



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 36

18th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, October 12, 2018

Pages 4243 – 4266

The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)
Government House Leader
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors
Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board

Mr. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Ms. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)
Premier
Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Hon. Robert McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation

Mr. Daniel McNeely

(Sahtu)

Hon. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs
Minister Responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation
Minister Responsible for Addressing Homelessness
Minister Responsible for Youth
Minister Responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Herbert Nakimayak

(Nunakput)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Hon. Wally Schumann

(Hay River South)
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment
Minister of Infrastructure

Hon. Louis Sebert

(Thebacha)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Lands
Minister Responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency

Mr. R.J. Simpson

(Hay River North)

Mr. Kieron Testart

(Kam Lake)

Mr. Shane Thompson

(Nahendeh)

Mr. Cory Vanthuyne

(Yellowknife North)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Michael Ball

Committee Clerks

Ms. Gail Bennett
Ms. Jennifer Franki-Smith (trainee)

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Mr. Glen Rutland
Ms. Alyssa Holland

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	4243
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	4243
94-18(3) – Fiscal and Economic Update (R. McLeod)	4243
95-18(3) – Housing Actions in the Tlicho Region (Moses)	4244
96-18(3) – Summer Highway Construction Update (Schumann)	4245
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	4246
Aurora College Foundational Review (Simpson)	4246
Recreation North (Thompson)	4247
Northwest Territories Economic Symposium (O'Reilly).....	4247
Community Response to Rockhill Fire Crisis in Yellowknife (Green).....	4248
Mackenzie Valley Highway Environmental Assessment (McNeely).....	4248
Orange Shirt Day (Testart).....	4249
Northern Carbon Pricing (Vanthuyne).....	4249
Capital Needs in Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh (Beaulieu).....	4250
Extending Length of Ferry Services (Blake).....	4250
Support for Tourism in Tuktoyaktuk (Nakimayak)	4251
Edehzhie Conservation Initiative (Nadli)	4251
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	4252
ORAL QUESTIONS	4252
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	4265
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	4265
ORDERS OF THE DAY	4265

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 12, 2018****Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:03 p.m.

Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Masi. Good morning, Members. Item 2, Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 94-18(3):
FISCAL AND ECONOMIC UPDATE**

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to update Members on our fiscal and economic situation and some of our ongoing challenges.

When I presented the 2018-2019 budget in February, I noted the progress we had made towards our fiscal strategy but also described our revenue challenges, with total revenue for 2018-2019 expected to be about \$120 million less than 2016-2017 revenues. This decline in revenue over a two-year period has presented an enormous challenge for our government. We have met that challenge through careful management of expenditure growth, while still advancing actions described in the mandate of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we are now at about the mid-point of the fiscal year, and I can report that we continue to be on track, with signs of very modest improvements in our fiscal environment in the future.

For 2018-2019, federal infrastructure contributions are responsible for slightly higher revenues than expected at the time of the 2018-2019 main estimates. As the planned infrastructure contributions grow over the next few years, our revenues will also grow. Additionally, we are seeing indicators of improved stability in our own-source revenues over the next few years and modest increases in our Territorial Formula Financing Grant from Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as Members know, we need to balance revenue growth with expenditure growth

unless we plan to continually take on more debt. We are all aware of our expenditure pressures, including the impacts of the aging population, the need for strategic investments in education and wellness, the importance of strategic infrastructure and other investments to support our economy, and the importance of reaching a fair collective agreement with our employees.

This Legislative Assembly and future Legislative Assemblies will need to continue to carefully manage our financial resources to ensure our overall sustainability to help create a future where our people can thrive and be healthy, where a well-managed environment contributes to our economic well-being and quality of life, and where a strong economy provides jobs and opportunities for our communities as well as funding for community governments.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT economy continues to show mixed results. Indicators like retail and wholesale trade, labour income, and diamond production all show strong growth on a year-to-date basis compared to the same period in 2017. Information on resident employment, income support cases, and the overall territorial population show deterioration compared with the same period in 2017.

The medium-term forecast for our economy needs to reflect the reality that the NWT economy continues to be built on the foundation of resource development and will continue to be into the future. We need to face the reality that our diamond mines are maturing, and we cannot take our economic foundation for granted. We need to continue to make strategic investments in our infrastructure and continue to build our base through diversifying our economy. The Northern Prosperity Economic Symposium that was held in early October and included leaders from the GNWT and Indigenous governments reinforced the importance of finding concrete ways to work together to support a prosperous and strong territory.

Mr. Speaker, during this sitting, we will be considering the Capital Estimates 2019-2020. As part of this plan, we are proposing \$118 million for highways, \$93 million for social infrastructure, \$42 million for energy projects, \$29 million for community governments, and \$62 million in other

projects in support of program delivery. This investment creates important economic activity and jobs throughout the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories and our government are facing significant economic challenges, but I hope that I can provide to this House and to the residents of our territory some assurance that this government will always remain mindful of our long-term financial objectives and the future well-being of the people we were elected to serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 95-18(3):
HOUSING ACTIONS IN THE TLICHO REGION

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has been working collaboratively with the Tlicho Government to address critical housing issues in the Tlicho region. In order to meet this government's commitments to address the cost of living, the Housing Corporation is continuing to implement northern solutions for northern housing. A crucial element of this approach is working in partnership with other orders of government, such as the Tlicho, to address affordable housing challenges.

Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories formed a working group involving leadership from all Tlicho communities, as well as senior management from the Housing Corporation. The group has met a number of times over the past year, leading to improved planning and an acceleration of housing activities.

The group has identified and prioritized areas that would benefit from an increased focus including: repairs and maintenance, analyzing the existing housing stock, finding solutions to homelessness, avoiding evictions, building capacity, and improved communications with residents of the Tlicho region.

I am encouraged by the recent work that has been undertaken by the Tlicho Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories Housing Working Group. I look forward to the reporting on the actions that they will take in these areas.

I want to promote the work that is already being done by the Housing Corporation to address many of these issues. One of these actions is the introduction of a housing stability worker in Behchoko. This person will work towards supporting residents in developing strategies to keep their housing. Sometimes, the obligations related to housing can be lost in the demand of

other pressing issues such as addictions, child care, family violence, poor health, and other social issues. The housing stability worker will work with vulnerable tenants by connecting them to vital community programs and services. This support approach will hopefully lead to more stable tenancies. This program is up and running in Behchoko right now with an office set up in the Tlicho's Ko Go Cho Complex.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also let this House know the Northern Pathways to Housing program is expected to be completed in Behchoko in the near future. This project is designed to help address homelessness. Once finished, it will house four single adults who would have otherwise been experiencing homelessness. This project has already shown to be successful so far in Fort Simpson, where four previously homeless individuals have been stably housed for nearly half a year. Mr. Speaker, this project is truly an example of a northern solution for northern housing. At the inception of its design, there were no projects like it anywhere in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Northern Pathways program is intended to house people first and then to improve their housing sustainability by addressing the issues that contributed to their homelessness. This approach is indicative of how our government is looking for ways to deliver services in a more integrated manner.

In support of our elders remaining in their home communities, the Housing Corporation recently constructed a seniors' aging-in-place nine-plex in Whati. This facility was toured by federal deputy Ministers just the other day and showcases the innovative approaches that the Northwest Territories is taking to address our issues. I am hopeful that this important infrastructure will result in more seniors staying in Whati and continuing to pass on their wisdom to our future generations.

Lastly, the Housing Corporation has begun preliminary discussions with the Tlicho towards the development of four community housing plans for their region. Each individual community plan will feed into a larger regional plan. These housing plans will be developed by the community for their community. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will look to hire a local facilitator to gather local feedback and to help plan for a community housing forum. At the end of the process, communities will have a detailed, comprehensive community profile, a needs analysis, and a housing plan.

These plans will be invaluable going forward for all housing stakeholders. They could be utilized for planning for new infrastructure, partnership proposals for any level of government, supporting

private market proponents in their projects, housing design, and numerous other housing planning purposes.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has presented this concept to the Tlicho Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories Working Group and will be working with Tlicho representatives towards the development of these plans over the next year. My understanding is that at least one community housing plan will be initiated in the Tlicho Region in the coming weeks, upon formal approval of the community's leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that there are considerable housing challenges in our small communities. We all know that there are considerable housing challenges in Whati, Behchoko, Wekweeti, and Gameti. Tackling these issues head on together is what's required. I know that the Tlicho leadership appreciates the efforts of the Tlicho Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories Housing Working Group. Joining forces with the Tlicho Government will provide more leverage to our efforts. I look forward to improved housing outcomes as we work together towards shared housing aspirations for our people.

Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 96-18(3):
SUMMER HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, our government is following through on its commitment to invest in transportation infrastructure by strengthening connections with our federal partners.

Improving our existing highway system helps to keep communities connected while improving safety for all road users. This also provides jobs and fosters skills and capacity development for all Northerners. Today, I am pleased to provide an update on many highway improvements that were undertaken this year.

Mr. Speaker, we have improved more than 200 kilometres of highway this summer, including three community access roads and three bridges at a cost of \$46.4 million. This work was funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government under the Government of Canada's New Building Canada Plan.

On Highway No. 1, work got underway to improve the embankment and drainage from kilometres 207 to 222. Pit development, material production, and

culvert installations were undertaken, and work has progressed to a point where improvements to this section can be completed next year. Improvements along Highway No. 1 also included the complete resurfacing of the Fort Simpson and Kakisa access roads.

Rehabilitation completed from kilometres 256 to 332 of Highway No. 3 this summer have resulted in an improved road surface. Road widening, structural strengthening, drainage improvements, resurfacing, and chipseal all took place on this section of roadway between Behchoko and Yellowknife. Rehabilitation work on the approaches to the Deh Cho Bridge, including reconstruction of the approach shoulders, soil nailing, and asphalt surface repairs, were completed earlier this fall and have further strengthened connections along this route.

Along the Ingraham Trail, roadway widening, structural strengthening, drainage improvements, resurfacing, and the application of chipseal took place between kilometres 49 and 51, and this work is substantially completed. Progress was also made on further planning and surveys intended to support the design of additional guardrail installation along this highway.

Mr. Speaker, rehabilitation of Highway No. 6 from kilometres 28 to 42 was completed this summer. This highway is now completely chipsealed, providing improved comfort and safety to travellers and residents of Fort Resolution. Highway No. 7 also saw surface improvements between kilometres 137.5 and 153 to help mitigate impacts on the highway's water-susceptible soil.

Mr. Speaker, our northernmost highways also received improvements this summer, with brushing and gravel surfacing taking place along the Dempster Highway and the start of reconstruction work on the Inuvik Airport Access Road. The Inuvik Airport Access Road Project is now 35 per cent complete.

The final completion inspection for the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway is scheduled for the end of October, and all signs, guardrails, and delineators will have been installed at that time. The operation of this highway was a success this past year, with many tourists visiting the area.

Mr. Speaker, bridges are an essential part of our highway system. It is important to ensure our bridges are maintained and rehabilitated appropriately, which is why our government has a number of bridge projects on the go. This summer, we completed the rehabilitation of the Buffalo River Bridge on Highway No. 5, which allows the bridge to handle modern highway loads and ensures an extended service life.

Work also began this month on the replacement of the Hay River to Pine Point Bridge on Highway No. 5. The project involves replacing the bridge superstructure, and construction is expected to be completed by the fall of 2019. Once completed, the bridge will be an open-deck bridge to better meet the current and projected traffic loads. During rehabilitation, traffic will be diverted to the nearby CN Rail bridge.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to improving our existing highway system, we are also committed to expanding our system. I am pleased to say that the Canyon Creek Access Road near Norman Wells is scheduled to officially open this November. Construction of this road has provided a significant boost to the Sahtu Region.

To date, 84 people have been employed through the Canyon Creek All-Season Access Road project, 28 of which were local Sahtu residents and 36 of which were Northerners from other parts of the territory. Eight of these individuals are now qualified heavy-equipment operators. These training and employment opportunities have allowed residents of the Sahtu to gain valuable skills that will be useful for future projects and opportunities. With this new road, residents will benefit from improved access to traditional hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities. The new road could open up potential resource development south of Norman Wells.

Looking ahead, our government is preparing for another active highway construction season, with reconstruction work scheduled for sections of Highways Nos. 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8. This work will be funded under the Government of the Northwest Territories' third bundle of highway capacity improvement projects approved under the New Building Canada Plan and will extend the work done under the previous bundles to support safe travelling, community access roads, and resource development.

Mr. Speaker, our highway system is an essential part of our transportation network. It connects communities and unlocks our economic potential by enabling exploration and development. We will continue to work with the federal government to secure further funding for our short- and long-term infrastructure needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in February 2017, I stood up in this House and asked the Minister of Education to undertake a foundational review of Aurora College. I asked because I believed the college was both underperforming and underutilized. Education is the cornerstone of every prosperous society. With a presence in 24 communities, Aurora College is key to achieving true and lasting prosperity across the NWT.

However, as they say, be careful what you ask for because you just might get it. The foundational review has been completed, and, while the report echoed many of the concerns I have heard, it is more of a proposal than an evaluation. The report essentially has one overarching recommendation, which is to have the government transform the college into a university based in Yellowknife.

Because of time constraints, I will list only a few of the reasons why I reject this recommendation.

The first is simple: we must stand guard against the onslaught of centralization of services in the capital, which come at the expense of other communities. I refuse to allow this Assembly to pull the plug on Fort Smith.

The second is that it is irresponsible to embark down a path of spending an unknown but undoubtedly immense amount of our limited funds on university when we have a graduation rate of 67 per cent in the NWT, which is actually closer to 40 per cent in the communities, and when many of the graduates require upgrading before they can even consider post-secondary.

After high school, there is no shortage of universities to attend, but, before graduation, our students usually only have one choice of school, and those are the schools that we need to invest in if we want to effect lasting change for our residents.

Another reason is that, although Aurora College is an arm's-length institution, attached to that arm is the hand of the GNWT wrapped firmly around the neck of the college. The Department of ECE bears much of the responsibility for the state of the college, and for this Assembly to sign a blank cheque authorizing ECE to go ahead and build a university would be to neglect our core oversight function.

However, Mr. Speaker, with all that being said, I am not opposed to the eventual growth of Aurora College into a polytechnic university, but that isn't something we should rush into based on a consultant's report.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SIMPSON: First, we must fix the issues at Aurora College so that they can provide the educational services that our residents need and deserve. At the same time, we can begin to lay a solid foundation so that the college can develop and grow, premised on successful program delivery, and based, not on the opinion of a southern consultant, but on the collective vision of our people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECREATION NORTH

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on September 25th, Recreation North provided a news release that spoke about what they had done and are planning to do. The Recreation North 2015 Arctic Inspiration Prize Laureate is a tri-territorial partnership of the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon, the NWT Recreation and Parks Association, and Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut. It was established to provide training to strengthen the capacity of recreation leaders in northern, rural, and remote communities. I believe the training is a great supplement to what the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is presently doing.

Mr. Speaker, after developing and piloting training for northern recreation leaders, Recreation North announced its future plans. The Recreation North Training Program launching in November 2018 will be a series of remotely delivered learning events. Evaluation of the pilot demonstrated the value of training to the participants and employees. I would like to share a couple of comments from the first participants.

"I appreciate learning from the others. A lot of brilliant ideas and creativity was shared. Most of our experience was very similar, even though we came from three different territories."

"Staff has gained confidence and was able to do the programming. The person was able to apply what they learned instantly, and I was able to see him doing it on a regular basis."

Moving forward, Recreation North is making a few changes to the training program by offering flexible learning opportunities. The program is flexible and works around people's work schedules in online blocks. This is really good. Students can work around busy schedules and complete certification at a reasonable pace, in a reasonable way.

Mr. Speaker, the training comprises a series of learning events delivered remotely by distance. In-person learning is offered through each territorial recreation and parks association. Each learning event takes about five hours to complete. Individuals may take one or several learning events, for personal interest or professional development, or choose 12 learning events for certification in northern recreation leadership. The flexibility in how the program is now laid out will allow individuals to begin at any point throughout the year.

I would like to thank Recreation North for all their work and look forward to seeing future success stories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ECONOMIC SYMPOSIUM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci Monsieur le President. Back in February, the Premier made a statement about the Arctic Policy Framework that included a reference to a northern summit on economic development. When I questioned the Premier on this initiative on March 1st, he said the "purpose of the summit is to seek input into the writing of the NWT chapter of the Arctic Policy Framework" and that it would likely be held within the next couple of months. The Premier further stated that we would be "paying for experts in different economic sectors to participate." The Premier said, "We are realizing that to diversify our economy is not as easy as it looks or sounds."

We need input from every sector or every possible source so that we can come up with a plan that will work. Just relying on our traditional sources to come up with a vision and a new economic diversification is not as easy as it sounds. We want to be as inclusive as possible."

When asked if Regular MLAs would be allowed to participate, the Premier said, "We would be pleased to discuss it with committees certainly," but that "our experience has been that sometimes it affects the input from people who are there, but, certainly, I have no problem with it. We should at least have a discussion on it."

The first notice that Regular MLAs received of this event that was held October 1st to 3rd came via the weekly media advisory on Ministerial activities on September 24th. The same day, I asked the Premier for an agenda and a participant list. That was finally provided three days later, after I raised the request a second time. Sorry, I can't share the agenda or participant list because, believe it or not, the guest

list for this consultation is confidential. I can confirm that the focus appears to have been largely related to non-renewable resource development. Happily, the communique issued on October 4th from the symposium seems to take a more balanced approach but was again made without any input from this side of the House.

I will have questions for the Premier about the NWT Economic Symposium and what happened with the commitments he made in this House to make this event inclusive, balanced, and collaborative. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO ROCKHILL FIRE
CRISIS IN YELLOWKNIFE

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday morning last week, I woke to the news that the Rockhill apartments were on fire. When I looked out my kitchen window, I could see the black smoke, and I feared for the lives of the families who called Rockhill home. For 20 years, the transitional housing program has helped hundreds of families rebuild their lives. It has become indispensable, and I worked there myself for six years. The good news is that all 87 people who lived at Rockhill escaped unharmed. The bad news of course is that the building was destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, since the fire, the YWCA has had an overwhelming amount of good news. First, Northview Property had enough empty units to accommodate most of the families. The remainder found places on their own, or they have now bunked in with family and friends.

Another highlight was the government response. The City of Yellowknife opened their facilities. A GNWT emergency response team came in to register families and provide them with services, from replacing ID to reissuing income assistance cheques.

Mr. Speaker, businesses stepped up. The diamond mining companies pledged money. DC Moving spent three days picking up and dropping off furniture. The Co-op donated \$7,500 in gift cards. This isn't the whole list, but it is an indication of how business rallied to the cause.

Faith groups joined in as well. The St. Vincent de Paul society provided vouchers for shopping at their thrift store and collected clothing donations, while the Islamic Centre bought new kitchen supplies for families. The Salvation Army provided all the meals at the Multiplex and the Field House.

Individuals went out of their way with online donations. The Students Against Drunk Driving at St. Pat's sold slushy drinks. The Department of Justice collected gift cards. Another group held a scavenger hunt. Yellowknife Catholic Schools hosted a Thanksgiving dinner.

Mr. Speaker, the response has been so generous that it is truly overwhelming. The YWCA now faces some tough decisions about the future of its housing program and housing staff, and they do so with the knowledge that the community has their back. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding the last spike, Mr. Speaker, realizing the Sahtu potential and the area as a major economic contributor towards the territorial and national GDP.

Mr. Speaker, all-season road access to this region's 26 per cent of the NWT land quantum is essential to our NWT's resource development initiative, while reducing the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, while ongoing discussions of investment confidence in forming the Arctic Policy Framework and modernizing regulatory reform is strategically complementary, fundamental to any project is financing.

Mr. Speaker, with the recent June Mackenzie Valley Highway funding announcement totals 37 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, tailoring and designing the next phase on this infrastructure includes the environmental assessment, a phase of public engagement. However, this project engagement would only be too common, which has had decades of public studies and community discussions.

Mr. Speaker, carrying on from the draft Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's work plan dated December 2013 would allow 12 to 14 months on this scheduling, while meaningful regional household opportunities are underway for the Mount Gaudet and Bear River Bridge construction.

Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ORANGE SHIRT DAY

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on a topic today which is important to all Northerners: reconciliation within Indigenous peoples.

For over a century, Indigenous children were removed from their communities and sent to residential schools. These government-funded, church-run schools attempted to whitewash and re-educate the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual development of generations of Indigenous youth. This was a terrible mistake that has stained our shared history, and we, as a society, must accept the trauma we intentionally inflicted upon Indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast.

Orange Shirt Day is an important symbol that gives us all the opportunity to start serious conversations about what we did as governments and non-Indigenous Canadians and the cost we continue to pay as a society.

Mr. Speaker, Orange Shirt Day in 2018 took place on September 30th. This day was chosen because it was historically the time of year in which youths were taken from their communities and homes to state- and church-run residential schools. September 30th is an opportunity for educators to set the stage for anti-racism, anti-bullying, and reconciliation-oriented lessons for the school year. It also gives educators time to plan events that will include young Northerners, as we must ensure that we are passing these important lessons on to the next generations, in the hopes that these travesties of education will never again be repeated.

I have had the honour of participating in Orange Shirt Day activities several times at N.J. MacPherson School, which is located in my constituency. I applaud the efforts of the amazing administrators, teachers, and students. They are not only embracing Orange Shirt Day but are helping to build a roadmap on how we move forward together in the spirit of reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, Orange Shirt Day is a good start, and so too is the proposed new statutory holiday now being considered before the federal parliament, but these actions are only the beginnings of the true process of reconciliation. Workshops and training programs that help Northerners understand the consequences of residential schools need to be held across communities and inside government institutions. We must all become acquainted with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and commit to implementing them as a territory.

Reconciliation will not be easy, but we must always strive towards it if we are to continue to live and thrive together in our shared land, country, and history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHERN CARBON PRICING

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax was supposed to be simple: just raise the price of fuel, and people will stop buying it. Voila, we change their behaviour and save the planet. Instead, we are facing a mess that is derailing more and more each passing week.

In May 2016, the Premier joined with his Yukon and Nunavut counterparts to "just say no" to a federal carbon tax. Then, only months later, we signed onto the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change supporting a carbon tax. What changed in those few months?

Mr. Speaker, in September 2017, I asked: what is our position regarding the carbon tax? Answer: we are working with our federal counterparts on a made-in-the-North carbon tax that will recognize the North's special circumstances. No clear detail was provided.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the GNWT outlined our carbon tax plan. Frankly, it doesn't seem to be strong enough to change anyone's behaviour. It's just going to move money from your left pocket to your right pocket. Simply put, it's a wash.

In the meantime, the rest of Canada is losing faith fast. Saskatchewan, out; Alberta, out; Ontario, out; PEI says it can reach targets without a tax; New Brunswick is taking a step back; Newfoundland is in no rush to pass a carbon tax; and Manitoba is out.

Mr. Speaker, why couldn't common sense prevail from the beginning? There was never going to be a carbon tax applied in the NWT that would change behaviour. And why? Because no Northerner needs more motivation to reduce their use of fossil fuels because of what it costs to live here.

When the discussion started, gas in Yellowknife was \$1.13 per litre. Today in Yellowknife, gas costs nearly a \$1.50 per litre, Mr. Speaker. That's motivation enough to change people's behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, the made-in-the-North carbon tax appears to be a pointless, symbolic gesture that will cost our government a lot of money to administer but will do very little for the world's climate. The \$42 million mentioned by the Finance Minister today to support northern residents, businesses, and the

environment is the incentive-based approach we need to support.

Mr. Speaker, let's join the rest of Canada and get off this sinking ship called the carbon tax. Later, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CAPITAL NEEDS IN TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I highlighted some new infrastructure projects that have recently been built within the riding of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. On the same token, I would like to share with you today some future infrastructure the riding will need in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Detah has never had a new school building before. In 1969, the government placed a few portable classrooms together and called it a school. Then, 20 years later, they added a few more portables, along with some renovations along the way. It's a school for Detah students. If you ask me, Mr. Speaker, I would say Detah is in dire need of a new school. The school is such an important aspect of their community. In this day and age, students need pride in the schools they attend.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, the community of Ndilo is also in need of improved public infrastructure. In 2009, the GNWT constructed the Kalemi Dene School. While the facility has served that community well, it is now in need of additional classroom space and a gymnasium. Specifically, they are asking for two more classrooms to be built in order to accommodate for shortages in their existing school space, along with a gym to put them on even ground with other schools in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, both communities of Detah and Ndilo are in need of adequately sized gymnasiums. Currently, both of these communities have a community hall which is used as a gym. They both have outgrown the facilities. Their rising populations will further necessitate the need for that infrastructure. Detah, in particular, is hurting at this front. The Kaw Tay Whee students would need to commute to Yellowknife just to participate in sporting activities. For most of the school year, the logistics of the Detah students coming to Yellowknife to gym is not feasible.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, the community of Lutselk'e is in need of a new health centre. I know it's in the works. However, there have been projects in larger communities like Yellowknife, Hay River, and Inuvik

that get approved while Lutselk'e people wait. It is the mandate of this government to put employment where employment is needed most.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: We all know where employment is needed most and the projects such as a health centre in Lutselk'e would create work for a few years. Furthermore, the Lutselk'e Health Centre is almost 35 years old and will be almost 40 by the time it is replaced. The standards have improved, Mr. Speaker. Our infrastructure must improve with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EXTENDING LENGTH OF FERRY SERVICES

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention the high cost of living in the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort-Delta region. My constituents work very hard to keep their homes warm in the winter, to feed their families, and to maintain their vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, these costs, the costs of the normal business of daily life, add up very quickly. Imagine living in the Mackenzie Delta in 1978, where we waited on the banks for barges to come in to deliver food and supplies. I can't imagine the costs related to all the supplies or the amounts of trapping that had to be done in order to pay for food and supplies. When the Dempster Highway opened in 1979, it opened the rest of Canada to the North, and, when the truckloads of food and supplies came down that highway, our people were happy; costs were cut tremendously.

Mr. Speaker, it's been 40 years since then. Today, we have more people unemployed, and, with jobs scarce, money is hard to come by. Food and other supplies that we need to live are increasingly out of reach. Many times, local families suffer because they can't buy healthy food or keep their homes heated. What about the fuel supply itself? Last winter, Fort McPherson ran out of gas and groceries altogether.

When shoulder season ferry services were cut, Mr. Speaker, these are the very outcomes I feared: sky-high costs, bare shelves, and gas pumps run dry.

Instead, it would make so much sense to keep the Louis Cardinal and Abraham Francis ferries open until the ice bridge is built. Extending the length of the season would benefit communities and prevent air transportation price mark-ups. Improved access

also makes the Mackenzie Delta more enticing to potential tourists.

Earlier in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, ferry services were cut to save money. Any savings, though, have gone to the Department of Infrastructure, not to the people making their homes in our small communities.

I would like to see action on this file, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR TOURISM IN TUKTOYAKTUK

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of our biggest challenges this summer was trying to accommodate the big boom of tourism in Tuktoyaktuk. However, the community has stepped up with whatever capacity they had to work with. The GNWT did offer some support with small pots of funding, but the community is looking for something bigger, like an RV park and a campground within or close to the community.

Mr. Speaker, both the federal and territorial governments have marketed the new highway to Tuktoyaktuk, connecting three oceans from sea to sea. This marketing has caused a mad rush to Tuktoyaktuk. There has even been a huge promotion from GMC and Chevrolet, launching their new 2019 Silverado with the slogan "Finding New Roads."

We have seen some very good reviews on TripAdvisor, which guides web surfers to Tuktoyaktuk's new visitors' centre and other attractions. Mr. Speaker, the visitors' center needs to be a larger building that community members and visitors can sit, talk and learn from each other.

Mr. Speaker, this promotion has brought a lot of media coverage, helping Tuktoyaktuk become advertised around the world. Mr. Speaker, this is good news, but it may bring an influx of tourism that could overwhelm the community.

It is also very important that Tuktoyaktuk has the means to ensure that tourists' experiences are good ones that they will tell their friends about, rave about on Facebook, and review on internet web travel sites. To do that, the community needs both services and infrastructure and a plan to develop them.

Mr. Speaker, Tuktoyaktuk tourism has great potential if we do it right. Mr. Speaker, later I'll have questions for the Minister of ITI. Quyanainni.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statement. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDEHZHIE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. First, I would like to welcome my colleagues back to the House. I'm glad to be back myself, and Mr. Speaker, I'm also keen to share some very exciting news for conservation, reconciliation, and the future of our territory.

[English translation not provided.]

Also known as the Horn Plateau, Edehzhie has been called "the jewel" and "the breadbasket" of the Dehcho, the place where Dene have turned for generations. Edehzhie means "source waters" as it hosts the source waters for the Willowlake, Horn, and Rabbitskin Rivers, and at 14,200 square kilometers, it's bigger than both the Banff and Jasper National Parks. In fact, it's bigger than about 40 countries, including the Bahamas and Lebanon.

Edehzhie's designation as a protected area, the first Indigenous protected area in Canada, is a monumental achievement, the triumph of a process begun 20 years ago, and I want to congratulate all involved.

As part of this agreement, both the Dehcho First Nations and the Government of Canada have agreed to protect the area from industrial development. Canada has also committed to establishing a national wildlife area by 2020. Future management decisions will be made by consensus through the Edehzhie Management Board, with the Dehcho K'ehodi Guardians responsible for stewardship and taking care of the Deh Cho.

The work doesn't stop here, Mr. Speaker. I know my colleagues are aware of the recent United Nations' report warning of climate change crisis as early as 2040. Governments must meaningfully act on issues of conservation, land protection, and carbon emissions. This agreement to protect Edehzhie is one example of walking that walk.

Dene law tells us that the survival of the whole group - our families and our communities - is more important than the accumulation of individual wealth or status. Not to put too fine a point on it, Mr. Speaker, but if we are to survive, and if the land that we come from is to survive, we must act on what Dene law has described as our collective responsibility to protect the land and resources for our children and grandchildren.

I thank First Nations for continuing to lead in protecting the land, waters, and animals, and I look

forward with hope to the work to come. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my parents, Terry Testart and Maureen Marshall, and my aunt Lillian Testart. Everything I've learned about good public service I owe to my parents, whose excellence and dedication in their careers made them the most important role models in my life. Thank you for being here today, and thank you for always being there for me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize Lois Little. Lois Little is a resident of Yellowknife North, she is a consultant and owner of Lutra Associates, and she is also the co-chair of the NWT chapter of the Council of Canadians. Welcome. Also, we're all familiar with Craig Yeo, the CA to a couple of our Members, and he's also a Yellowknife North resident. Welcome to the House. Thank you.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize Mr. Terry Testart as well. He was in a senior administrator office in Tuktoyaktuk for many years. So, welcome, Terry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to recognize Ms. Wendy Holmes. She's an award-winning Canadian agrologist, columnist, author, and speaker. She's here from British Columbia, visiting and helping people in the Northwest Territories, particularly Fort Smith and Fort Resolution, where she visited to better understand the impacts of the Site C dam in British Columbia. Also, I'd like to recognize Lois Little, who is the co-chair of the Northwest Territories chapter of the Council of Canadians, who is assisting with her visit. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we're missing anyone in the gallery, welcome to our Chambers. It's always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item

6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 367-18(3):
EARLY CLOSURE OF LIARD FERRY SERVICE

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with weather changing, the drop of water levels, we are seeing the Merv Hardie Ferry on 24-hour notice. It is at least 23 days earlier than the 15-year average. I want to recognize and thank the marine staff. They've done a great job of keeping the ferry operational as long as we can and for doing it in a safe manner. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. Can the Minister please advise the House how the department is getting the message out to the residents and non-residents that the ferry is going to be shut down earlier than normal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we want to take this opportunity to reach out to the greater Northwest Territories to update the general public on the situation that's happening at the Liard ferry. As most people know, this time of year, the rivers drop off sharply. In the case of the Liard River, generally this time of year when it does drop down, it actually comes back up after a couple of days, but that hasn't happened in the last three days. It's actually at its lowest level, and we're probably operating our ferry presently at the lowest level that that ferry has operated; it's at 1.65 meters as of today.

To the Member's point of thanking the marine staff, they've reduced the fuel storage on the boat, and they've gone to lighter loads to off-set a premature shutdown of this ferry to help the residents of his riding. We are monitoring this on a day-to-day basis, but one thing that has come to light here, in the last 24 hours or so, it looks like the river levels in Watson Lake have actually come up a little bit, so we're going to continue to monitor this. The weather's supposed to actually warm up a little bit in his region, so that's going to help us with that, as well, but we continue to use all our means of getting the message out there. We have our electric board at Enterprise, we have the electric board at the Yellowknife Junction there, to inform Members, we have our Twitter account, we have our webpage, and we have our 1-800 number, and, as well, our staff on the ferries who are continually updating the passengers as they cross the river system.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that information. Yes, they're operating the ferries at a level that's even unprecedented, so I'd like to thank

again the staff there. Because of the water level dropping in the channel, it needs to be dredged. When you sit there and you look at it and you talk to the ferry and you talk to residents, it needs to be dredged. Is the Minister able to advise if the department has looked into the process of dredging this section of the river?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I looked into this matter, and I was informed by the department that 20 years ago we contracted Cooper's Barging with an excavator to have a look at doing this, and it was very unsuccessful and it wasn't able to be done. Another attempt to dredge this channel would need to involve a number of things, now, in light of the new regulatory system that's out there. We would have to do environmental studies on it, approval from multiple organizations, we'd have to go to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, the DFO, and of course, there's always going to be a funding issue. So, at this point right now, that's where it was on the dredging issue, but, if we were to ever consider this, that's the lay of the land that we'd have to consider.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that answer. So, I guess the question is from our riding, and a lot of people use this ferry, so will the department start looking at this option or other options to see it again? Because we're talking 20 years ago, and, with modern technology now and equipment, will the Minister advise this House if the department's looking at that?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: There is no feasible option at this time besides dredging, so, if we were to consider this, we'd have to go back and go through all the process that I just laid out in the previous question.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd hope they actually would start looking into that and start planning for the future because the water levels keep on dropping and regularly. Yes, we're seeing Watson Lake go up and warming up, but we're still seeing the challenge. With the water levels dropping, and it's occurring on a regular basis, has the department looked at ways to help reduce the cost of living during the ferry shutdown and ice road being built?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continually communicate with all the residents of the Northwest Territories and residents and businesses with these annual shut-downs of these ferries. We know it's interruptive, and we will continue to communicate with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 368-18(3):
SUPPORTING TOURISM INDUSTRY IN
TUKTOYAKTUK

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier, I spoke about the tourist boom in Tuktoyaktuk, and my questions are for the Minister of ITI. Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the community of Tuktoyaktuk can continue to provide essential services that are required for the 2019 tourist season, my question is: will the GNWT commit to an RV park or visitors' centre or other infrastructure that is crucially needed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an interesting situation. As we all know in this House, for many of us that follow this file very closely, with the construction of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, it's brought an enormous amount of people up to the Member's riding. I think the big challenge around the community has been, and I have been up there quite a bit and talked to residents in that area, the amount of influx of people was overwhelming for the community for the most part. We had over 5,000 people, I believe, that came there this summer.

We have had a number of meetings with the community leading up to this for a number of years. We have assisted them with development plans on how they want to address some of these things. You know, we have committed to doing certain things with them. We are trying to do a way-side pull-out right now along the ITH. It's one of the funding things that we are looking at, and we are working with hunters and trappers on that to try to resolve which place they actually wanted. There were three places put forward, and I think we have it narrowed down to two of them.

We committed another amount of funding, somewhere around \$42,000, to complete a feasibility study to advance a cultural centre, but I think what we need to do with the community going forward is we need to get back in there and have a conversation of what happened this year with the amount of people that were there, what kind of needs that need to be put into place. A lot of this stuff needs to be entrepreneur-driven. The Government of Northwest Territories cannot do everything for everyone. There's a lot of opportunity around tourism and things going forward. I have had a number of discussions with people around the RV park for Tuktoyaktuk. I have had people come to me and say they wanted to do it, and then

they come back and say they didn't want to do it. Then someone else has come to me, and they want to do it. The hamlet was into these discussions, and then they have called off those discussions.

As of late, I have sat down with the mayor, when I had an opportunity on a trip to Inuvik, and had those discussions. We will certainly continue to have those discussions on what we need to address. It's a different situation because most communities are struggling. How are we going to be able to change our economy? We are in a situation in Tuktoyaktuk that there's almost an overwhelming opportunity.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mr. Speaker, I believe that, you know, having an RV park or some sort of infrastructure like that should fall on the departments of the GNWT and ITI and maybe other departments within the government. I think it's only fair, given that Tuktoyaktuk used a lot of their capacity to do what they can to ensure that they did their best, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if I got a solid answer there.

Mr. Speaker, my second question is: will the GNWT fund a full-time tourism coordinator so that additional capacity can be provided?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: These positions, we have rolled out. We had three of them rolled out. We had one in Tuktoyaktuk, one in Hay River, one in Deline.

I think the challenge with what the Member is asking us for a full-time coordinator was these were going to be rolled around the Northwest Territories as the demand increased in other communities. This is an ongoing funding, I think, for a little bit, but we're going to sit down and look at which next three communities wanted to apply for this.

I know we're going to sit down with the community here shortly as I have said and all the stakeholders and see what is happening in this past year and what type of assistance is going to be needed, so I can't commit to, if we're going to continue this ongoing funding, but there is ongoing funding for different communities, and, maybe after the discussion we have with the community, maybe I'll have to make a decision that, you know, that Tuktoyaktuk has the biggest need going across the board, that we're going to have to continue to look at their assistance, but I'll have to get more assistance once we have the stakeholder meeting.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It's good to see that the department is going in that direction, where they are consulting with communities and their needs.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Tuktoyaktuk is also dealing with the issue of a funded GNWT economic development officer, the EDO. This position was set

up through the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk and there are some uncertainties as we speak. Mr. Speaker, the contract is on a year-by-year basis. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is: can this position come directly through the Government of Northwest Territories like other surrounding communities rather than through the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: My understanding on some of these positions like this in some of the smaller communities is we were having a hard time to fill some of these positions, but one of the conditions we took with the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk was, and we give them a significant amount of money to do this on a year-to-year basis, which is ongoing by the way, they have the flexibility to hire the individual they want.

We have had cases where I have had people of some communities come to me and they don't like our EDOs and another community that are assisting them. This gives the community the flexibility to hire the exact person that they want. Chances are, in this case right now, the person lives within the community and is part of the community and has done a great amount of work on this file for the residents of Tuktoyaktuk and in the Northwest Territories.

We have no plans of bringing this to the Government of Northwest Territories. We want to give the communities the flexibility to continue to hire the person they want, to suit their needs.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to hear that there are no plans, but, as well, I think, if they do not plan on taking it on, they should fund the position appropriately like other positions that are in economic development or in the Government of Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, what will the Department of ITI do in the upcoming months to advance the tourism development plan for the community of Tuktoyaktuk with the hamlet?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have said, in the coming weeks here, we are going to sit down with all the stakeholders in the community to find out what needs to be addressed in the coming months ahead for the next tourist season. During those discussions, the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk is going to have to come up with their own tourist development plan. They have to lead it. They are going to have to own it. They are going to have to need it and put it in place. We are there to assist them to do that, but we are also currently in conversation with CanNor to help develop another tourist development workshop in the coming months.

There are a number of things going on, as I have said. It's a good position to be in, but it's also a challenging one, I think, for some of the community members to take the advantage of these real opportunities that lay there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 369-18(3):
NWT ECONOMIC SYMPOSIUM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. [English translation not provided.]

My questions are for the Premier, about the recent NWT Economic Symposium. When the Premier answered questions in the House on March 1st, he said that "the purpose of the summit is to seek input into the writing of the NWT chapter of the Arctic Policy Framework."

Can the Premier explain how this event morphed into a discussion of non-renewable resource development projects in infrastructure corridors? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The economic symposium, or better known as the NWT Economic Symposium, was funded using retained resource revenues from the intergovernmental council, which all intergovernmental council members fully supported. Three participants from each Indigenous government were funded. Many brought additional participants who were funded directly from their intergovernmental offices' budgets.

The costs are still being calculated by the symposium and will be provided once the calculations are done. The Member dismisses the discussions as only being about infrastructure, but the discussions were what was important to the Aboriginal leaders of the Northwest Territories, and I wouldn't belittle those discussions.

MR. O'REILLY: Of course, I'm going to take issue with what the Premier said there. I had intended no disrespect whatsoever to our Indigenous governments. I'm talking about the lack of communications about this event with this side of the House. The Premier promised on March 1st that this meeting would be about economic diversification, the meeting would be inclusive, and that experts from various sectors would be involved.

Can the Premier explain whether the symposium was inclusive, with representation from various economic sectors and experts?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Generally, he who pays the bill calls the tune. Along with Indigenous leaders and economic development representatives, there was a facilitator who is an expert in economic research and analysis in attendance.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Premier for that information. It would have been helpful to have gotten it ahead of time, of course. He said that he would be pleased to discuss the event with committees, and we should at least have a discussion of it, referring to involvement of Regular MLAs in the symposium.

I don't recall any such discussion, and we only got notice of it less than a week in advance through the weekly ministerial activity media release. Can the Premier explain why Regular MLAs were not involved in the symposium, and why he did not fulfill the commitments he made in March in this House?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As I said, the symposium is being funded by retained earnings from the Intergovernmental Council. It was focused on the Aboriginal leaders. The focus of the symposium was seeking input and agreement from our partners, NWT Indigenous governments, that the NWT economy needs urgent attention.

The symposium was in support of implementing the priorities of the Legislative Assembly to grow and diversify the Northwest Territories economy and work more closely with Indigenous governments. It was not about identifying new priorities.

Through the discussion, we identified concrete plans and actions to stimulate the Northwest Territories economy by leveraging the individual resources and authorities of participating Indigenous governments and organizations in coordination with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Premier for that. The only public information about this symposium is a one-page communique. We have little idea of who was actually there, how much it cost, whether there will be some photo report of this event, and of course, all of this was done with zero input from this side of the House.

Can the Premier table in this House, before the end of the sitting, the cost of the event, a list of participants, and a full report of what transpired to help inform the debate and discussion? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: A summary report of the symposium presentations, discussions, and

outcomes are being prepared and will be shared with the symposium participants. This report will also be shared publicly once the participants have reviewed it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 370-18(3):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up to my statement, my questions are to the Minister of Infrastructure.

Last June, I was very pleased to witness the \$140 million in funding that is dedicated to the development of an all-weather highway in the Mackenzie Valley. Can the Minister of Infrastructure provide us with an update as to what work is currently being done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to remind the House that this was a key milestone in the mandate that we secured, so it was nice to see funding for this project.

The funding that has been secured to date will help with the construction of the Bear River Bridge, the planning and environmental studies that led to obtaining permits, the road construction between Wrigley and the newly completed Canyon Creek All-Access Road, as well as construction to an access road from Wrigley to Mount Gaudet.

Canyon Creek All-Season Access Road represents the first step in converting the existing Mackenzie Valley Highway winter road into an all-weather highway. I am pleased to advise Members that the official opening of this road will take place in November in Norman Wells. More information will be coming shortly on that.

Work is now in progress on acquiring permits for the Great Bear River Bridge. The Department of Infrastructure has been undertaking engagement with communities and residents in the Sahtu region to gain input, to finalize aspects of the project, and working to complete applications for permitting. The department also, so far, has held meetings in Deline, Colville Lake, and Tulita, including a public meeting and separate meetings with the hamlet, and meetings are scheduled later this month with Norman Wells Land Corporation Membership and the public, as well as a public meeting at Fort Good Hope.

In terms of next steps for the environmental assessment development and access road to Wrigley to Mount Gaudet, we are examining options

that are available to make the determination of the best approach to proceed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that reply. My next question, Mr. Speaker, then: the GNWT already had an environmental assessment under way with this project through the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board. What is the plan for continuing with that, what are the next steps, and when can we expect to see the environmental assessment move ahead? If you can condense that into one reply, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. There were several questions there. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there were, but I think it is important that we get this information out there.

The environmental assessment process was initiated by the government in 2013 for the full proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway. The proposed project was rescopeed in 2015 to focus on the section of highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells. In February of 2015, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board released its terms of reference, requiring further studies to be undertaken by the department in order to complete the developer assessment report for the environmental assessment.

The Department of Infrastructure is in discussions with staff from the board to confirm options available and next steps in terms of proceeding with the ongoing environmental assessment. Before any final decisions are made, the Department of Infrastructure will also be discussing next steps with the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated and the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for the continuation of where our government was leading off in the past. My next question: I am glad to hear that things are moving ahead. Who has the department met with to date to discuss the environmental settlement for the Mackenzie Valley Highway?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The department staff, as I said, met with the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board to discuss the environmental assessment options. Staff will be meeting with the board of the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated and Chief and Council of the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation next week, as well as officials from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency Northern Project Management office.

These discussions will influence how the department will approach the environmental assessment and the timing of any associated activities, consistent with an overarching objective

of proceeding through environmental review and permitting process as effectively as possible, while ensuring all related concerns are mitigated and all required approvals are obtained. A final decision on the best approach will be made in the coming weeks once the discussions have concluded, and that decision will inform the path forward, including next steps and timeline.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question, Mr. Speaker, is: will the Minister offer my office a schedule of upcoming events? Say, for example, if there is to be a community consultation in Tulita or Norman Wells or various impacted communities, will that schedule be provided to me so that I can accompany the project team? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, we will closely work with the Member on his particular region around these projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 371-18(3):
DIALYSIS SERVICES

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Department of Health staff for taking steps to address an issue that I brought up in the last sitting. Even though dialysis treatment is offered in Hay River, it is always fully subscribed, and as a result, there were a number of residents who were living at Vital Abel House in Yellowknife so that they could access dialysis treatment.

What the department did was give these residents an option to fly to and from Yellowknife from Hay River three times a week so that they could receive treatment, and by all accounts, this has worked out very well. My constituents are very happy with this option. There have been no hiccups with transportation.

My first question is: when I see my constituents on the flight home later today, can I assure them that this pilot will continue and that they can go home to their bed every night? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer is yes, but there are always conditions. We want to keep working with our residents to make sure that they are getting the support that they need. We also acknowledge that it has been good so far, but we have also had pretty

decent weather, and the flights have all been on time.

If it looks like we might be having some complications, we need to be flexible. We may have to bring them in for a week or two from time to time depending on those things, but our intention now is to continue to work with our residents across the Northwest Territories, not just those in Hay River, while we do our review of dialysis services in the Northwest Territories and come forward with larger solutions and larger options. In the interim, we will work with our residents one on one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I understand that everywhere else has it worse, really, than Yellowknife and Hay River when it comes to dialysis, because those are the only two places to receive treatment. I appreciate that. I believe there is someone from Fort Providence and Fort Resolution who drives in three times a week to Hay River for treatment.

The last time that I spoke about this, the Minister stated that he heard loud and clear that we need to do more to provide dialysis services closer to home, and he would prefer not to have people going from Hay River to Yellowknife to receive that service. He stated there is a lot of work to be done, and "we are prepared to start that work." Can the Minister please detail the work done to date?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This is a territorial problem. We have residents across the Northwest Territories on dialysis. We are looking at it from a territorial lens, recognizing, of course, that both Hay River and Yellowknife are the only places that dialysis is currently located.

The authority and the department have already begun their analysis. They are looking at other options like home-based dialysis. I think one Member did mention a travelling dialysis. There are some concerns about that, especially the models that exist in the South, but we have started to explore those options.

Also, recognizing that we need a big solution, a big comprehensive solution for the whole territory, we are also trying to find some short-term wins, and we have been exploring the opportunity of sharing some resources between Stanton and Hay River to balance out where the resources need to be, where the existing machinery exists today. We are working on some of the details.

We are open to having some short-term solutions as we continue to move on finding some larger, more appropriate territorial solutions.

MR. SIMPSON: I appreciate that. It sounds like a lot of work has been done so far.

The Minister mentioned sharing resources between Stanton and Hay River. Could the Minister please elaborate on that, and would that entail, perhaps, bringing resources to Hay River physically so that these residents wouldn't have to fly back and forth?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are not intending to move equipment back and forth, obviously, but we have trained professionals here in Yellowknife, and some really great trained professionals in Hay River. The question is whether or not we can actually have some of our staff go back and forth, rather than some of the patients.

There are some complications there. We are trying to figure out whether that's even a possibility, but right now, we are exploring all options. Like I said, we are trying to find some short-term solutions, some short-term wins, to support our residents, but also, this has to be done in view of territorial solutions as well.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister please provide us with some timelines on these possible short-term solutions and on the longer-term territory-wide solution to this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We have certain processes within the Government of the Northwest Territories' budget planning and whatnot. I imagine larger-term solutions will have to follow that cycle, but we are trying to find some short-term interim solutions with existing resources that we can actually implement during the 2018-2019 fiscal year. We are hoping that we will be able to finish that work, recognizing that that is part of the solution, and it will not be the comprehensive solution that will follow our normal processes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 372-18(3):
CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I talked about capital in the riding of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance some questions on the capital planning process.

I would like to ask the Minister: in this House, who is responsible for the capital plan? Who has final responsibility? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is an interdepartmental working group. They analyze the capital assets coming forward from each department and make recommendations to the Deputy Minister Capital Planning Committee, and that is shared by the Deputy Minister of Finance and includes all deputies.

They review the recommendations made by the working group and either accept or vary the recommendations. Then they provide recommendations to the Financial Management Board, and the Financial Management Board will review the recommendations of the planning committee and either accept or vary the recommendations.

The next part of the capital plan is provided to committee for review, and in camera reviews are scheduled. Feedback from committee can result in capital plans being varied, and then the final review of the capital plan takes place on the floor of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I was going to ask the Minister to lay out the process, which he has already done. I guess what appears to be missing from the process is the weight, and I am not talking about W-A-I-T but the weight of each of the projects as they are brought forward by the various Deputy Ministers through the capital planning process.

I don't know which process has priority, and I guess coming down to the question would be: how does the GNWT prioritize the actual projects once they have gone through each project that comes up through the capital planning process?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: There is a 20-year capital plan that most departments have. There is an overall 20-year capital plan, and then there is a five-year capital plan. There are a number of projects that could get on these plans, but sometimes the plans change. If they find that there is another facility or a building that is unsafe for the occupants, then that might take priority over one that is on the five-year capital plan. That may get pushed back a bit. I think we all, that have been around in this building for a while, have seen that, where plans get pushed back a bit because of other circumstances.

That would be the process that would be used. If it is on the five-year capital plan, then, normally, the planning would start for that, but if, for some unforeseen reason, something else happens to any of the other government assets, then that may have to take priority because of the safety issues that come along with it.

MR. BEAULIEU: Assuming that everything remains and there are no emergencies, I would like to ask the Minister if factors such as employment play into the capital planning process. I know it is an important aspect of this Assembly to ensure that we have employment. As many have said, including the Minister of Finance, "employment is the best social program that we can have."

I would like to know if there is a community that has an employment of 40 per cent versus a community that has an employment rate of 70 per cent, is that a factor when we're allocating capital projects? Right now, what is happening in my riding is the projects are getting completed, and the young people that are being trained and are ready to take the next project on will have to work in other communities to fill in the gap.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: First of all, that is a good thing. If these young people are getting the skills that they need and the contractor wants to move them to another community, I think that is a good thing. When we debate the capital budget, as we are going to be doing, you will find that there is a number of other projects for other communities. If contractors are able to secure that work, then they may move these folks there, and then there will be an opportunity, if there are other projects in their hometown, to come back home.

I always believe that's a good thing, and it expands their skills, their knowledge, but, as far as the employment goes, I don't believe that plays a part in the prioritizing of that project. Again, it goes back to safety and whether this building needs to be replaced for safety reasons and how long it has been on the capital plan. The Member makes a good point, and I agree with them that, if they have to move around with the work, then that's a good thing. They are being recognized for the skills that they gained when the project was near a home community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with some parts of what the Minister is saying. Some of the employees like to go to other projects in other communities, but many of them cannot.

I would like to ask the Minister: I know that they use several factors to determine, I think, five or six different factors to be weighed up against other factors to determine which capital item or infrastructure item will be placed first on the infrastructure list for each year that we review in the House. I would like to ask the Minister, if there is a possibility that, it's sort of like a social factor I guess, of getting away from the technical factors, if they could add employment as part of a key factor

when determining which communities will get infrastructure projects?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as much as I agree with the Member on the importance of employment in the small communities and I think, through a number of the different programs that the Government of the Northwest Territories offers as part of infrastructure goes, I think we have seen an example through the small community employment fund through the rural and remote committee, there was someone there that was allocated for some employment opportunities and in small communities, but I don't believe that's a particular one that was factored in with the prioritizing of projects. I don't even know if it should be, to be quite honest with you. Maybe it is a discussion we need to have.

Again, I will go back to the fact that we do have infrastructure deficit that is quite large. All communities in the Northwest Territories need projects. We hear that here, in the House. We go back to our capital budget that we are going to be debating in the next couple weeks in this House. I think we are going to see that there is a huge infrastructure budget and there should be benefits for all those possible in the territory.

I think I took the long way to answer the Member's question. It is no, I don't believe that employment factor would be prioritized as part of allocating projects in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 373-18(3): CARBON PRICING

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I talked about the effects of climate change and the importance of taking action now. The federal government has indicated that the way in which we are going to do that is by changing folks' behaviour and that was going to be through an applied carbon tax. The NWT signed on to the federal plan for a carbon tax and even though we had previously argued against it, saying such a tax wasn't appropriate for the North.

Can the Minister describe what the tax was in fact intended to accomplish? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the NWT signed on to the Clean Growth and Climate Change Framework. Carbon pricing is actually an element

of that. We didn't sign on to carbon pricing just yet. We have an MOU that we are in the final stages of drafting, or it is in its final stages right now. We have not signed that yet.

The Member is correct. We were against carbon pricing when it first came out because we knew that it was going to have a detrimental effect on people in the Northwest Territories. Once we realized that the federal government was going to implement this regardless of whether we were in or not, then we took steps and showed some leadership in coming up with and made an NWT approach that we thought would benefit or minimize the impact of the federal backstop. Had we gone with the federal backstop, it would have been quite costly to people in the Northwest Territories. I would encourage the people not to stand by the border because people would have been leaving so fast, you would have gotten run over. So we have come up with a plan that, although not perfect, addresses a lot of the concerns that we heard from the public across the Northwest Territories.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate the Minister's reply, and I certainly do appreciate the effort that they have put in with regarding to protecting Northerner's interests, especially around the cost of living.

As maybe a supplement to that question, then, I just want to ask the Minister, then: are there or have there ever been discussions to use carbon tax to mitigate the climate change impacts by changing people's behaviour? I mean if that's what the federal government said it was intended to do, were there ever discussions between ourselves and federal governments to apply it in that manner, that it would be used to change people's behaviour so that we could protect the impact of climate change?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the federal government, that was their original intent, was to try to curb people's behaviour so not to contribute to climate change. They came up with the carbon price tax.

We, in turn, had to make some adjustments to try and minimize the impact that it was going to have on the people of Northwest Territories. The intent was to curb people's behaviours so that there's less greenhouse gas emission, but I think even the federal government realizes that, in the Northwest Territories, and we used the word 'uniqueness' a number of times, our situation is a little different. We have had an opportunity to use their idea to leverage some funding to try and help with some transitional projects in the Northwest Territories to actually contribute to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for the reply. You know, northern communities, industry, and residents are already taking significant steps on their own initiative to invest in renewable energy. We have seen numerous examples of that throughout the territory, whether it's the windmills at Diavik, the solar panels in Colville Lake, or just folks doing improvements on their homes.

Because we are doing it on our own, does it make sense to even burden residents with the new tax, especially if it's not going to do what the federal government intended it to do, and that was to change people's behaviour?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I mean, first of all, this government did not want to burden people with a new tax. Had we used the federal backstop, which they were going to use regardless, it would have cost people in the Northwest Territories a lot more. I want to make that quite clear.

Through a number of our approaches to carbon pricing - and I do believe that our document is public. I know I have briefed committee on it. I have some feedback from committee on it, so I do know that we have a backstop that we are using. One of the things is the cost of living offset that we proposed to help offset some of that high cost of implementing this. The NWT Child Benefit is another one that we are using.

We have taken some steps to try to mitigate the impact on people in the Northwest Territories. Again, I have to reiterate that the federal government was going to impose this no matter what. I think we have met the challenge of trying to minimize the impact on people in the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for the reply. Yes, the federal government was going to impose it on us no matter what, but, as we have seen around the country, there are a number of different jurisdictions that are mounting arguments against Ottawa's carbon plan. You know, if we were joining the new carbon regime, that very future seems to be in doubt. Does the Minister still think that this is the way to go, or are we still going to go through this carbon tax, made-in-the-North carbon tax, come January?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we are monitoring what the other jurisdictions across the country are doing. We will continue to do that. As I said before, we haven't signed the MOU yet. We are still working with Ottawa, but again, I go back to the point that Ottawa is going to implement this

regardless what the other jurisdictions are doing. They will implement. They will have their fight with the other jurisdictions. I just want to be sure that our territory is ready, that when the date comes to implement carbon pricing, we are ready for it, and if there are any benefits to be gained from it while mitigating the impact on people in the Northwest Territories, we will take full advantage of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 374-18(3):
EDEHZHIE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was in Fort Providence, the home community of Premier McLeod. My question is to Premier McLeod. It was a proud day in Fort Providence. Everyone was there, but, sadly, there were no GNWT senior officials. Can the Premier explain: what was the GNWT's role in establishing the Edehzhie as a protected area? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason we weren't there is we received an invitation two days before the event, and we were already scheduled to be in session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: There was an initial schedule signed back in September, and parties, of course, that were involved, you know, sought clarity, and one of them was the GNWT. Can the Premier explain or update the territorial position on the subsurface withdrawal for Edehzhie?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have been in discussions with the Dehcho First Nations with regards to the subsurface of Edehzhie. We see it as a package arrangement. We are not prepared to one-off individual sectors of the Dehcho process. We had put forward a significant offer where Edehzhie was part of it, and we have yet to receive a response to that offer.

I understand that the Dehcho leadership will be holding leadership meetings at some point in October to determine where they want to go with regards to the Dehcho process.

MR. NADLI: Yesterday evening, it meant a lot for the Federal Government of Canada to be there and Dehcho First Nations officials, as well, and it was a big, exciting event.

One of the steps that needs to happen to fulfill the future of our protected area and advance it through the federal process is transferring Edehzhie to the federal government. Could the Minister or the

Premier explain in terms of how that process might work out?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There was never an intention to transfer the subsurface of the Edehzhie back to the federal government. The discussions that we have been having is that it would be controlled in the Northwest Territories by the Aboriginal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories through an agreement that would be established through the Dehcho process.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is: going forward, what actions will the GNWT take in the remainder of this Assembly, the 18th Assembly -- some might say that the 18th Assembly is already over -- but take to advance conservation and land protection initiatives like Edehzhie? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have been in discussions with the Dehcho Grand Chief on several occasions. She has indicated to us that they are still doing work in this area, and we are very optimistic that they will come back with a positive response so that we can move forward and hopefully bring these negotiations to a conclusion before the end of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 375-18(3):
SUPPORT FOR YWCA HOUSING PROGRAM

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services in his role as the lead on the Rockhill fire.

The Rockhill apartments belong to the GNWT, and they were leased to the YWCA over the long term. Rent collected from the tenants paid for the housing staff to provide wrap-around services for the families. Now, not only is the building gone, but revenue from the building is gone as well.

My first question is whether the Minister is committed to this housing program continuation? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I go into the answer, I just want to take an opportunity to thank the Member for her statement and, once again, applaud the YWCA, the executive director Lyda Fuller, and the amazing staff for the incredible work

they did in responding to this fire, in addition to the residents of Yellowknife, the City of Yellowknife, and the team of GNWT staff that actually stepped up and provided some response as well. I think it was a great response. I think this community should be proud of everything they did.

Mr. Speaker, the Y has been a valuable partner with the GNWT and, on behalf of residents of the Northwest Territories, providing valuable programming. The lead team that we have established to work with the Y has met with the Y on one occasion. We are looking to find ways to support them moving forward.

We are waiting for an ask from the Y to figure out exactly what they are looking to us for in the interim as they rebuild and figure out what our next steps are, but we are working closely with the Y. We believe they are an incredibly valuable resource to the community, not just Yellowknife, but the entire Northwest Territories, and we are looking forward to continuing our working relationship with them. Thank you.

MS. GREEN: Could the Minister give us a sense of the options that are on the table? For example, does the GNWT have access to a building that could be leased to the Y, or is there access to bridge funding to help with the continuation of the housing staff services? What is the range of options the government is willing to consider?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It is still early days, but it is my understanding that we don't have a building that we could make available. We are certainly reaching out to other potential partners to see what might be available, and we are working with the Y as they are doing some of their outreach as well.

As far as the existing building, we do have to do some remediation on that site. We haven't figured out what rebuild plans, if any, there are for that particular site. We haven't, like I said, received an ask from the Y on some of their bridging plans or some of their other plans, but we are prepared to continue to work with them closely.

As I have already indicated, our group of deputies who took the lead on our response have reached out and have had some meetings with the Y, and we are looking forward to continuing that relationship as we work with them to find solutions that work for them, for their programming, for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister's willingness to work with the Y. At the end of the day, the Y is going to have to have revenue to keep this housing program going, and if that revenue can't be generated from a building, then it is going to need to come from a contribution agreement. I am asking

the Minister what resources he can bring to the table for the continuation of this program.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We understand the challenges that the Y is facing. We understand that they have really put themselves out there to backstop the placement of the individuals throughout the Northwest Territories that used to be in their building, and we do understand the financial risk that puts the Y in and the challenges that it puts on them.

I don't know what financial contribution we will be able to make at this point. We haven't received an ask. We don't know the magnitude. We are hoping and we expect that we will see something so that we can begin to have those very discussions, but, at this point, it would be premature to speculate or to assume what those assets might be.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Y needs to make a specific ask, and my understanding is that the leadership group there is considering that and will be making that known to the Minister.

My final question is about the takeaway, the Minister's takeaway, from the government response. I realize that only just happened, but are they going to do a debrief? Are they going to look at how the response went from their position to strengthen service delivery in the future? Not that there were any problems with the response last week.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, as the lead on our response in Health and Social Services, I have asked the deputy to actually do a debrief with the other departments to make sure that we have learned from this experience. I think it went quite well, but there's always opportunity to learn from experiences, also how we might be able to utilize this experience for other similar incidents that may occur in different communities throughout the Northwest Territories.

It's not just Health and Social Services. MACA has a responsibility to work with communities on emergency responses to different crises that may befall a community. You know, we don't want to see these things. We would hope never to see these things, but it's important for us to be ready. We will certainly learn from this experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 376-18(3):
IMPACTS OF EARLY FERRY CLOSURES

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. We know that Fort McPherson ran out of gas in Tsiigehtchic and ran short of groceries during the last winter season. How is the department prepared to prevent these kinds of crises in our small communities this winter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I answered in my previous question, it's based around communication. We have to communicate with the people and the residents of Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic particularly. It's not up to us to tell the gas station how much gas they have in stock or the grocery store how much food they have in stock.

Our job as the government is to indicate that there could be an incoming situation in which there is significant probability that that may happen in the Member's region this year because of the coldness of the water. The department has informed me that it's well below the normal temperature of the water. We suspect, if conditions continue this way, that the ferry is going to close prematurely, maybe like up to two weeks earlier than normal.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, it's funny the Minister is saying we need to communicate. Last year, in this very House, I mentioned to the department that we will have extended hours because it is so warm, yet the department pulled out the ferry prematurely while the river was open another almost two weeks. It's funny that the department has that response.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Infrastructure is responsible for the laws and policies that govern road, air, and marine transportation, not to mention the infrastructure itself. What actions is the department taking this winter to keep the costs of living down, especially when it comes to the transportation of goods to our small communities?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I'm glad to answer this question because this government has done a lot of stuff to help address the cost of living in the Northwest Territories, particularly infrastructure. We have our public highway system. We subsidize ferry operations. We have community airports. All of these things help support the delivery of goods to the communities.

You know, we have to keep our assets in check so we have the efficiency of resupply. Roads are particularly probably the cheapest way to get stuff to communities, depending on where you are. What

this government has committed, as the Finance Minister said today, we're going to come out with the largest capital budget probably in the history of this government. A lot of it is around the road system and energy system, but it's going to help address the cost of living in many communities.

We have a lot of communities that don't have access 24-7 or 365 a year. We secured funding for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We have secured funding for the Tlicho all-weather road. These things are proceeding. We have a number of energy projects that we have clearly laid out in our 2030 energy strategy. The Finance Minister clearly indicated the investment that we are making in these things. These things all go towards help to make the cost of living and our quality of life in the Northwest Territories better.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how is the department preparing for the end of the ferry season and the beginning of the ice-road season to ensure as smooth a transition as possible?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I want to remind the House of last year, this exact situation. We committed to having a newer, lighter equipment to facilitate the winter road system. We have that machine up and ready and we were training our staff again in the region.

Last year, if I remember the dates between, in the Member's riding, I think the river closed on the 4th and the 8th, and both rivers were open by the 18th. That's only 10 to 12 days of shutdown for access to light vehicles. I think the department did a great job, and I commend them on their efforts, and we will continue to do that and make sure that the impacts are negligible on the communities.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, now a million dollar question, if you will: when can we expect the ferry services to be extended through the winter extension like it has in the past?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: This ain't a million dollar answer because I have answered this question a number of times in the House. The winter operations were due to around the Ikhl well and that situation. I have said in this House many a time that the winter operations weren't effective. The Dempster was closed 40 per cent of the time during that operation. The reason we did that was to secure energy for the community of Inuvik, and that has been addressed through the contractors. We are not committed to putting any more money

into the winter operations of that ferry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. I would like to remind Members that we haven't gone through all Members asking questions due to the fact that some of the questions and answer were a bit long. Just a reminder as we move forward to be cautious around the answering and the questioning. I will allow the Member from Kam Lake to ask the oral questions.

QUESTION 377-18(3):
IMPACT OF GENERATION EQUIPMENT
FAILURE

MR. TESTART: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. The Snare Forks Hydroelectric Facility has been reported as having a bearing failure, and now the public reports on this say the unit will be offline for several months, which represents a loss of 4.3 megawatts of power, approximately 15 per cent of the hydro system's total generating capacity. My question to the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation is: what will be the impact of this technical failure on the cost of living of Northerners and the power rates that rate payers are paying? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, looking after the best interests of people in the Northwest Territories is what this government is all about. The impact on electricity cost is not known at this time. Any impact on NTPC cost is expected to be mitigated by the insurance claim.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for that reassurance. The estimate of these repairs, regardless of what that is going to be, the final of these repairs, the insurance claim is going to cover that? Is that the department's best estimation at this point?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that there is a team that is flying in to do an inspection and determine the next steps. I would assume that cost would be the next step and then, once the costs are determined, then I would assume they have a discussion with the insurance company as to see what would be covered.

Once we have that more detailed information, I will share it with committee if it is their wish.

MR. TESTART: That covers the mechanical aspects of repairing this issue, but there will be more costs required for the backup diesel system. Can the Minister speak to what the equivalent cost

to generate the loss of 15 per cent of power through diesel is? Is he aware of those numbers now? Can he share them with the House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the insurance is expected to cover some of the costs associated with equipment failure, including the need to increase diesel consumption. We do have sufficient backup there, diesel and hydro backup to keep the unit operating.

Again, this just happened, I believe, Monday or just recently. Tuesday, October 9th, it just happened, so we are just in the process of doing an inspection and determining what associated costs might be tied to the failure. Again, as soon as we have those numbers or estimates of numbers and what it may cost, we will share that with committee.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for providing us with information. I know it's a live event, and I see there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, but if he could just reassure taxpayers that, if there are costs not covered by the insurance, the government will carry the burden of that so that we are not putting the cost back onto our citizens. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Although that is good brochure material, I can't make that commitment right now to have the government cover the cost. We will have to determine what the costs are going to be, and then we will make a determination then what it may cost the ratepayers, if any, but I can't make that commitment right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 238-18(3):
REPORT ON THE STAFF RETENTION POLICY
FOR 2015-2016, 2016-2017 AND 2017-2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 239-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LIQUOR
LICENSING BOARD 64TH ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 240-18(3):
NORTHERN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SERVICES
(NEBS) PENSION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT FOR
THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Report on the Staff Retention Policy for 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018." Pursuant to section 64(2) of the Liquor Act, I wish to table "Northwest Territories Liquor Licensing Board 64th Annual Report 2017-2018;" and pursuant to section 27(4) of the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan, I wish to table "Northern Employee Benefits Services (NEBS) Pension Plan Annual Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2017." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 241-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SURFACE RIGHTS
BOARD 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 242-18(3):
LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 243-18(3):
29TH ANNUAL REPORT, 2017-2018 - VICTIMS
ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 244-18(3):
ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
RENTAL OFFICER - APRIL 1, 2017 TO MARCH
31, 2018

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following four documents: pursuant to section 32(2) of the Financial Administration Act, I wish to table "Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board 2017-2018 Annual Report" and "Legal Aid Commission of the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2017-2018;" pursuant to section 10(2) of the Victims of Crime Act, I wish to table "29th Annual Report, 2017-2018 - Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories;" and pursuant to section 74.2(2) of the Residential Tenancies Act, I wish to table "Annual Report on the Activities of the Rental Officer - April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole

of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review, and Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital 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 call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

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

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

---Carried

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

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Board of Management at the rise of the House today, as well as a meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Operations at 2:30 p.m. today.

Orders of the day for Monday, October 15, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer

2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process
 - Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020
 - Bill 7, Chartered Professional Accountants Act
 - Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Securities Act
 - Bill 14, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2018
 - Bill 15, Document Formalization, Service and Notice Reform Statute Law Amendment Act
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
 - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. This House stands adjourned until Monday, October 15, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 12:05 p.m.