million in carbon tax rebates and through individualized trusts that can be used to make investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Administration of the tax and benefits will cost about \$600,000, leaving \$3.7 million for greenhouse gas emission reduction investments, which in 2019-2020 is proposed to be used to support the Inuvik Wind project.

Carbon pricing is not expected to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Northwest Territories over the short term to medium term because the incentive to limit fuel use already exists due to high energy costs. As the carbon tax rate increases over time, further reductions will be increasingly difficult without considerable technological improvements that allow economically viable reductions in fuel use. Through the 2030 Energy Strategy, the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to make investments in alternative energy options for territorial residents and businesses a priority. The 2019-2020 Capital Estimates includes more than \$40 million in funding for energy-related capital projects.

We expect to continue to work closely with the federal government in efforts to provide reliable, affordable alternatives to carbon-intensive fuels for communities and businesses. The majority of the \$8.7 million proposed in this budget for lowering emissions comes from the federal Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund.

Of this, the budget proposes to further support the Arctic Energy Alliance with an additional \$2.5 million for new and enhanced programs and services to improve energy conservation in commercial and residential buildings.

Another \$3.8 million is allocated in this budget for large-scale commercial, industrial, and government organizations to support larger, energy-efficiency retrofits. Other investments support actively trapping carbon in our trees through forest regeneration actions and improving energy efficiency and substituting heating fuel in public housing through retrofit upgrades.

This budget proposes an additional \$555,000 to implement the 2030 Northwest Territories Climate Change Strategic Framework. These funds will be used to support data management, reporting, and outreach so that the Government of the Northwest Territories can build its understanding of climate change within the territory, build resilience and adaptation, and transition to a low-carbon economy by 2030.

This budget also provides \$381,000 for an environmental assessment of the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway that will provide further information to improve our knowledge of the effect of climate change occurring in the Northwest Territories.

### **Governance**

Mr. Speaker, over the past three years Members of this Assembly have worked hard to strengthen our consensus government, and we have actively pursued fostering collaborative government-to-



government relations with Indigenous and community governments, including much work to support the negotiation of self-government agreements and settle land claims. In the first three budgets of this Assembly we have invested \$22 million in new funding for governance priorities as we strive for better transparency and accountability and strengthened communication.

Budget 2019 proposes to continue this work by investing a further \$2.1 million to improve overall service delivery. These funds will be used to strengthen online service delivery, establish the Ombudsman Office, create an Access to Information and Protection of Privacy unit, and strengthen the Legal Aid Commission.

This budget proposes to close the funding gap for community government with an additional \$1.9 million for their operations, maintenance, water, and sewer expenses. This investment is in addition to \$2 million in incremental infrastructure contributions. We recognize the funding gap, and over the four years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly we will have added a total of \$8.2 million in additional community government funding.

The Government of the Northwest Territories and Indigenous governments work closely together to support human resource development and build capacity in their organizations by providing temporary work opportunities for each other's employees.

To support and enhance this capacity-building through temporary work assignments, this budget proposes a \$400,000 investment to directly offset expenses such as travel, accommodation, and compensation.

Our mandate calls for advancing self-government agreements and promoting women in politics. Budget 2019 proposes \$288,000 to support self-government implementation negotiations and to continue promoting women in politics through continued development of a communications campaign by the Women's Advisory unit.

We are committed to our public servants and propose to invest \$5.1 million, including an additional \$2.0 million for medical travel and dental programs for Government of the Northwest Territories employees, and \$3.1 million to pay for the collective bargaining increases for teachers and for pay increases to the non-unionized Government of the Northwest Territories employees that were set in 2018-2019.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that we are continuing to negotiate with the Union of Northern Workers for a new collective agreement that will cover the majority of our employees. These

negotiations are being undertaken with a backdrop of a particularly challenging fiscal environment.

Total revenues, once we adjust for increases in federal funding for targeted projects and the new Northwest Territories Carbon Tax, have increased by 2.7 percent over the four years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, for an annual average of 0.7 percent to pay for our expenditure increases. Every year sees new fiscal pressures as program costs increase for reasons beyond our control, such as rising healthcare costs caused by an aging population. This 0.7 percent annual increase must pay for these pressures as well as support investment in the Assembly's priorities and resources to maintain our existing programs and services, including collective agreements.

The balance between these various demands can't be ignored. We value the public service that delivers our government programs and services. All of us in this Assembly have friends and family who are part of our public service, and no one wants to see job action. However, our fiscal reality can't be ignored. Increasing spending beyond our revenue growth would mean we would need to reduce spending in other areas, increase our revenue through additional taxes, or increase our debt that future generations will have to pay. There are no other choices.

To our residents, I commit to you that this government will do everything within our power to reach a fair collective agreement without abandoning the needs of our residents or compromising the future of the Northwest Territories. This is a difficult choice, but one we must achieve.

### **Revenue**

Mr. Speaker, total revenue is forecast to increase to \$1.933 billion in 2019-2020 following a two-year revenue decline of \$81 million. The 2019-2020 increase is largely driven by federal transfers for infrastructure projects and targeted programs, by the introduction of the Northwest Territories Carbon Tax. Excluding the impact of this revenue, the government is left with \$50 million in increased revenue over the four-year period or an average of \$12.5 million per year.

As announced last July, we are honouring our commitments to carbon pricing under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change by proposing a made-in-the-Northwest-Territories carbon tax at \$20 per tonne starting July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. The legislation to levy the carbon tax and provide offsets to mitigate its effects on the cost of living and doing business will be introduced in this session. The Northwest Territories Carbon Tax is expected to come into effect on July 1, 2019,

and will generate \$16.2 million in revenue for 2019-2020.

With cannabis legalization in October of last year, we are projecting \$747,000 in additional revenues from the Northwest Territories share of the federal Cannabis Excise Tax in 2019-2020 and expect some revenue from cannabis sales. Supply shortages are impacting cannabis sales and revenues, and we are hopeful that the national supply issues get resolved over the next few months. This budget does not contain any increases in our existing tax rates.

### **Economic Outlook**

Mr. Speaker, our overall economy held its own in 2018 and we expect economic activity to increase 2.1 percent in 2019 because of good news last year, such as the restart of oil extraction in Norman Wells and steady diamond production.

In recent years the Northwest Territories economy has been supported by diamond mine construction and over \$786 million in public infrastructure investments, including large projects, such as building the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway and Stanton Territorial Hospital.

We are continuing to build the territory with \$343 million in infrastructure investments, including new projects, such as construction of the Tlicho All-Season Road, public infrastructure to support program delivery to Northwest Territories residents, and low-carbon economy capital projects.

We are continuing to use public investment to support local economies and set the foundation for future economic development. At the same time, we also need to have a frank evaluation of our various economic strategies to pave the way for a more sustainable and robust economy. Despite years of trying to diversify, we remain dependent on the non-renewable resource industry for its high-paying jobs and local business opportunities.

We expect the resource sector to continue to perform reasonably well over the next five to 10 years. However, there remains no oil and gas activity in the Beaufort Delta, and in 2019 mineral exploration is expected to be lower than 2018, adding uncertainty for developing the next generation of mines.

None of our existing diamond mines plan production past 2034, and one mine is scheduled to close in six years. The lead time for a deposit discovery to become an active mine is measured in decades, and we need mineral exploration now if we want to have replacements for the maturing diamond mines.

Ultimately we need economic diversification to strengthen the sustainability of our economy. We compete in a global market, whether it is exporting resources or attracting tourists. Changes in the global economy are directly transmitted to ours through resource prices and the demand for our products. To be clear, just because, overall, things are not so bad does not mean that there are not cracks in the foundation.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Speaker, our final budget puts the finishing touches on a mandate that has built a solid platform for the next Assembly and a legacy that will provide positive returns for the people of the Northwest Territories for generations.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly will have a new territorial hospital and improved long-term health facilities to provide better quality healthcare for residents. We have expanded transportation infrastructure by connecting Tuktoyaktuk to the rest of Canada by road, and are furthering this expansion by building an all-season road to Whati. These new roads open up these regions to new economic opportunities. We have started to close the gap between what community governments need to provide community services and their ability to fund these services. The next Assembly will be able to build on our investments in new and innovative programs in education, including junior kindergarten and northern distance learning, which are already helping more children achieve academic success.

I believe that we have provided the foundation that will allow a transition to even more quality public services for Northwest Territories residents while revenues recover sufficiently to start to reduce our short-term borrowing.

I believe Members of this Assembly should be proud of the work we have done to invest in our priorities in a fiscally responsible manner. The choices and decisions of this Assembly will be our legacy in support of a vision for this territory where people can thrive in a strong economy that provides jobs and opportunities in safe and vibrant communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Colleagues, at this point I'm going to call for a short break, and the public are invited to join us in our refreshments downstairs in the gallery. Masi.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, we left off after the budget address. We are moving on to Ministers' statements. Item 3, Ministers' statements. Item 4, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BINDING ARBITRATION OF GNWT-UNW LABOUR DISPUTE

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the negotiations between the Government of the Northwest Territories and its unionized workforce represented by the Union of Northern Workers. The union is in a legal strike position. Rather than wait for the results of mediation scheduled for this weekend, they served a strike notice yesterday for next Monday. This is a deliberately provocative move that increases the stakes for this weekend.

At the end of the day yesterday the government responded with a provocative move of its own. The deputy minister of Finance noted that strike notice had been served and essential and emergency services are in place. He then went on to lay out the process for union members to work during a strike. The result has been the same as throwing gas on a smouldering fire.

Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife has its own painful experience of having workers cross a picket line. The temperature of the Giant Mine strike rose as people returned to work or accepted jobs as replacement workers. People said and did things that ruptured relationships permanently, but worse, much worse, nine people died in what many believe is cause and effect.

Constituents have been in touch with me to suggest that the government's tacit encouragement to cross the picket line is the wrong move. I agree. It will turn up the temperature in this dispute and create a toxic environment, not just in the workplace, but throughout the community. I don't want to see this happen in Yellowknife Centre or anywhere else.

I believe there is a way out that allows both the UNW and the GNWT to call this dispute a draw, and that is to agree to enter into binding arbitration in the event that this weekend's mediation fails. There is no point in keeping arbitration as an option once the strike has begun. The damage will have been done. My constituents have been clear. They do not want a strike. They believe it will harm their businesses, damage our economy, and prompt some of them to leave the Northwest Territories for good.

Mr. Speaker, this worst-case scenario is avoidable. The union has said it will agree to binding arbitration. I want the same commitment from the government. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance, and I will not accept answers that he cannot talk about negotiations. What I want is a proven alternative to move forward. Mahsi.

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

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ALL-SEASON ROAD TO AVALON NECHALACHO PROJECT

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.] Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my Member's statement I spoke about Avalon, a company that owns rare earths deposits at Thor Lake. Today I wish to expand on my statement and talk about the benefits of building an all-season road that would run from Ingraham Trail to Thor Lake.

Mr. Speaker, the all-season road I speak of does not necessarily have to be one of an NWT highway standard. It can be designed to a haul-road standard, for example. Even a road of this standard will help the mining company to attract investors and will be a project that can be completed working in conjunction with members of YK Dene First Nations. Furthermore, it would be a road that could be used by people travelling from Lutselk'e or to Lutselk'e and further to the east arm of the Great Slave Lake.

I spoke to an elder from Yellowknives Dene, and he saw some employment opportunities right away. He thought that, once a road was constructed, there would be a need for security for the equipment that is left behind when people are travelling, and security that could eventually lead to a working relationship in the security area with the mine.

Mr. Speaker, during the construction of this road there will be multiple years' worth of employment opportunities for Northerners. Once completed, there will be other opportunities for maintaining the road. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, a right-of-way will be established by the road, but in addition to road construction there is also potential for hydropower transmission lines to Nechalacho, which would connect the project to a clean, low-cost source of energy. This, however, would require an expansion of transmission lines from the existing Bluefish hydro dam.

Mr. Speaker, there can even be a dock built on the shore of the Great Slave Lake, just a few kilometres away from Thor Lake.

Mr. Speaker, an all-season road to Thor Lake would have many benefits, more than I can mention in a short Member's statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly made a commitment in our mandate to expand and diversify the economy of our territory. Some of the newer areas of the economy are booming, such as tourism. Others are growing more slowly, but show promise. We can expect recent investments in film, agriculture, and fisheries, among others, to pay off in the future.

However, as we move forward we cannot forget the riches we have right beneath our feet, Mr. Speaker. Our territory is blessed with generous mineral resources, including many that will be increasingly needed in the new green global economy. Natural resource development can provide good, stable, and generational jobs for our residents and fuel growth and stability in our communities and regions.

We are improving our investment climate. Investors are looking more and more favourably at our resources as a safe bet because we are doing good things. In the North, we have decades of experience of responsible and safe resource extraction. We have the tools and the know-how to continue to lead the country in innovation in cold-climate resource development. Mineral development will also support the growth of a central infrastructure. The growth of power and transportation systems like Taltson, the Mackenzie Valley Highway, and the corridor to the Slave Geological Province can only be supported by large-scale development of natural resources, and that is infrastructure that will support our communities into the future, well beyond the life of any one project. These projects are needed to create wealth that will support our communities and provide prosperity for all Northerners, their families, and communities.

Mr. Speaker, the mining industry is becoming a world leader in championing responsible, sustainable, and carbon-free practices. That is especially important to us as we live in the part of the world that is most drastically affected by climate change. We can be partners with this new green, progressive, and responsible sector in ways that create wealth, good jobs, and security for our citizens. A diversified economy is important, Mr. Speaker, and it is important to continue to develop new initiatives, but it is equally prudent to continue with the sector that has consistently and reliably provided wealth and growth to Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
BILATERAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS

**MR. MCNEELY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Housing solutions and bilaterals. Mr. Speaker, firstly I would like to recognize the many bilateral funding resources secured by the Government of the Northwest Territories through the previous timelines of FPT sessions held with the Government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it is a mandate of this government to build stronger families and stronger communities. One aspect of achieving this is through affordable housing. Then there are the many opportunities during construction.

In November 2018 the NWT Housing Corporation concluded bilateral negotiations for a 10-year agreement. Under this agreement, there is a number of resource programming. One can say this is a financial case in the contributions to our NWT core need. The success to the objectives underneath this strategy is and will be measured by the affordable units provided in the communities. This can be achieved by essential planning.

Mr. Speaker, a primary first step is reviewing the expense taken in drafting and tabling the core need assessment survey tabled during the spring of 2016.

Mr. Speaker, to further extend our secured resources and the principles of best value the NWT Housing Corporation should include the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund as criteria to assisting our communities with affordable energy-efficient homes as part of the community development sessions.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative would not only provide meaningful needed homes while showcasing low-emission, energy-efficient programs. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions to the appropriate Minister of Housing. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ARCTIC AND NORTHERN POLICY FRAMEWORK

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the new Arctic and Northern Policy Framework is being advanced by the Government of Canada in cooperation with Indigenous governments and northern territorial governments. I see this framework as an opportunity for Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories to work with Indigenous governments to develop policy together that will benefit every northern region in the country.

Mr. Speaker, one of the main goals should be to build capacity and use Indigenous and local knowledge to develop our regions.

The timeline Canada publicly set for completing the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework has slipped a bit, Mr. Speaker. Many people might say, "Oh, another government policy with a fancy name." However, it is important and, like any land claims, we are all accountable to implement such agreements. I am worried about the delay because it is supposed to be the policy on which Canada's support and funding decisions will be based. We are talking about money for housing, healthcare, education, and infrastructure. We are talking about empowering our communities and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We are talking about living up to the promise of our land claims agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I hope our government is putting pressure on the federal ministers to complete the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework as soon as possible and with full participation of Indigenous governments.

Mr. Speaker, it would be refreshing to see a federal policy framework with a perspective that is truly Arctic and northern, and I look forward to the respectful engagement and collaboration for all Inuvialuit beneficiaries, especially constituents in Nunakput. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT-UNW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are any number of issues I could bring to the House today, but there is one pressing issue that I'm sure we're all aware of, and that is the ongoing dispute over the collective agreement between the GNWT and its workforce.

Mr. Speaker, these employees are our friends and neighbours. The financial uncertainty that it is causing not just for the workforce, public servants who are tireless providing our high-quality public services to the people of the Northwest Territories; it is additionally causing uncertainty for the business community, for private citizens in the private sector as well who are worried about what their future holds and what the consequences of a divisive strike action will be.

Mr. Speaker, after three years without a deal it is understandable that people are frustrated and it is understandable that people are emotional. Where we are today is something nobody wants. I have to take some personal responsibility for that. I am an

MLA. I am here to work with the Cabinet and my colleagues in discussing issues of territorial concern. I knew for the past three years that there have been difficulties in this collective agreement and I have done very little, and for that, I am truly sorry. I should have taken more action, I should have spoken up, and I should have worked more closely with colleagues to try to bring a resolution to this that would not result in the threat of immediate strike. Again, for that, I am truly sorry.

I am directly responsible for the actions to come, and I will be working tirelessly to try to bring an end to this dispute, to try to bring about a fair deal for northern workers, and to try to make sure a strike does not happen, because that is my priority. We cannot afford it.

We heard a financial address today. We know the economy is not in the best place. We need to do whatever we can to strengthen our communities, to strengthen our public service, and to keep going forward. A strike will slow us down and could have consequences that will take years to recover from.

This must be put to rest, and I will take action today. I will ask questions of the Minister today, and I will work with my colleagues to bring an end to this before it starts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FUTURE OF BLUENOSE EAST AND BATHURST CARIBOU HERDS

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. At the invitation of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, I attended community meetings last month in Wekweeti, Gameti, Behchoko, and Detah on the future of the Bluenose East and Bathurst Caribou herds, and I want to thank sincerely the Minister for that opportunity.

There was a joint Tlicho government-ENR presentation that covered the recent surveys, collars, monitoring programs, harvest controls, wolf harvest incentives, land use, habitat and fire, education, and research.

The main comments and suggestions from participants included:

- harvest restrictions are not consistent with the Treaties;
- there is the need for more consultation before significant decisions are made;
- increased predator controls;
- reduce disturbance caused by mining

(including temporary measures when caribou are nearby and permanent protection of critical habitat);

- stop harvesting of Bathurst Caribou in Nunavut;
- provide financial assistance for alternative food sources and/or replacement food subsidies;
- further monitoring and research is needed to understand the cause of caribou declines and getting youth and elders on the land; and
- we need greater transparency in caribou allocation decisions at the herd level and among communities that rely on each herd.

There does not appear to have been any community consultations on the content and details of the joint management proposals recently sent to the Weak'eezhii Renewable Resources Board. The standing committee likewise did not have an opportunity to review the proposals beforehand.

The proposals rely mainly on harvest reductions. Wolf hunting subsidies are to be increased, but there are no special temporary or permanent habitat protection actions included. There is nothing on financial assistance for community hunts or replacement food subsidies.

Very little of the Bathurst caribou range plan is reflected in the joint management proposal. No new funding for caribou initiatives have been identified in the Minister of Finance's budget address earlier today.

If we were to make any serious progress and take actions to save caribou, particularly the Bathurst herd, we need stronger leadership from ENR and new funding to support the initiatives in the Bathurst caribou range plan. I will have questions for the Minister later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH GAH SCHOOL YOUTH CENTRE MOVEMENT

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all around the world we are seeing young people rise up and take political action on the issues that matter to them. We are seeing teens speak out against gun violence in the United States, and students protesting for action on climate change in Europe.

We spend a lot of time talking about our youth, but it is just as important to listen to our youth. As adults, this can be a humbling experience. We have

a responsibility to listen to all of our constituents, not just the ones old enough to vote.

I'm pleased to report that, at the Deh Gah School in Fort Providence, the senior class got political and they got results.

While completing a course in political studies, the students started talking about what they thought Fort Providence needed to thrive. They were troubled by the prevalence of drugs and alcohol in their community, not just in their demographic, but in people of all ages, and by limited extra-curricular options for teens. One student told CBC: "A lot of the time what I end up seeing late at night is kids walking around in a park when it's like below 30 to get away from their home life."

The students decided that a local youth centre could change this. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, working for political change can be difficult, slow, and frustrating. Sometimes it is hard not to let all the "can'ts" overwhelm your momentum. Government timelines seem to stretch on and on, especially to young people.

The Deh Gah students persevered. With the help of teacher Nimisha Bastedo and local recreation coordinator Jason Collard, and sustainability planners Northern Loco, they put in the time. They studied the North's political history and arranged meetings with local leaders, including myself. They got involved in December's municipal elections, holding a candidates' forum on youth issues and making two presentations to the hamlet council.

Thanks to their hard work, the students achieved a funding commitment from the hamlet council of \$40,000 in capital funding to convert the lounge of the curling club into a youth centre. Other partners chipped in. The Bridge Corporation invested \$10,000, and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has funded staffing through the end of this fiscal year. Operations are planned to launch in mid-March. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this is a great achievement, but the students know they can't rest on their laurels. To make this important initiative sustainable and to meet the clear needs of the community, an estimated \$124,800 is needed to cover annual operations costs.

This is where we come in. These young people have told us what they need in no uncertain terms. They want a safe, welcoming community space. They want to embrace traditional practices like Dene hand games, arts and crafts, and learning

from elders. With the support of a few adult allies who have done the legwork, they have taken a leap of faith, and it is our job to catch them, as this government promised in its commitment to support effective youth programming, including youth centres.

I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs later on today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NEW HOUSING UNITS ISSUES IN AKLAVIK

**MR. BLAKE:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Mackenzie Delta we are looking forward to offering families new housing units. There is a four-plex in Aklavik and a duplex in Fort McPherson that has been completed before Christmas and is ready for new tenants.

We are happy for the units, Mr. Speaker, and encourage the NWT Housing Corporation to build more units so that families can be accommodated. Mr. Speaker, the newly completed units, however, are sitting empty. This is due to the fact that there were issues with power meters on the units. Since a completion of the units, there has been no activity to try to fix the problem. Once the situation with the meters is solved, we can be reassured that some very excited tenants will be able to move in.

It is no secret that each of our ridings in the NWT suffers from housing shortages. I have given statements in the past regarding this issue and will continue to speak on behalf of the need for more housing units in our communities.

It is unfortunate that families have to patiently wait, hoping that their name will move up on the waiting list for a house. Yet, we have these houses sitting empty, waiting for a simple mistake to be sorted out.

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

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
EMERGING LEADERS FOR THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that being a Member of this Legislative Assembly has taught me is that I am an optimist; and honestly, I don't think I could do this job if I wasn't.

Just look at the state of our territory. Government labour relations are at an all-time low. The impending closure of all the diamond mines is going to do to Yellowknife what the fall of the oil and gas industry did to the communities up and down the valley. It is getting harder for small businesses to make it in the NWT, and they are increasingly becoming convinced that this government is just fine with that. Indigenous leaders from across the territory have told me that the relationship between Indigenous governments and the GNWT is at the lowest point that it has been in decades. Even the foundation of consensus government, the relationship between the 19 Members, is so weak that accountability has become a pipe dream.

If history tells us anything, it's that things never seem to change.

A while back, I was reading comments made in the House by Mrs. Jane Groenewegen. She was once again raising ongoing issues that she had been raising for years. Many are the same issues I continue to raise 10 years later.

I've just read a GNWT report from 1991, and if you had told me it was written this year, I would believe you because the challenges it identifies are indiscernible from the challenges we face today.

Going back even further, Mr. Speaker, I watched a CBC documentary from 1973 in which Nellie Cournoyea talked about the problems with the way government operates and how it is structured. Again, those comments ring true today.

So, Mr. Speaker, in light of all this, how do I stay optimistic? Well, it is because I have seen the future.

I have been lucky enough to travel to every region of the NWT, to regional centres, communities, and the capital, and what I have seen is a new generation of leaders emerging in every corner of this territory. Every generation is shaped by common events, and these emerging leaders see the word in a different light than the champions of the status quo. They are educated in western and traditional ways to a degree and in a manner that hasn't been seen before. They are not content with continuing business as usual. They would prefer to work together to achieve progress; not what they are told progress is supposed to be, but progress as they see it.

This groundswell of young, educated, capable future leaders is what keeps me optimistic in light of the mounting challenges this territory is facing, and I encourage them now, at the beginning of this sitting and at the beginning of this election year, to step up and begin to take the helm and help steer

the NWT into the prosperous and equitable future that Northerners deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR FLORA CLI

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the last sitting Nahendeh region experienced the loss of one of our beloved elders, Flora "Big Momma" Cli. She was born on April 3, 1943, to William and Mary Cli. She passed away on December 1, 2018, after a long battle with cancer.

Flora was one of 11 children. I had the pleasure of knowing Flora personally, had the opportunity to be invited into her home for some tea and snacks that she always had available. She was always busy doing things around the house. However, she loved to be in her cook house that Francis and Steven built for her. This was where she thrived. She enjoyed being outside, having bush tea, and making dried meat and fish. People were always welcome in her home. Once you walked into her house, you were considered her family.

Flora was very selfless, always ready and willing to help others, regardless of the time or situation.

Flora had two children, Cheryl Cli and Steven Jose, whom she loved and cherished deeply. People spoke about how "Big Momma" would speak about her children, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild with so much pride and love. She raised them to be strong, independent, and hard-working individuals. She stressed to always be generous, loving, and caring for your family and friends. Those were strong values she held close to her heart. Flora loved and appreciated her extended family. She loved the opportunity to visit her sisters and brothers every time she came into Fort Simpson. Her nieces and nephews were a huge part of her life. She never wasted an opportunity to be with them.

When you talk to others about Flora, they loved the way she could tell a story about the past. She would get you hooked on every story, and before you know it, it was done. You were sad to hear it was finished, but you knew there was always going to be another great story she would share.

Flora will be dearly missed. We will miss her wisdom, humour, and caring attitude.

Flora was survived by her spouse Francis Betsaka, her one brother, two sisters, one daughter, one son, four grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and numerous nephews, nieces, great-nephews and -nieces. The Betsaka and Cli family would like to

thank everyone for their loving support and prayers during their time of sorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Flora Seline Cli will be sadly missed and never forgotten.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Our condolences to the family, as well, and to the community. Members' statements. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the visitors in the gallery. We have visitors in the gallery: Chief Eddie Sangris of Detah is here with us. I would like to thank him. We also have Chief Lloyd Chicot of Kakisa. He is here in the gallery. I would like to thank him for joining us.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.] I would like to recognize Chief Eddie Sangris, YK Dene First Nation. Thank you.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple people I would like to recognize. First, Ms. Kristine Vannebo-Suwala, the executive director of the Family Support Centre in Hay River. I want to welcome her here and thank her for all her hard work.

The second person I want to recognize is my beautiful girlfriend, Chantal Lafferty. I appreciate her coming out. This is the first time she has been to the House while I have been here, and she informed me that it might be the last. I'm not sure why, but that is what she said. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to take this opportunity to recognize Chief Sangris. We are, after all, on the Chief Drygeese traditional territory. I also want to take this opportunity to recognize Yellowknife North resident and president of Local 11, Frank Walsh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a



constituent of Inuvik Twin Lakes, Ms. Donna Rogers. Welcome to the Assembly.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Chief Edward Sangris of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. And, of course, we are meeting on Chief Drygeese Territory. I have two constituents I would like to recognize, as well; Lyda Fuller, executive director of the YWCA, and Debby Rybchinski, who is the manager of Alison McAteer House. They are both here for meetings with the NWT Shelter Network this week. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to recognize the constituents of Range Lake, and excuse me if I say it wrong. I am trying for the fiftieth time: David Wasyliciw.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Practice makes perfect. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Chief Sangris there, a strong supporter of my son Arnold and a mentor, and I think I heard Chief Chicot back there, so I would like to recognize him as well. Mahsi.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Thebacha constituent April Davies here with the NWT Shelter Network.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize an interpreter here, Lillian Elias, who is also a relative. Ms. Lillian Elias is a true example of culture, pride, drum dance, and language across the Northwest Territories and around the world, Mr. Speaker. Also, as an elder, a very respectful role model to many women; not just women, but everybody she crosses paths with. I would just like to welcome Lillian and wish her a good week here in Yellowknife. Quyanainni for being here, Lillian. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to recognize a few people; Chief Lloyd Chicot from the K'aagee Tu First Nations, I see him in the gallery, and also, Chief Edward Sangris from Detah. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us as part of our proceeding. Masi. Item 7, acknowledgements. Member for Range Lake.

### Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 17-18(3):  
JEFF SEABROOK - CANADA'S OUTSTANDING  
PRINCIPAL AWARD RECIPIENT

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate one of the Range Lake constituents, Mr. Jeff Seabrook. Jeff Seabrook is the recipient of Canada's Outstanding Principal Award.

Jeff is the principal of William McDonald Middle School, and his hard work in building trust and respect with students and their families has not gone unnoticed. It is an honour to have one of Canada's best principals situated right here in Yellowknife, supporting our students to the best of his abilities.

Please join me, everyone, in celebrating his accomplishments and all of the much-needed assistance he provides for our children in the North. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 507-18(3):  
BEARNET COMMUNICATION EMAIL  
REGARDING STRIKE NOTICE

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, his deputy minister sent an email to all GNWT staff that many interpreted as encouraging people to cross the picket line. Given the outrage this message has provoked among union members, will the Minister walk this statement back so that options to cross the picket line are excluded? Mahsi.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I will not. What we were doing was providing information out there. If you read the

statement very carefully, it does not encourage people to cross the picket line. It encourages them to speak to their union representative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I don't agree with the Minister's interpretation. I felt the information was gratuitous and fanned the flames. Did the Minister, in fact, consider the impact of having workers cross the picket line on workplaces and communities when he authorized the message?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The goal of the communique was to provide employees with information in response to a number of inquiries we had as to what some of their options might be. We thought we would provide them with the best information possible, including that. I have the ability to read, and what I read was that it encourages people to talk to their union representative.

**MS. GREEN:** Is the government prepared to enter into binding arbitration if mediation fails?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Let's not presuppose that mediation is going to fail. The ultimate goal at the end of the day is to reach an agreement during mediation. Failing that, we will have a discussion at that time, but let's not presuppose the outcome of mediation before it even happens.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister is no doubt aware, the temperature on this dispute has gone up very considerably in the last 24 hours because of actions on both sides. What is his plan to reduce the temperature around this labour dispute at this time? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** My plan is to appeal to people's good judgement and treat both sides with respect, and I think that will go a long way. We talk about respect in the Northwest Territories all the time, and I think that this is one of those situations where we show due respect on both sides of the table, and we would hope that that would bring the temperature down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 508-18(3):  
ARCTIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, and my questions are for the Honourable Premier. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: how is our government working with Indigenous governments to make sure that Canada's new

Arctic and Northern Policy Framework lives up to the promise of its title? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The Honourable Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first thing to note is that this is a federal framework. The Government of the Northwest Territories has been vocal about ensuring that Northwest Territories interests, including those of Indigenous governments, are given priority by the federal government. We continue to stress to Canada the importance of having an equal representation of Dene, Metis, and Inuit voices in the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework.

In the spring of 2018, when there were initial drafts of the federal framework, the Government of the Northwest Territories shared them with officials from the intergovernmental council and sought their comments. This includes the IRC. Since then, we have been sharing with intergovernmental council officials and are actively passing on their comments to the federal government.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to working closely with the members of the intergovernmental council and to continuing this process throughout the development of the framework. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate the response from the Premier. It is good to see that the GNWT is working laterally with Indigenous governments. I think that is quite important as we develop policy. Getting back to that, Mr. Speaker, would the Premier describe some of the improvements that are resulting from this collaboration with Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** One of the pieces that has been added to the current federal framework as a result of this collaboration is a section on the importance of reconciliation and self-determination.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate that. Reconciliation is important to a lot of Indigenous people across this territory, considering what has been going on over the last 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, there is some urgency to complete this new framework. Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier doing to expedite the process with his federal counterparts, not just within the executive, but with Infrastructure and other departments of the Northwest Territories that work with the federal government?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Throughout this federal process, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made every effort to meet the timelines set by Canada, regardless of how they

have evolved. That said, as a government, I will not support a document that does not clearly focus on a positive economic future for our territory and one that acknowledges the importance of increasing the power of northern voices.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to see that. There is a lot of power in allowing Indigenous governments the right to self-determination. It looks like the Government of the Northwest Territories is working that way. Mr. Speaker, when does the Premier expect that money from Canada will flow to implement the priorities that emerge from the new Arctic and Northern Policy Framework?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** In response to correspondence from the three northern premiers, the Prime Minister has committed in writing to investments in Budget 2019 that reflect the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, and I look forward to seeing those. However, it is the Government of the Northwest Territories' understanding that the overall governance and financial plan for the framework is not yet set, and this does create challenges for us in predicting what money will flow, when, or how. With that said and although the framework is not yet completed, we are seeing some initial movement in priority areas our government has set, for example, with the announcement that Minister LeBlanc made in Yellowknife related to Taltson a few weeks ago. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 509-18(3):  
REGIONAL WELLNESS COUNCILS

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asking questions of the Minister of Health about regional wellness councils, and I would like to follow up on some more questions here today. There seems to be some confusion about the NWT Health and Social Services board and regional wellness councils and trying to get information, so can the Minister explain what is the role of both regional councils and NWT Health and Social Services to provide information to MLAs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, there is no role for the members of the regional wellness councils to provide information to MLAs. The regional wellness council members exist to provide

input and guidance on the delivery of services at authority level, and they provide that information both directly at regional level but also through the leadership council up to the board. I do, however, encourage engagement among MLAs, community members, and regional wellness councils, given the shared commitment to improving health and social services in the Northwest Territories, but the regional wellness councils do not report to MLAs.

Having said that, I think the Member is aware that we have a protocol established within this Assembly that, if he or any Member has questions related to health and social services, those questions should be directed to the Minister and the Minister will respond within five days where appropriate and possible.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I appreciate that answer from the Minister. I am well aware of that process, but I am trying to get that information out there and understand the roles and that. So the Minister said that we go through the department to get the information through him, and the standard timeline is five days, so why does it take longer than that in some cases?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing as black and white in many of the things that we do. Many of the questions that come to me from MLAs are very complex in nature and require expertise at the front-line level, which requires us to go through our staff to the deputy minister's staff, to the authority's staff, to the front-line providers who are the ones who can provide us with that information. I do my best to endeavour to provide the MLAs with indication if answers are going to take longer than the standard five days, but in some situations, given the complexity and scope of the questions being asked, of course they take longer than five business days.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for that answer. Yes, I understand it takes longer than five days, so I am just going to give you a scenario. I asked a similar question that a regional council asked, and I was advised that I have to wait until the regional council gets this information. It's more than 30 days. It's a meeting that is going to happen in the springtime. So can he please explain to me why that information has to be shared with the regional council before coming to us?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I would strongly encourage the Member to check his e-mails again because I do believe I followed up on that when he raised these concerns. Our intention is not to wait to provide that information to the regional wellness council first. Our intention is to get that information available to both parties who ask, which are MLA and regional wellness council, they both asked the same information, but to get to the information as

soon as we can. However, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I am strongly encouraging the Member to attend the next regional wellness council, where staff from the department will be coming to provide a comprehensive presentation which will likely be far more involved and encompassing than a written response. So, no, Mr. Speaker, we are not intending to wait 30 days to get him the information. We will get it to him as soon as is possible, but we do encourage him to attend the regional wellness council so that he can partake in a much broader discussion.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will actually table the response from the Minister. It did say longer than 30 days. I will table the whole discussion there. Mr. Speaker, so the Minister is inviting me to this meeting. I greatly appreciate it, but the regional council has asked: will the Minister attend that same meeting so that he can explain everything to them, as well? So I appreciate his invitation. I gladly accept it if it fits into my schedule, but I am hoping the Minister will be able to attend that meeting, as well, so that he can hear the regional council's concerns, as well.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I love the Member's passion on this file. This is a file that I have some passion for, as well. I do encourage Members to attend regional wellness council meetings. They are public. Anybody can attend them, and there are usually great discussions to these. So, please, all Members, attend your regional wellness council meetings.

Mr. Speaker, I did attend a meeting with the leadership council in the spring, and the leadership council did express some concerns with how information is flowing to and from regional councils. At that time, I committed to the chairs that I would attend each of the regional wellness council meetings in each region, so at least one in each region, to have an opportunity to have those very discussions with the regional wellness council members. So far, I have been able to attend two. One of them had to be by telephone. I am not going to promise to attend that one meeting, because I do have a very full schedule, but I have made that commitment to all the regional wellness councils and I will live up to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 510-18(3):  
BILATERAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my questions to the Minister of the

Housing Corporation, it was really gratifying for myself to attend the discussions held in Deline with the Deline Got'ine Government and the NWT Housing Corporation staff as well as the invited representative of the CMHC. Discussions were held comparing programs available and the needs of the communities, concluding with action plans. My first question: with the winter road affordable travel season upon us in the Sahtu, is the NWT Housing Corporation planning similar community planning sessions in other Sahtu communities compared to sessions we had in Deline in October? Mahsi.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, we want to work with the Member and the leadership within the Sahtu region to identify some of these core needs. As I mentioned, I did table a document yesterday that shows that we are doing a variety of initiatives and programs throughout the Northwest Territories to address our core needs right across the Northwest Territories. We did send staff in to Deline. We are working with Deline right now on a community housing plan that will help identify the priorities that are needed for that community. We are more than willing to work with all of our Indigenous governments and communities across the Northwest Territories so that, at the end of the day, we do have community housing plans for every community in the Northwest Territories. I am committed and willing to work with the Member and the leadership from the Sahtu. I know we are looking at having some meetings in early April, and I am committed to looking to see if we can do a little tour, give a little information.

As I have said in this House, as well, we are looking at doing an Indigenous housing summit here in Yellowknife, and we will be inviting leadership as well as administration to come attend that meeting so that we can give the information out but to also hear some of the concerns from our leaders and our community members as we move forward in our housing strategy. I look forward to working with the Member to address those.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thanks to the Minister for that reply and that commitment. That is very gratifying to hear. When I review some of the programs available in designing a home, I come to realize that there are many options of energy-efficient programs. Will the Minister commit to providing some information on, say for example, showcasing a home with the energy-efficient programs offered by the Arctic Energy Alliance, as well as the programs designed for the Housing Corporation, so that the end result would be a nice product that is low in energy cost and designing that home with the local corporations?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Definitely. That is one of our priorities and one of the things that we do want to address. With public housing units, obviously, the NWT Housing Corporation also takes care of some of the utility costs, and anything that can help us reduce the costs in terms of energy efficiency, that money will go into more programs and services within the NWT Housing Corporation.

We want to work with our leadership. A good example is with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and this is something that we will highlight. Any programs that we do have within the NWT Housing Corporation, we will be addressing them. We will be sharing them. We will be educating our leaders and our communities during that Indigenous Housing Summit, and we will make sure that all of that information is given out to our leaders and our partners and stakeholders.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thanks to the Minister for that reply. My next question is: the Housing Corporation has a secured 10-year strategy. As part of that discussion on taking that strategy and applying it to some of the Sahtu communities or all of the Sahtu communities, and the other communities, for that matter, will that strategy be passed on to the other communities over the territory?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As the Member knows, and it has been said in this House, it was said in the sessional speech, we do have a national housing strategy, and the funding that we did receive in that, collectively within the federal and territorial government, is going to be \$140 million over the next 10 years.

On top of that, as we mentioned, we also did make an announcement of the co-investment fund where we did get a carve-out of \$60 million. That is very flexible in how we run that program. That program, in particular, we have been really sharing with our leadership and our partners. We are trying to get that funding out to all of our partners across the Northwest Territories, and we will continue to share that. That is something that we will highlight during our summit as well. If we do get into the Sahtu region, if we do a tour, we will share that information.

We are working with CMHC, as well, with their SEED funding to address getting some proposals brought forward, but I am willing to work with the Member and his region, as well as the leadership, on getting this information out to all communities across the Northwest Territories.

I thank the Member for bringing up these very informative programs that we need to address. We have about eight months left in this government, and the more contribution agreements that we can get signed, the more deals that we can get signed

in terms of working with the partners to address the housing need, I am definitely in strong support.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In conclusion here, I will just point out to the Minister some of the logistic arrangements in preparation for our discussion and tour coming up here. Two of the Sahtu communities are only accessible during the winter road season, and the other ones that live along the river bank are resupplied biannually. That helps with the logistics and mobilization of materials and planning. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. That was more of a statement to the government. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 511-18(3):  
CONSULTATIONS ON BATHURST CARIBOU  
HERD

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources on the crisis of the Bathurst caribou herd.

I want to again thank the Minister for taking me along on the community visits. I thought that the community visits were a very good idea. I just wish that they had happened before the submission with the joint proposal, the management proposals for the two herds. I would like the Minister to explain why there was no consultation on the joint management proposals, before they were submitted, with the Tlicho communities, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and even the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was glad that the Member was able to attend these sessions with me, and as I said in the sessions, I thought that it was very important that Regular Members come and listen to some of the concerns that the communities have firsthand. Again, I appreciate the Member taking the time to visit the communities with us, and also the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh on our trip out to Detah. They had an opportunity to hear firsthand some of the concerns that the community was sharing.

We had a lot of community membership show up, we met with the community leaders, and my understanding is that we were taking a lot of this information, and then we had representatives there

from the Wek'eezhii Land and Resource Board, as well. My understanding was that we were going to make these rounds and then make our submission. If that wasn't the case, I will confirm that, and I will follow up on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I can give him my assurance that those joint management proposals were sent in, in some cases, before we met with the communities. They were good meetings. I just wish that they had happened sooner, and I understand there is some urgency with this issue.

I have looked at these joint management proposals, and there doesn't seem to be any specific measures or actions related to habitat protection. There are just some further measures or restrictions on harvesting. I wonder: can the Minister explain why the joint management proposal for the Bathurst caribou herd does not contain any specific measures or actions for habitat protection, things like mobile caribou conservation measures, offsetting and compensatory mitigation, or even land use planning?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Bathurst joint management proposal includes a clear recommendation that the collaboratively developed Bathurst Caribou Range Plan be finalized and implemented, and work to develop the plan was initiated by ENR in 2013. The Bathurst Caribou Range Plan includes the measures you have mentioned, including the mobile conservation measures, offsetting and participation in environmental assessment, and land use planning throughout the herd's range in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. Yes, the joint management proposal does reference the range planning exercise and the plan itself, but it doesn't actually contain any of the measures from the plan. The problem seems to be with the plan itself. The plan, which I think is a good one, contains specific recommendations for community guardianship, habitat conservation, mobile caribou conservation measures, road planning and management, and so on, but the problem is that that plan doesn't seem to carry much weight yet.

Can the Minister explain what the status of the range plan is and why almost none of it was incorporated into the joint management proposal?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I will follow up on the status of the range plan. I will share it with this House, or I will share it with the Member.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. I look forward to an update on the range plan, and if I don't hear back before the end of the sitting, I might ask again, but maybe the Minister won't ever want to drive with me anywhere again.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, lastly, there doesn't seem to be any new funds identified for the caribou crisis in the budget address earlier today. Can the Minister tell me whether there is any new funding for caribou in the 2019-2020 budget? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The GNWT has committed considerable resources to the management of barren-ground caribou, and as the Member heard in our presentations to the communities that we visited, there are a number of other initiatives that we are working on. I have directed the department to put the plan together to come up with identifying the resources, the amount of resources, that we might need to implement some of these. One of them I think was expanding the Boots on the Ground program. I think there was the predator initiative that we are working on. So I have directed the Department of ENR to identify the places where we could get the funding and the amount of money that we might need so that we can implement these initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 512-18(3):  
BINDING ARBITRATION FOR UNW  
NEGOTIATIONS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the concern around a strike action is that, if the mediation process on the weekend does not go well, it will be a strike come Monday. We have an opportunity to stop that from happening by agreeing to binding arbitration before they get to the table. Is the Minister willing to consider that to prevent any potential for a strike, to cut it off from happening at all? Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I responded to the Member for Yellowknife Centre before, we are going into mediation this weekend, and we are going there with an attitude that we would like to see an agreement reached that benefits both the UNW, GNWT, and the people who we have been elected to serve from across the Northwest Territories. So I am not going to commit to anything until we get past this process of mediation, and I would like to see an agreement reached through that process.

**MR. TESTART:** I appreciate the Minister's optimism. I have been optimistic for three years, and now we are at a really very dangerous situation for bringing additional division into our communities. Mr. Speaker, I asked about information the government is providing. The Minister spoke of an email he sent out earlier in question period, and he said that he'd read the email and it did not seem to inflame tempers. I have the text of the email, and it says "unionized employees who are considering coming to work during job action are encouraged to discuss their choice with their union representative," and then further, "If you would like to come to work during job action, you must contact your immediate non-unionized supervisor." Mr. Speaker, "encouragement" is different than contacting "your non-unionized supervisor." Is the Minister sure that he has read this email and that the message sent to employees is clear?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Member said in his Member's statement before and he apologized for missing the boat for the last three years, and now he is telling us he has been optimistic for the last three years. Which one is it? I did read the email correctly. It is encouraging them to speak to their union representative, and, once they speak to their union representative, then they can speak to their supervisor if they think they would like to come to work. Mr. Speaker, it's quite simple there, in the text, and I am sure most people out there understand it.

**MR. TESTART:** What I meant in my Member's statement is that I should have been asking these questions three years earlier because the Minister has not led this process to a successful resolution. The Minister has led this process to a potential strike. So what is he doing, what actions, how is he approaching this differently, to result in a fair deal for northern workers?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** What I am doing is I am leaving it to those whom we have tasked to negotiate on our behalf and those who are tasked to negotiate on the union's behalf, with the understanding that I would like to see them come to a resolution through mediation this weekend, and, failing that, then we will take the next steps then.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, does the Minister believe that, at this point, new direction is required, either a new strategy, either a new leader for that team? It just seems like things are at an impasse, and I am fearful to gamble on optimism at this point.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Much like the Member for Hay River North, I am optimistic. I have been optimistic in the 14 years that I have been in here,

and I would like to see them come to an agreement this weekend that is beneficial to all. Failing that, again, we will have to decide on the next step. There is some back and forth that needs to be had yet, so let's let the people who we have tasked do that, and then, failing that, let's go political with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 513-18(3):  
ALL-SEASON ROAD TO AVALON MINING  
PROJECT

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today, I talked about a road to Nechalacho, the Avalon mine. I would like to ask the Minister if he agrees that an all-season road to any potential mine increases investor comfort. Thank you.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have spoken in this House many times, the lack of infrastructure is holding back some of the economic opportunities for the Northwest Territories. This particular road that the Member is talking about is an interesting concept, but this government has identified three strategic corridors in our mandate, and that's what we continue to keep our priorities on.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** On the viability of continuing to put a road in to the diamond mines, that is not something I am opposed to, but I think that this road might have more benefits to a complete road all the way up the Slave Geological at this time, although I am not in here prepared to talk against a road into the Slave Geological, but it is my opinion that the road into the Thor Lake would be something that is viable. I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister would take the step of consulting with the company to see what their feeling is on an all-season road that will run down from Ingraham Trail to Thor Lake.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I meet with industry stakeholders all the time, and I am sure everyone that I even met at roundup would love to have a road to their project. The reality on the ground is this government has a mandate commitment, as I have said in my previous statement, and we will continue to focus on those. If Avalon would like to pursue a road, I am sure that they would like to have a conversation with myself and Indigenous governments that would be affected in that region, and I could sit down and have a conversation with them, but where that project would go from there would be dependent on a number of things.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** So the Minister is telling me that, if Avalon or the company that would be building the mine at Thor Lake would like to discuss possibility of having an all-season road built to their mine site, then they should come to the Minister to have that discussion and also that they should be prepared to do consultation with the YK Dene? Is that correct?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes. As I have said, I would be willing to have a discussion with any mining proponent in the Northwest Territories that is looking to do investments in the NWT. What we can clearly do is have an open dialogue, conversation, about what they are thinking. If they are proposing a road in that region, we can clearly lay out what would need to take place to do that. I am not saying that this government or that future governments would support building a road strictly to one mine. That is not what I am saying. I am just saying we are open to having a conversation with them and clearly lay out a path that they would need to take.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason I am not asking the Minister of ITI questions, I am asking the Minister of Infrastructure, is because I am interested in the road. I think the road would have benefits to Thor Lake. We are not building a road to Whati to accommodate NICO mines, but we are building a road to Whati because we are building a road to Whati, and what happens from there would be beneficial to the mining operation over there. This is the same type of concept I am talking about. Build a road to the shore by Thor Lake that will benefit the community of Lutselk'e and other people who wish to travel from that area. It's a fairly strategic point when you are trying to travel on the Great Slave Lake. So my question, I guess, is: will the Minister have discussions maybe with the communities, like first consultation with the YK Dene and maybe further consultation with Lutselk'e to see if it would be viable? I am sure, like the Minister said, the road would be very acceptable to the mining company, but why bother having that discussion if no one agrees with it? Would the Minister of Infrastructure agree to have a discussion with the YK Dene and Lutselk'e on the viability of a road from Ingraham Trail to Thor Lake? Thank you.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As the Member clearly laid out a scenario that could possibly work, it is something very similar to the Whati road, where we did a joint proposal or joint exploratory work with the Tlicho government on the road to Whati. That ended up resulting in a road that is going to get built here in the next couple of years. If that is something that the YK Denes communities and Lutselk'e want to consider, I would strongly suggest that they request a meeting, and we can sit down and have

those discussions, how we can figure out if there is an opportunity there that we can maybe work into our strategy going forward.

As I have said in this House, we have three strategic transportation corridors that are reflected in the mandate of this government. There is the Department of Infrastructure's transportation strategy, Connecting Us. I believe that has been clearly laid out for the next 20 years, but that is a discussion that we could have with the communities. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 514-18(3):  
FORT PROVIDENCE YOUTH CENTRE  
PROGRAMMING

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are in follow-up to my statement on the Fort Providence Youth Centre, and my questions are to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, Mandate Commitment 2.5.3 says, "We will support opportunities for youth by ensuring effective youth programming, such as the Youth Corps, Youth Contributors, Youth Ambassador Programs, Youth Centres, and Youth Tours." Can the Minister give us a general update on the work his department has done to fulfill this commitment, including the work still yet to come in 2019-2020? Mahsi.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a previous position I held within the public service, I did work as a regional youth and volunteer officer. These programs have always been very well-utilized throughout the Northwest Territories. They continue to be utilized, and we continue to support these programs in all of our regions and all of our communities. We have some very great employees who promote these programs, and I know that the Member did bring up the youth who wanted to do the Youth Centres Initiative. I really appreciate that leadership within the Member's community of Fort Providence when we went through the Detah or Deh Cho tour, our last one. The programs are always utilized to the maximum of their dollars.

Any information that the Member or any Members in the legislative would like to find out about the programs that we have within MACA, we have some very good details on our website, and we would be more than willing to continue to move that forward, as well as looking at our strategy that we are working on, renewing our youth strategy, and



sharing that information with all Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has provided funding to staff of the new youth centre until the end of March 2019. How can MACA work with other departments to help the youth centre in Fort Providence?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I guess, right off the bat, I can encourage the Member, encourage the coordinator, anyone who is working on developing programs and services for the youth centre in Fort Providence, to reach out to our regional staff in our Fort Smith office to discuss the options. Our staff will be more than pleased to work with the coordinator, as well as the youth, to develop what kind of programs they would like to see offered in the youth centre and work on developing an application process. I do encourage the Member, as well as the coordinator, to take that as the first step and move on from there.

**MR. NADLI:** Municipal and Community Affairs coordinates a number of funding programs that the Minister had made reference to for youth-focused initiatives. What options exist to help the new youth centre in Fort Providence, the operation over the next year and beyond?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** We do have a Youth Centres Initiative where youth centres can actually apply for funding up to a maximum of \$25,000. As Members know, we have youth centres throughout the Northwest Territories, as well as friendship centres, that can access this funding. It is on a first-come, first-served basis, and we do have a lot of youth centres, so sometimes they don't get that full \$25,000. We try to distribute it the best way that we can. We also have a Youth Contributions Program, as well as the NWT Youth Corps Program, that they can look at accessing with the youth centre. The youth in general can look at accessing other programs that we have in departments, but right now, first off, there is just the Youth Centres Initiative.

Like I said, all of that information on programs that we offer through MACA under the youth portfolio, the details are on the website. I encourage anyone who is looking at programs for our youth to visit our website and see what kind of programs we do offer.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not all youth have access to computers and likely some of them are unable to understand the layers of information that are unloaded on the MACA website. What are the process and deadlines for applications to these funds, if any, and will the

Minister commit his interest to ensure that he works with the community to ensure that the operation of the youth centre continues? Mahsi.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As we come to a new fiscal year, coming up April 1<sup>st</sup>, that is when the applications start arriving to our regional offices. Our regional staff do a good job of getting that information out to all of our partners that work with youth.

In terms of making sure that our youth centres continue to get the funding and support that they need, as I mentioned, we do have a Youth Centres Initiative that we work with our youth centre coordinators, as well as our rec leaders and people in the communities, to make sure that these programs are available for our youth.

Once again, if the funding is already exhausted for this fiscal year, come April 1<sup>st</sup>, I encourage the Member and the coordinators right across the territory to look at the funding options that we do provide through MACA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 515-18(3):  
HOUSING UNITS IN AKLAVIK AND FORT  
MCPHERSON

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I would like to ask the Minister: what was the issue that we had with the meters on the units that were built before Christmas in Aklavik and Fort McPherson? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand that the buildings that were in Fort McPherson, as well as Aklavik, when we did those multi-family buildings, are designed to have individual meters on each of the units. In this case, the units that we did have only had one meter.

It was brought forward to us when we went on the tour with the Member to Aklavik and opened up, I'll put a plug in here, our Northern Pathways to Housing, and we did hear those concerns. We are looking at addressing them, and the Member said it in his statement, the sooner that we can do it, then the sooner that we can get families into those units and address the waiting list for public housing and our families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** That leads me to my next question: how long will it take to install meters on each unit, and when can people expect to move in?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned, once we did hear the concerns that were brought forward to us by members of the community and the MLA, we started working on them, getting them addressed. We are hoping to have them done by the end of the fiscal year, March 31<sup>st</sup>. Once they are completed, passed inspections, and everything is good to go, we will start working on getting people into those units as soon as we can.

**MR. BLAKE:** Instead of waiting a few months with the four-plex in Aklavik, can we simply let more people move and divide the power bill into four instead of letting people wait three to four months? These people could move in right away and share the cost of the power bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Obviously, that is a good solution. I will have to consult with our LHOs as well as our regional office to look at that, and how we can. Obviously, you might have one unit that is using more power and somebody trying to conserve their energy. We are going to have to find a way that suits all people who are in the units. Obviously, the best solution would have a meter on all the units, so that you know what each of the tenants is paying. It would not be fair for somebody who is trying to conserve energy when somebody else is using a lot of energy. That is something that we need to consider moving forward, but it is a very good suggestion. We can take a look at it, and I will make sure that I get back to the Member.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on future units, will the Minister ensure each unit has its own meter so we never have this issue again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Like I said, when we do the multi-family buildings, we want to make sure that meters are put on each of the units. We have to have better communication with our contractors and anyone who does work for the NWT Housing Corporation, we do have to make sure that they understand what our building codes are, national building codes. In terms of multi-family buildings, it needs to be just, and we will make sure that our contractors do understand that moving forward so that this doesn't happen again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 516-18(3):  
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions about Bob's Navy that will be directing to the Vice Admiral of Infrastructure. I'm talking, of course, about the Marine Transportation Services, and I have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. When Cabinet purchased NTCL, they purchased a lot of decommissioned vessels, barges and tugs. It is my understanding that disposal of those units has begun. Is that correct? I'll just start with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the deckhand for asking the question. To address the concerns of both hazardous materials as well as a review of the highest and best use of assets, including decommissioning barges, tugs, and other equipment the Marine Transportation Services identified to clean up scrap metal mostly located in Hay River at this point. That work has already commenced. There was an RFP out in July, and it started in late 2018, and we suspect that that will be completed by the fall of 2019.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Could the Minister elaborate on just what is going to be disposed of? I know there are a couple dozen barges right on the water, and then there are probably a dozen tugs in the NTCL yard itself. Could he elaborate on how much of that is going to disappear from the landscape?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** To date, we have approximately removed 500 tonnes, so that is a significant amount. We are looking at possibly committing an additional 500 tonnes, but to date, out of that 500 tonnes is included 10 barges and one tug so far.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Now, I know scrap metal has a value. It is probably not much. Is this costing the government money, or is there some money coming into the government's coffers from this?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Marine Transportation Services is proceeding with the scrap metal cleanup through a cost avoidance plan, and to date we have had proceeds from that sale of \$600,000.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and finally, if the Minister could please talk about how this has been used as an opportunity to keep money in the North, and employ Northerners and train Northerners? Could the Minister explain what type of northern content was included in the RFP

and what type of northern businesses are being employed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** There are a number of questions there, but I'll gladly answer them. First of all, on the northern content, we can be able to supply that information once the scrap metal removal plan is completed. We can commit to doing that. He has asked about whether there are opportunities; we are looking at other opportunities of partnering with Indigenous governments or development corporations to provide business opportunities, training, employment, and those types of things for scrap metal up and down the river system. NTCL has a number of properties up and down the river system that have years and years and decades old of scrap metal that still have to be cleaned up, so we will be looking at those opportunities going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 517-18(3):  
NEW MINE POTENTIAL RESOURCE REVENUES  
FORECASTING ANALYSIS

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask questions to the Minister of ITI. I would like to ask the Minister if, prior to any mine opening, if they do potential resource revenues, that would be coming from the mine to the two governments? Thank you.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, depending on where they are in their cycle, if they are very close to starting up, our analysis unit does some forecasting for royalty revenue for the following year's budget.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I am going to assume that Neptune Resources or NICO mines has had that evaluation done. Can the Minister tell me if the resource revenue is coming from that mine is greater than the cost of the road from the highway to Whati?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I would have to get that level of detail from the department, but to clarify on my other statement, when we're doing forecasting of royalties and revenues from these mining companies, particularly in their very first years of operation, there are tax implications that they have with the federal government that they get to write off a number of these costs. It takes a while to put these mines in a situation where they are profitable versus what they are allowed to write off in their taxes.

I can look at what the detail we have around the NICO mine and see what their projection is for that ongoing. There are three different types of ore bodies there, and those are subjected to change to commodity markets, as well. It makes it a little tougher to probably figure out exactly what this thing is going to generate for revenue in the coming years.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Recognizing that we are in very early stages of any potential for what is happening in the mine that I spoke of earlier at Thor Lake at Nechalacho, I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister would be willing to have the department take a look at the potential resources revenues from that mine?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I could certainly have that discussion with the department. We don't know exactly what they're going to do yet. We know the opportunity they are looking at is a mini micro mine, very, very small-scale, but we can certainly have those discussions and see what the opportunities are for generating some type of resource revenues out of the mini mine that they are proposing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, replies to budget address (day 1 of 7). Item 13, petitions. Item 14, reports of standing and special committees. Item 15, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 16, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 322-18(3):  
MAIN ESTIMATES, 2019-2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 323-18(3):  
BEARNET COMMUNICATIONS TO THE  
EMPLOYEES, FEBRUARY 5, 2019

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Main Estimates, 2019-2020"; and "Bearnet Communications to the Employees, February 5, 2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 324-18(3):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
417-18(3): SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS IN  
TU NEDHE-WILIDHEH

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 417-18(3): Supporting Small Business in Tu Nedhe-Willideh." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 17, notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 31-18(3):  
REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TO ENTER  
BINDING ARBITRATION WITH THE UNION OF  
NORTHERN WORKERS

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Friday, February 8, 2019, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that this Assembly call on the Government of the Northwest Territories to agree to enter into binding arbitration before the scheduled strike begins. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion. Item 18, notion of motion for first reading of bills. Item 19, motions. Item 20, first reading of bills. Item 21, second reading of bills. Item 22, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement, and Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

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

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

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to report progress. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement, and Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020, and would like to report progress, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

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

---Carried

Masi. Item 24, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Thursday, February 7, 2019, 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. Acknowledgments
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 2 of 7)
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
- Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 7, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

