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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, February 5, 2019****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

ELDER ERNIE BERNHARDT: I am privileged to have the opportunity to give the opening prayer for this Assembly, as one who has served in the Assembly for a short period of time and coming back as a preacher, I guess. My title is on for about five minutes, and then I will be back to an ordinary citizen.

I have chosen to devote my prayer for the youth of the NWT. In fact, I ask you all to remember that you folks have the ability and the knowledge to pass laws, but you have to remember that you have to reflect the diverse groups of people that you are about to serve. You have to put aside your differences, but you've got to start thinking as a whole in order for it succeed.

After having said that, Honourable Speaker, Premier, and Cabinet, I would like to say a little prayer for our young people, as they are the future of the Northwest Territories. Some could be the future Members of council if they chose so.

I would like to call upon my youth, when I was young. I was an orphan in Aklavik and my mother died, but I was lucky to have a nun that was like my mother. She brought me up the first three years of my life, and then after that I was placed in school in Aklavik, where I learned how to pray. Whenever I'm in trouble, I'll grab my rosary that was hers; 150 years old, falling apart, but that's my strength.

Our youth have to find strength somewhere. It's supposed to come from their parents. I'm not saying anything else; it's the children who have to look up to their parents. If you can find it, I welcome you to extend your arm to people you know, your relatives, or someone you don't know, but you don't know that they love you. You've got to find it for yourself. If you find friends because they'll be more honest. They'll give you better guidance, but not forgetting their own parents' guidance.

I'm going to ask the father to bless each and every one of you, so that you could have good judgement, so that you could lead us to wherever our people go, so that you can speak together as one voice.

We have many languages, but learn to speak in one voice. They'll get it somehow. My method is simple, but it's for the youth.

When I was having coffee this morning with my wife, up there, Beatrice, we had an argument, of course, but we mended. It's good to mend your arguments. This is from my youth. Respect your mother. Respect your father and your mother as I, the Lord your God, command you, and so that you may go well with you and so that you may live a long, long time in the land that I'm giving you. After that, you could relate to that message.

I pray in my heart for you people. You need it a lot. You could fall down, but have the courage to get up and try again. I fell down. I got booted out, but I found the strength to get up and try again. Don't be afraid to fall down. You're going to find your courage somehow. You've got to believe. You have to believe in God.

Then I will close my prayer by saying the Our Father. Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen. In the name of the father and of the son and of the holy ghost. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Please be seated. Good afternoon, colleagues.

[Translation] On behalf of the Assembly, I would like to thank Mr. Ernie Bernhardt for joining us today and leading us in prayer. Mr. Bernhardt now calls Yellowknife home, but he has spent most of his life in the Kitikmeot region of what is now Nunavut and was a Member for Kitikmeot during the 12th Legislative Assembly. Masi, Mr. Bernhardt.

I would also like to thank the pages we will have with us throughout this sitting. We will have students from Inuvik, Hay River, K'atlodeeche First Nations, Fort McPherson, Yellowknife, Detah, Tuktoyaktuk, Gameti, and Yellowknife.

Welcome and thank you to all the Pages who will be with us during this session. Colleagues, it is our

privilege to share this Chamber with these young people, our future leaders. Please join me in thanking them and welcoming them to the Assembly.

I would like to advise Members of this House and the public that, throughout this sitting, we will be providing interpretation in the following languages: Tlicho, Chipewyan, French, Inuvialuqtun, North Slavey, Inuktitut, Gwich'in, South Slavey, and Inuinnaqtun.

Colleagues, including English, we will be making use of 10 of our 11 official languages during this sitting. We do not currently have the capacity to interpret into all languages each day, but over the next six weeks our proceedings will be available in 10 languages. This is a great achievement, and I want to thank our staff and our interpreters for making this possible. Masi.

For Members who wish to listen in English, please remember to leave your dials on channel 2.

Colleagues, it is my pleasure to welcome you all back to the Chamber to resume the Third Session of the 18th Legislative Assembly. I also want to wish a happy and healthy new year to all of you and to all residents of this territory. Although we have been busy with the ongoing work of committees and government, this is the first time in 2019 that we have come together in this Chamber.

Colleagues, we are about to begin the final budget session of the 18th Legislative Assembly. The weeks ahead will be long, and we will not always see eye-to-eye. However, we must remain respectful, professional, and mindful of the rules of this Assembly.

In our unique form of consensus government, we hold ourselves and each other to a high standard for our conduct and decorum. The people of this territory who we represent expect this of us. I look forward to the debates and discussion that will take place over the next few weeks. However, I ask that you choose your words carefully, thoughtfully, and respectfully.

Colleagues, it is with sadness that I inform the House of the passing of Mr. Mike Ferguson, the Auditor General of Canada. In addition to serving as the Auditor General for Canada, Mr. Ferguson also served as the Auditor General for the Northwest Territories. On behalf of this House, I wish to extend our condolences to Mr. Ferguson's family, friends, and colleagues.

Finally, I want to take a moment to reflect on the recent passing of two Air Tindi pilots. In a territory such as ours, where many of our communities are accessible only by air, a tragedy such as this impacts us all. On behalf of this Legislative

Assembly, I offer our most heartfelt condolences to their family, friends, coworkers, and all those impacted by this loss.

Now it is my duty to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It reads:

Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I remind to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of:

- Appropriation Act (Operation Expenditures), 2019-2020;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operation Expenditures), No. 4, 2018-2019; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2019-2020

during the third session of the 18th Assembly. Yours truly, Margaret M. Thom, Commissioner.

Masi, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 131-18(3): FEBRUARY 2019 SESSIONAL STATEMENT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Members back for the continuation of the Third Session of the Legislative Assembly.

We are now into the final months of the 18th Legislative Assembly and Ministers and Members have been working hard together to create a better territory for our residents, one in which all people have the support and opportunities they need to be healthy and economically secure, while maintaining their connection to a sustainable and well-managed environment.

I want to recognize everyone in this House for their efforts and their commitment to advancing our work on behalf of Northwest Territories residents over the past three years. We have achieved a lot already by working together and working with other governments, including the Government of Canada and Indigenous and community governments.

Last November, Mr. Speaker, our government was pleased to sign an agreement with the Government of Canada that will help us address housing needs across the Northwest Territories.

The \$140 million bilateral agreement on implementing the National Housing Strategy in the Northwest Territories will see Canada invest \$90 million in this territory, while the Government of the Northwest Territories will contribute another \$50 million over a 10-year period.

Beginning this April, this funding will protect, renew, and expand social and community housing and support the Northwest Territories' priorities related to housing repair, construction, and affordability. Our governments have also agreed to work together on the design and implementation of a new Canada Housing Benefit for the territory, to provide affordability support directly to families and individuals in housing need.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has also negotiated a \$60 million carve-out with the Government of Canada, Mr. Speaker, to advance innovative, community-driven housing solutions in the Northwest Territories under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund. Projects under this fund will build and repair community and affordable housing in the Northwest Territories and will be 75 percent cost-shared with Canada.

I know housing remains a priority for all Members and their constituents, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased that we are now in a position to meaningfully address those needs with Canada.

Our government also continues to work with community governments to develop community housing plans. These plans will provide communities and their stakeholders with the tools to direct the future of housing in their communities. We are currently engaged in this process with Deline, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, Paulatuk, Whati, and the K'atlodeeche First Nation. Once developed, these plans will provide housing investors, including all levels of government, with the information they need to invest in community housing infrastructure.

Supporting our residents to be healthy and educated is another priority for our government that I know Members share with us, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to deliver and improve on programs, services, and supports Northerners need.

Addressing mental health and addictions remains a priority for us, and last month our government was pleased to announce a \$1.8 million investment over three years for cannabis education. Through funding provided under Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories will develop and deliver a comprehensive and interactive cannabis public education campaign.

This campaign will use traditional media and social media platforms, augmented reality, community-led engagement sessions, and other innovative public-education tools to bring health and safety information to communities across the territory and help individuals make informed decisions about cannabis use.

We were also pleased last month, Mr. Speaker, to announce an agreement with the Government of Canada to invest over \$750,000 to support the opioid addiction treatment program in the Northwest Territories. This additional funding will let the Government of the Northwest Territories extend the opioid treatment clinic, currently only available in Yellowknife, to other communities in the territory.

Along with addressing the health and shelter needs of Northwest Territories residents, Mr. Speaker, our government continues to invest in education and skills development so Northerners are able to acquire skills and training to get the jobs they want here in the Northwest Territories.

As part of our commitment in this area, the Government of the Northwest Territories was pleased to open the new \$10 million Centre for Mine and Industry Training at the Thebacha Campus of Aurora College in Fort Smith along with the Government of Canada last month.

With \$4 million coming from Canada and \$6 million from the GNWT, this new facility will allow Aurora College to develop new and innovative programs to support training of Northern residents. Programs that will be supported include heavy equipment operator training, introduction to the mining industry, surface miner, mineral processing operator trainee, introduction to underground mining, underground mining, and diamond driller.

Training Northwest Territories residents for in-demand careers that are available here in the North remains a priority for our government and is a key to our Skills 4 Success plan, which aims to align educational opportunities to labour market needs in our regions and communities.

Mr. Speaker, the combination of classroom and hands-on training the new centre will provide will not only make Northwest Territories graduates more competitive, but will also become more important as the Government of the Northwest Territories continues with plans to transition Aurora College to a polytechnic university.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, we need to keep up our end of the bargain. We encourage our youth to stay in school, and government has a responsibility to make sure that there are good jobs available for them when they get out.

We want our young people to settle down here at home, start families, and contribute to the ongoing growth and prosperity of the Northwest Territories.

People will not live where there are no jobs or opportunities for them, and that is why the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to invest in economic growth and diversification, including investments in infrastructure that will transform the economy of the Northwest Territories for the long term.

Part of keeping that commitment includes investing in local economic diversification, such as the new Hay River fish plant our government announced last month, with support from the Government of Canada.

This project is one of the keys in the Government of the Northwest Territories' strategy to rejuvenate the Great Slave Lake fishery and restore its contribution to a diversified local and territorial economy. Through a partnership with the NWT Fishermen's Federation and their Tu Cho Cooperative, we look forward to transforming the existing fishery and expanding its scope to supply domestic, commercial, and export markets with Great Slave Lake fish and fish products.

Our government's investment in Marine Transportation Services is also contributing to economic diversification in the territory, with three major projects being undertaken at our MTS shipyard in Hay River. These large maintenance and overhaul projects for our own vessels and contract work for the Canadian Coast Guard, scheduled for January to August 2019, will provide off-season employment for 30 MTS employees and another four specialized trades contractors at peak periods of work.

Resource development, Mr. Speaker, has traditionally been the foundation of the Northwest Territories economy and in 2017 accounted for 32 percent of the Northwest Territories economy.

Much of that economic activity has been due to the diamond mines, but the Northwest Territories is about more than diamonds. We are seeing new and renewed exploration activity in so-called "green" or "technology" metals and minerals like copper and cobalt, as well as rare earth elements, lithium, and graphite. We are also seeing a resurgence of interest in the gold and base metals that established our territory.

We also have world-class reserves of natural gas that, as we begin to see a shift to lower-carbon alternatives nationally and internationally, has the potential to meet market needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, lack of infrastructure, including infrastructure for transporting our resources to market, is one of the biggest challenges to economic development the Northwest Territories faces, and this is why we have made investing in this area a priority.

We continue to make progress on the Mackenzie Valley Highway following last June's announcement of another \$140 million in combined funding from the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. This project will connect several communities to the public highway system and create economic opportunities, such as increased tourism and access for resource development. Work currently under way includes the Great Bear River Bridge, the Wrigley to Mount Gaudet access road, and planning and environmental studies that will lead to obtaining permits for road construction.

We are also making progress on the Tlicho all-season road, with Canada providing 25 percent of the funding for this P3 project. North Star Infrastructure was announced as the preferred proponent last November, and we were pleased to learn that the Tlicho Government is considering taking an equity position in the project shortly after that. Construction of this 97 kilometre road is expected to begin in the fall of 2019, subject to regulatory approvals.

Construction of an all-weather road into the Slave Geological Province would address the lack of access to the world-class mineral deposits located in the region and help attract further investment by lowering the cost of mineral exploration and development. We currently have a funding application to advance this project in with the federal government and look forward to hearing good news about it soon.

The high cost of energy, particularly for remote off-road projects, is one of the biggest challenges to resource development in the territory. Addressing this need will not only improve prospects for economic development, but also provides an opportunity for greening the mining industry.

Our government and the Government of Canada made a major step in this direction last month, when we announced over \$1.2 million in combined investments to advance the Taltson Hydroelectricity Expansion project. These investments will support Indigenous engagement and fund initial engineering work.

The Taltson project will transform the Northwest Territories' energy system, providing current and future industry with clean and renewable energy, driving economic growth, and mitigating a major source of the territory's GHG emissions.

A significant portion of the funding announced will go to the Akaitcho Territory Government, Northwest Territories Metis Nation, and Salt River First Nation to establish their business model frameworks to actively participate in the development of the project.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous participation and partnership in the Taltson expansion project will ensure Northwest Territories Indigenous governments and their people will benefit meaningfully from this development, including new revenues, access to jobs and business opportunities, and help ending their reliance on diesel to power their communities.

I want to recognize Canada's Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Dominic LeBlanc, for his leadership in advancing Taltson with his federal colleagues. We expect last month's announcement was just the beginning for this important project and look forward to hearing more good news from Canada on significantly more funding for the Taltson Expansion project in budget 2019.

The investment in Taltson also reflects our shared commitment with the Government of Canada to address the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories and transition towards lower-carbon energy options.

Expanding the Taltson Hydroelectric facility will increase the availability of clean, renewable energy to help the Northwest Territories reduce its reliance on diesel, helping to reduce the cost of living for our residents and allowing the territory to meet its commitments under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change.

Advancing Taltson supports key components under the 2030 Energy Strategy, which has been developed to guide the development of secure, affordable, and sustainable energy for transportation, heat and electricity, support energy efficiency and conservation, and promote renewable and alternative energy solutions.

While the potential benefits of Taltson are still several years away, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada are also addressing more immediate energy needs. Last October, we were pleased to announce the investment of \$23 million under the Low Carbon Energy Leadership Fund for a number of initiatives that will support implementation of the Government of the Northwest Territories' 2030 Energy Strategy, including energy retrofits for public housing, energy retrofits for marine transportation vessels and ferries, and active forestry carbon sequestration.

This funding will also support a four-year \$1.8 million government greenhouse gas grant program designed to support emissions reduction projects and initiatives undertaken by Northwest Territories community governments, municipalities, and Indigenous governments.

The Low Carbon Energy Leadership Fund investment is also being used to enhance programming offered by the Arctic Energy Alliance and to introduce new programs, including support for energy upgrades for owners of older, less efficient homes and low-income homeowners. Funding will also be available to support NGOs for energy retrofits.

Mr. Speaker, the upcoming sitting will be a busy one. We have a lot of work on our table, including consideration of the 2019-2020 Main Estimates and important new legislation to support the responsible management of Northwest Territories land, environment, and resources, protect the health of our residents, and support their education.

While this looks like a lot, it is important to remember that we have already accomplished a lot as Members of the 18th Legislative Assembly. We have already demonstrated that we can do good work together. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Let's build on this success and our commitment to working together on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories as we embark on our final budget session together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 132-18(3):
NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Wednesday, February 6, 2019. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that, pursuant to rule 36(3), the Minister's statement delivered previously by the Honourable Premier, February 2019 Sessional Statement, be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

The motion is carried. The sessional statement delivered by the Premier will now be before Committee of the Whole. Masi.

Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2019 IRC ELECTION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the 2019 IRC Election for IRC Chair and CEO All Candidates Forum took place on Monday, January 28th, in Inuvik, with all 42 directors from the six Inuvialuit communities of Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok in attendance. The event was broadcast live on Facebook and brought many of the issues that we face as a people to light, as well as all of the achievements over the last three years, looking outward to where we would like to be in the future as we make decisions for our children, our grandchildren, and future generations.

The election took place on Tuesday, January 29th, with seven prominent candidates from the IRC. Mr. Speaker, the Inuvialuit of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, through the 42 community directors, re-elected Duane Ningaqsiq Smith for another three-year term.

Mr. Speaker, the position of chair and CEO of the IRC is a tough job. Mr. Smith has championed many initiatives, such as the Inuit/Crown Partnership Committee, which I am honoured to be a part of; and direct funding agreements with the federal and territorial governments, which have brought millions of dollars for housing, health, wellness, training dollars, and environmental and wildlife conservation, to name a few. These not only benefited the ISR, Mr. Speaker, but the Northwest Territories as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation is to continually improve the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the Inuvialuit through the implementation of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and by all other means available.

Some corporate goals of the IRC are the representation of an advancement of Inuvialuit interests in areas of external relations, including

federal, territorial, and municipal governments, circumpolar and other Aboriginal organizations, private sector, and special interest groups; the preservation and growth of the financial compensation flowing from the IFA; and the distribution of accumulated wealth to beneficiaries.

Mr. Speaker, 2019 will mark the 35th anniversary of the signing of the IFA, celebrating the elders who had the vision for the future of the Inuvialuit and celebrating the many Inuvialuit successes.

Mr. Speaker, I stress that the GNWT must work proactively with Indigenous governments for similarly beneficial results.

Mr. Speaker, once again I would like to congratulate Mr. Duane Ningaqsiq Smith as chair and CEO, working toward our own self-determination, and all the best for the next three years and beyond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MANDATE COMMITMENTS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 18th Assembly will adjourn in 198 days. Thinking about it makes me anxious because we have so much to do by then. We all know that feeling of leaving town Saturday for a big holiday, with a full plate of work, things to get ready for the house sitter, and bags to pack. That is the feeling: lots to do, not much time. It is time to prioritize.

Mr. Speaker, according to the GNWT's mandate tracker, 109 of 188 mandate commitments are not yet fulfilled. I have questions about those marked fulfilled. For example, has the government fulfilled its commitment to reduce poverty? My answer is not yet, but using the government's rationale, 79 commitments have been fulfilled and an additional 109 are in progress.

Mr. Speaker, the mandate category lagging furthest behind is the economy, environment, and climate change. Forty-three of 68 commitments are still in progress, including 10 pieces of legislation, completing land use plans, and improving access to agricultural land. That is after the government's budget cutting has reduced the staff of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources by 10 percent. The department doesn't have the capacity to complete the work outlined in the mandate. This is substantial work that is important to the economic well-being of the territory as we embrace devolution and move toward the closure of the diamond mines.

Mr. Speaker, the category of community wellness and safety is also lagging behind, with 23 of 64 commitments in progress. We haven't yet seen the plan for recovering from addictions promised in the Mind and Spirit strategy tabled in 2016. Given that the homecare study is not yet complete, I wonder if the government is going to develop and implement an action plan in the next seven months. These are just samples of the unfulfilled commitments in every priority area.

Mr. Speaker, I ask myself why we have fallen behind, and one obvious answer is the work we have taken on through bilateral agreements with the federal government. We have taken Ottawa's priorities as our own, as the sessional statement demonstrated, because they are bringing substantial investment to the table. This money is welcome, of course, but it comes at a price. We are not fulfilling commitments we are funding ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on my Caucus colleagues to meet and examine the mandate. We need to identify our priorities among all those in progress to ensure as many are fulfilled as possible in the next 198 days. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT-UNW COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout the public service there is one dominating topic of discussion, the possibility of a government strike. Workers are disgruntled. They have been without a contract for three years. Meanwhile, the cost of everything is going up, and none of us has a choice about whether to pay the cost. Fuel, travel, power, food, nothing is spared from the increasing cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, in this fiscal climate the essential services that our government provides to its citizens become more and more important and we need to recognize and respect the public servants who provide those services. These are highly trained, professional, competent, and caring people. Teachers, nurses, engineers, project managers, accountants, all these people working for this government provide the services that our citizens need and count on.

Mr. Speaker, in a soft economy those services are relied upon even more than ever, and we are living in a soft economy right now. Small businesses have already noted a steep decline in sales and income just in the past few months. Confidence in spending is down, and a possible strike is just a rumour at this point. Imagine the actual impact of an actual work stoppage across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, no one disputes that, as leaders of the Northwest Territories, it is incumbent upon this government to lead in a fiscally responsible way, especially during economically challenging times, and that means serious and relentless scrutiny of the dollars that we spend.

However, as leaders, we also have a responsibility to respect our partners and citizens, our partners who are the dedicated employees of this government and our citizens who benefit from and rely on the services that government provides. In this case, Mr. Speaker, that means that we need to roll up our sleeves, get back to the table, set aside our differences, and seek compromise.

Mr. Speaker, our economy, our public service, and our citizens need leadership. We need teamwork and partnership. A work stoppage will not achieve anything or do anyone any good. I urge both the government and the UNW to go to work and get an agreement done, as there is no more important a matter for Northerners at this time than this one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2018 SAHTU REGION EVENTS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back, colleagues, to the House.

2018 Highlights in the Sahtu Region: Mr. Speaker, before we start our review of the budget for the upcoming year I want to celebrate some of the highlights of 2018 in the Sahtu. It was great news when Enbridge completed its pipeline repair and Imperial Oil resumed production in Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, it has taken decades, but our determined efforts to build the Mackenzie Highway are finally paying off. Last June the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada announced funding totalling \$140 million to build a bridge over the Great Bear River near Tulita, construct a 15 kilometre all-season road from Wrigley to Mount Gaudet, and to do environmental and planning studies for future segments of the all-weather road highway.

In October the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated and the Department of Infrastructure agreed to work together to advance the environmental assessment process for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. This road work will bring new opportunities to residents and businesses and deliver government services in the Sahtu at an affordable rate.

At the same time a new era in local healthcare began in September, with the opening of the health centre and long-term care facility in Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add that the Deline Got'ine Government and the NWT Housing Corporation are working on a community housing strategy that will include a needs analysis and a long-term partnership.

The work we are doing in the Sahtu region fits nicely into our efforts to raise our profile in Canada and around the world. In September the Special Senate Committee on the Arctic visited the Northwest Territories to see first-hand how we are meeting our challenges and opportunities and how Canada can help us do that. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Another positive development is Canada's new Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. Indigenous governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories are working together to make sure that Canada includes the issues that are important to us in the Northwest Territories. This is really critical because it is Canada's way of publicly setting its northern priorities. After all our hard work, we should see a final document from Canada fairly soon. Most of all, I look forward to federal contributions that would flow from it.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the great work being done in the Sahtu and the positive impact it is having on the residents. I know this will continue into 2019, and I look forward to the results and achievements ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. [Translation] We have a guest in the House. We have Daryl Dolynny here. I would like to thank him for joining us today. We also have Sandra Bishop for Behchoko [translation ends]. Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF GNWT ACTIONS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am excited to be back in this House. The work we do here is an opportunity to lay a strong foundation for the future of our territory and the people who have elected us. We have the chance to address the issues which affect our shared futures. We have the opportunity to get it right and to chart a clear path toward a healthy and prosperous future for all the peoples we represent. Mr. Speaker, there are very serious concerns that compel us to make sure we get it right.

Northern workers in the public service have not had real job security for some time. Three years without a collective agreement is simply unacceptable for the largest employer in the Northwest Territories. Northern owned and operated businesses continue to struggle with too much red tape, broken procurement policies, and a lack of access to crucial sources of new capital to grow and sustain their business. Municipal governments are still underfunded, and yet this government continues to download new responsibilities; access to information, cannabis control, emergency response services, homelessness, all without additional funding to address resourcing these pressing issues. This is forcing our communities to raise taxes while cutting programs and services to make ends meet. In addition to this, there is a sugar tax, a carbon tax, land transfer tax, airport tax. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, and for a government mandated to tackle the ever-growing cost of living, it is absurd that its policies are directly impacting the pocketbooks of Northerners.

The time now is for decisive action. It is time for us as representatives of the people to pursue the policies and legislation needed for economic growth. It is now that we must put niceties aside for real and frank discussion of these pressing issues at hand. Mr. Speaker, we must not merely pawn off nice words at the expense of everyday northern families and the communities that we serve. People are anxious, people are frustrated, and this government must act to ensure prosperity, growth, jobs, and most importantly, that our cost of living is held in check.

This is the beginning of the final stretch, Mr. Speaker, and we must be certain that what we do here today is for the benefit of all people. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NICO PROJECT SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have not had much good to say about the socio-economic agreements signed by this government. Another one, for the NICO Project, was signed on January 29, 2019, at a mining conference in Vancouver.

I will be the first to admit that this most recent agreement is better than the previous ones, but there is still a long way to go to generate and retain real benefits for Northwest Territories residents. Improvements in this most recent agreement include:

- Employment and purchasing targets are set for the closure phase;
- A staffed office in the Northwest Territories is to be established, primarily for human resources purposes;
- There are specific targets for training, apprenticeships, and educational awards;
- A training and learning centre in Whati is to be created;
- Equal opportunity strategies are set out for women;
- A social legacy project is to be carried out, but there is no requirement for consultation, no notice, and no specified value; and
- Annual reports are public, and there are to be annual community visits.

Then there are the familiar deficiencies. The failure of the agreement to set or require any form of sanctions or penalties for non-compliance renders it rather meaningless. It is another best efforts arrangement. It is not clear how the reviews of previous socio-economic agreements have fed into this new one. The review that I tabled in the House in the last sitting was highly critical of our previous efforts to capture and retain benefits, and this agreement is not a whole lot better.

Of greatest concern is the timing and lack of consultation with the Tlicho government, which boycotted the signing in Vancouver. On the face of it, the lack of consultation appears to be a breach of Chapter 23 of the Tlicho Agreement and certainly not in accordance with GNWT's Respect, Recognition and Responsibility Approach to Engaging with Aboriginal Governments.

The signing of this agreement also comes just before the new Mineral Resources Act is brought forward that could raise the bar for benefits agreements. The signing of this agreement seems to be more of a news event to show how the NWT is open for the mining industry than a serious effort at benefit retention. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF CHIEF APRIL MARTELL

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back to the House, Mr. Speaker, and welcome to my colleagues. I am looking forward to working with all of you over the next six weeks, especially in this budget session. We have a lot of important work to

complete. Mr. Speaker [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, of course, the KFN, a nation of Dene people who live on the south shore of Great Slave Lake who are signatories to Treaty 8, have a rich history far beyond first contact with European settlers. In fact, anthropological data suggests that, before European contact, many First Nations societies were matriarchal, or led by women.

Looking to the future, Mr. Speaker, Chief Martel herself is part of that rich history. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, Chief Martel's enthusiasm is very exciting. Before taking on her role, she was an educator at Chief Sunrise School, where she worked in the Aboriginal Head Start Program.

I understand that she is eager to work on education, job training, housing, and language and cultural revitalization. These admirable goals are shared by many Members in this House, and so I hope my colleagues will join me in wishing Chief Martel, as well as the new council, all the best.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I would like also to say a big mahsi to former Chief Roy Fabian for his many years of service to the K'atloodeeche First Nations. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NAHENDEH REGION SPORTING EVENTS

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, last month the Nahendeh hosted a number of exciting sporting events for youth and adults. I had the opportunity to volunteer, be a spectator, and even participate in a number of those.

On January 11th and 12th the Hamlet of Fort Liard hosted the 5th Annual Four on Four Soccer Tournament. They had over 60 athletes from Wrigley, Fort Simpson, Hay River, and Fort Liard participate. There were four co-ed divisions, ranging from the 12-and-under division and ending with the 19-and-under division. Spectators enjoyed the weekend with lots of amazing soccer. I would like to thank the cooks, recreation department, and coaches for making this event a great success for the athletes and families.

On January 18th to 20th we witnessed amazing sportsmanship and enjoyment during the annual Paul Stipdonk Memorial Soccer Tournament. The community of Fort Simpson saw over 80 athletes participate in five co-ed divisions, ranging from the four-and-under division and ending with the 12-and-under divisions. The four communities of Fort

Simpson, Wrigley, Samba K'e, and Fort Liard participated in this event. As in the past, the high school students coached the teams and Chris Stipdonk, son of Paul, refereed the majority of the games. Along with soccer, the youth were able to attend a movie night, skills competition, and free gym time.

On January 25th to 27th the Fort Simpson Recreation Center hosted the 32nd Annual Fort Simpson Men's Senior Hockey Tournament, with five teams registered. Fort Simpson, Deline, Hay River, and Fort Providence were represented. The Deline Braves emerged as the tournament champions, with the Hay River Huskies coming in second and the Nahanni Inn Flyers placing third.

The organizers would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped out with the adult dance and family dance, in keeping score, and the Moosehide Mamas in providing the little extras that make this tournament successful. They would like to thank all of the platinum and gold sponsors; Rowes Construction, Simpson Air, Nahanni Inn, Village of Fort Simpson, Liidlii Kue First Nation, Dehcho Friendship Centre, and Aurora Ford.

Finally, to bring the weekend to a successful close, the Fort Simpson Curling Club hosted the 29th Annual Merchants Bonspiel. There were 13 teams competing in three events. There was a team from Hay River and a junior team that participated. The winning team of Marc Bertrand, Dani Thompson, Troy Hardisty, and Anastasia Panshyna were the single undefeated team. The club had a special recognition for Ted Grants for his support throughout the years. The organizers would like to thank the cooks, volunteers, corporate sponsors, and the teams who helped make this a successful event. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend we saw the annual Wolfpack Invitational Basketball Tournament, with teams from Fort Smith, Fort Nelson, and Fort Simpson participating with 12 teams in five divisions. There was a lot of great basketball played that weekend.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Nahanni Inn Flyers for winning the annual Hay River Rusty Blades Hockey Tournament, where there were 12 teams in three pools. In the end, we played Yellowknife in the final and won 3-2. Special recognition goes out to Shawn Gillis for being the youngest player on the team and scoring his first old-timer's goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
AVALON NECHALACHO RARE EARTH
ELEMENTS PROJECT

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about a resource development project that has been in the works for the last several years within the riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The project that I am referring to is the Nechalacho Rare Earth Elements Project, which is located 100 kilometres southeast of Yellowknife at Thor Lake.

Mr. Speaker, this project is a unique economic opportunity for not only the NWT, but for our country and our global allies. I say this because currently there are no such resource development projects that exist anywhere in North America. That is because the vast majority of the world's rare earth reserves lie in China, who currently supplies 86 percent of global rare earth demand. However, China's dominance in this industry will not be eternal because, if the current rate of production is maintained, they have about 10 to 15 years' worth of estimated supply remaining. This opens the door for a more competitive market for other countries to supply this ever-increasing demand for this resource.

Mr. Speaker, for those who may not know, let me share with you some of the many uses where rare earth elements are used throughout the world. Generally, rare earths are manufactured in small quantities by large industries and placed in such products as televisions, cell phones, computers, automobiles, jets, and medical devices. Rare earths are also widely used within renewable energy resources, such as turbines, electric cars, energy-efficient lighting, and rechargeable batteries. Given the ongoing global transformation of energy systems, analysts predict that the demand for rare earth elements will continue to grow in the foreseeable future.

In addition to these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I also point out that the project has great potential for helping to alleviate the growing economic woes the NWT is experiencing due to the receding life of our diamond mines. Not only would this project help employ local people during the construction period, but Avalon, the company building the project, will have many jobs available during production.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, I think the project will open many doors for the NWT because I believe the new emerging industry growing within our territory has strong potential to attract spin-off industries and will benefit the entire NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ADEQUACY OF MOOSE KERR SCHOOL

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with this recent cold snap, several schools across the Northwest Territories have closed because of extreme cold. Even when these closures only last the morning or a full day, they remind us how important one's environment, both inside and outside, is to the students' ability to learn successfully.

Families and community leaders in Aklavik remain concerned about the adequacy of Moose Kerr School, not our dedicated teachers, not our hardworking students, not the many groups that also use the school, but the building itself.

This winter alone, the school has shut down a handful of times, not because of the weather, but because of building issues. Although the GNWT has done various maintenance projects over the years, that work does not seem to have caught all the problems.

This is very troubling to the community, who want their concerns to be heard and for the students to have a reliable, high-quality environment for their education. Right now the GNWT has said that small repair initiatives over time will make the building last another 20 years. I appreciate that those important repairs have been happening and that capital planning must address the needs of the whole territory, but there is still a disconnect between the government's assessment and the needs of the community.

The GNWT has also said that, with the current utilization rate, any future replacement of Moose Kerr School, which was built 50 years ago and last had a major retrofit 20 years ago, would be smaller than the current school.

I'm hearing from the community that a smaller school in better condition is preferable to the current situation. You will not be surprised to hear, Mr. Speaker, but I'll have more to say about Moose Kerr School as this session continues. Thank you, and I'll have questions later today.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 36-18(3):
MODULAR PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on October 19, 2017, regarding Northwest Territories Housing Corporation modular units construction.

In terms of modular versus stick-built construction, experience has shown that costs can be comparable in more northern communities due to shipping and transportation costs. Where a community can be accessed through the road system, savings are expected from a modular approach.

The original calculation of construction cost savings did include the payment of a cash advance to Concept Energy Services Ltd.

The amount of the advance was \$1.34 million and was supported by the signed legal agreement requiring partial recoveries from subsequent progress-draw payments as the work is completed. This advance has now been fully recovered from Concept Energy Services Ltd.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation provided Concept Energy Services Ltd. with the advance in order to assist with up-front material purchases. This is consistent with practices in the modular home industry, where up-front capital is required. This advance was provided in accordance with Section 99 of the Financial Administration Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency.

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 88-18(3):
RESOURCE ROYALTIES IN 2018-2019 MAIN
ESTIMATES

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Frame Lake on February 12, 2018, regarding resource royalties in the 2018-2019 Main Estimates.

The Diamonds, Royalties and Financial Analysis Division of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is responsible for providing the Department of Finance with the mineral and oil and gas royalties forecasts used in the Government of the Northwest Territories budgets. The Department of Finance is responsible for all tax revenue forecasts, including tobacco tax revenues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 149-18(3):
CORE HOUSING NEEDS FUNDING

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on February 22, 2018, regarding the housing core need action plan.

The estimated \$20 million of planned activities for 2018-2019 will be resourced from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's 2018-2019 Capital Plan, the base funded programs included in the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's 2018-2019 Main Estimates, and available internal cash resources realized from sources such as the sale of housing assets, mortgage collection efforts, and any residual budget surpluses. A current assessment of the available internal cash resources was undertaken during the development of the 2018-2019 Corporate Plan and will continue to be assessed as part of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's annual business planning process.

The planned investments set out in the "Towards Level Ground: Addressing Persistent Core Need in the Northwest Territories" report were identified, taking into account the feedback received from the Housing Engagement Survey and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's available resources.

Specific areas of core need will be addressed through a variety of Northwest Territories Housing Corporation initiatives and programs. The following are approximate projected numbers of households to be assisted by initiative: emergency repair - 348; seniors Aging in Place retrofits - 150; new unit construction - 135; major homeownership repairs - 84; rent supplement programs - 100; policy renewal - 40; lease-to-own repairs - 90; public housing portfolio rebalancing - 30; new seniors' housing - 40; housing support pilot - 20; new home program - 11; community housing support initiative - 10; Habitat for Humanity - 3; Sahtu homeless shelter - 4; and Northern Pathways - 12.

Recognizing that a number of the planned investments set out in this plan involve territory-wide application-based programs as well as a draft future year capital plan, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is unable to provide an exact regional breakdown of these investments at this time. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is planning to include in its annual corporate plan a status report of each of the plan's initiatives, including actual spending by region.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's 2018-2019 Main Estimates includes a \$600,000 funding allocation to the Rent Supplement Program.

Recognizing that the historical utilization rate of this program has been approximately 40 percent of that amount, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation considers the current base budget adequate at this time. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will continue to assess the results of the new program and explore opportunities to align with upcoming federal programming. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Returns to oral questions. Minister of Finance.

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 483-18(3):
UNION OF NORTHERN WORKERS AND GNWT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Kam Lake on October 31, 2018, regarding the Union of Northern Workers and the Government of the Northwest Territories' negotiations.

The GNWT and the UNW received correspondence from mediator Mr. Vince Ready on November 15, 2018, confirming the views that he expressed to the parties on conclusions of mediation on October 26, 2018. He confirmed that, in his view, further mediation talks should be scheduled to explore terms of settlement. Additional mediation dates have been scheduled with Mr. Ready for early February 2019. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent who has joined us in the gallery today. She is here as a chaperone for the Pages from the Deh Cho. She is a generous volunteer, a beloved teacher, and my aunt, Ms. June Simpson. Welcome.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to welcome the many UNW local presidents who joined us in the House today, but in particular I want to recognize president of Local 11 and Yellowknife North resident, Mr. Frank Walsh. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to recognize the employees from Fort Providence, the Department of Infrastructure, plus the president of

the local GNWT employees of Fort Providence, Mr. Darrel Gargan. I believe he is somewhere in the gallery. Mahsi.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Sean Whitcomb, chief steward of UNW Local 3. Thank you for joining us today.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a constituent, Ms. Arlene Hansen, who is joining us here today and chaperoning our Pages this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Ernie Bernhardt, who said the opening prayer of the Legislative Assembly, and also, his wife, Mrs. Beatrice Bernhardt. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also recognize Louise Leblanc, Local 13 president from Fort Simpson, as part of the Union of Northern Workers, as well as Mr. Ernie Bernhardt and Beatrice Bernhardt, who are family friends. I had the opportunity to work with them in Kugluktuk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a few constituents from the Great Slave riding with us today. Ernie and Beatrice Bernhardt are with us today, as well as Daryl Dolynny, who is a former member and current CEO of Avens and a resident of the Great Slave riding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us. It is always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings.

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 497-18(3): GNWT-INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier my Member's statement was on the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation's 2019 election. My questions are for the Premier on government-to-government relations.

Mr. Speaker, my first question is: how are we, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, holding ourselves accountable in relation to our obligations for the implementation of the land claims agreements in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to respecting the provisions of land claim agreements and to fulfilling its obligations under all Northwest Territories land claims, especially since we are also a signatory of the land claims. We see it as our land claims, as well.

Through implementation committees, which include representation for Canada, the Indigenous government, and the Government of the Northwest Territories, the parties discuss the ongoing implementation of land claim agreements and work to resolve any issues that may arise. Thank you.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It is good to hear that the Premier recognizes it as a territorial land claim, as well. That holds us accountable. How will the Government of the Northwest Territories work with Indigenous governments to build better working policies around our land claims agreements so that we can work more closely together as we move towards self-government and our own self-determination?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed through the Respect, Recognition, and Responsibility document to work collaboratively with Northwest Territories Indigenous governments, including those with settled land claim agreements, on policies and approaches to public program and service delivery that reflect common interests and address shared concerns.

As Indigenous governments move toward self-determination, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to working collaboratively to support capacity building, the transition to self-government jurisdiction, and the delivery of public

and Indigenous government programs and services.

As well, we formally recognize Aboriginal governments through memorandums of understanding, where we commit to meet bilaterally at least twice a year to discuss and resolve issues of concern or mutual issues.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response in talking about bilateral agreements and other ways of advocating for funding for our regions. Leading from that question, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to advocating or working side-by-side with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in Ottawa as climate change continues to affect the infrastructure in Nunakput?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, we are commit today working very closely with the IRC in Ottawa not only on climate change, but other issues that affect us, such as offshore oil and gas and fisheries, among other things.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. It's good to see that the government is open to working and actually travelling together to Ottawa to advocate. We are stronger together. That leads me to my next question, Mr. Speaker: talk about travelling. Will the Premier commit to taking all of Cabinet up to Nunakput and meet with all levels of government on issues that affect our residents before the 18th Assembly wraps up?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Cabinet open houses are a valuable opportunity for all of us in Cabinet to hear directly from people in each riding. We have two Cabinet open houses left to do, and we are prepared and looking forward to going to Nunakput, and we will hold Cabinet open houses in both of these ridings that we have not attended yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 498-18(3):

UNFULFILLED MANDATE COMMITMENTS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier. As I mentioned in my statement, more than half the commitments the Members of the 18th Assembly made in our mandate have not yet been fulfilled, and many of them are of immediate importance to our future. My question for the Premier is: what is the plan to complete the 109 outstanding commitments in the next seven months? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are 230 mandate commitments for the 18th Legislative Assembly. Some of these are specific and targeted. Others are very broad and focused on fundamental issues that have faced our territory and require long-term efforts. With that said, we are committed to advancing each of these mandate commitments and, where possible, completing them. There are many positive advancements being made and tracked on the mandate reporting website. Between now and the end of this Assembly, the government will continue to work toward fulfilling the mandate commitments of the 18th Assembly.

MS. GREEN: I thank the Premier for that answer, but I am not satisfied with it because, in the three years to date, less than half of the mandate commitments have been fulfilled, so why will we have confidence on this side of the House that in fact the rest will be fulfilled in seven months?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As of February 1, 2019, we are reporting on the implementation of the mandate. We have 123 commitments fulfilled, 107 commitments in progress, and zero commitments in the planning stage.

MS. GREEN: It seems that two commitments have gone into the fulfilled category since I did my research. My question, however, remains: with more than a hundred commitments still not fulfilled, what confidence can the Premier give us that in fact they will be fulfilled in the next seven months?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As a government, we are working very hard and we are committed to fulfilling all of the mandates, and we will be reviewing the commitments as we go forward. At some point, we will make a determination. Some of them we know are ongoing commitments, as I said. Some of them, the commitments are very broad, so I think a lot of them are ongoing. We will be reviewing each of them to determine if they will be fulfilled or not, and, at some point in the next seven months, we can report on our progress.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question at this time is to ask the Premier whether he is going to involve Regular Members in the discussion about commitments that still need to be fulfilled in the balance of this term so that we can add our voices to the priorities that are established.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We track and report progress on all the commitments and, as always, we welcome feedback and input from the Members

as to what the priorities should be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 499-18(3):
REGIONAL WELLNESS COUNCILS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have seen these regional wellness councils become part of our health system and the Minister has talked about how well it's working, so there are some questions I need to ask because constituents and people have been asking me these questions. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm: does the Department of Health and Social Services and NWT Health and Social Services provide the standard orientation for regional wellness councils on what their roles and responsibilities are? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is an orientation manual for the regional wellness council members on their roles and responsibilities. The handbook is updated on a regular basis. It's currently being reviewed to include updating information around additional guidelines and whatnot to make their jobs better understood and more clear. This will be shared, obviously, with the regional wellness councils across the Northwest Territories. There is a training session coming up where we are inviting all regional wellness council members to come in for an update and to be familiarized with the updated manual. However, as you know, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that all the regional wellness council members in the Deh Cho have actually attended training, have participated in training that either occurred in 2016 or more recently in February 2018.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. Can the Minister tell us, this orientation, do they do it annually, is it biannually, or is it just when you get appointed, and do they do it as a complete group, or is it individualized?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Generally speaking, members receive their orientation at the beginning of their first appointment. This helps to get them familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the council and how to engage with the public and also with the authority. The leadership council, which are the chairs of the regional wellness councils, I met with them in the spring and they identified that ongoing support for the regional wellness council members is something that is really important to them. The department and the authority are

presently developing some options to help increase refreshes and other orientations and other mechanisms to make sure that the regional wellness councils are as up-to-date as possible on current programs and services that are being provided so that they can provide advice in a meaningful way.

MR. THOMPSON: I am very happy to hear that through the Minister and that we are moving forward on that. Some of the questions that constituents bring to me, I know the process, but what happens if board members hear concerns about health and social services and the system and how do they bring these concerns forward presently?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The regional wellness councillors are an incredibly important group of individuals, and they have the opportunity to bring information both from the public to the system, but also from the system to the public. Regional wellness council members are encouraged to obviously contact the chairperson of the respective wellness councils and to add items of concern to the agendas of those councils. They also have an opportunity, when appropriate, to go to the chief operating officer of a region, who may be able to provide them updates or information if they are looking for that information so that they can share it with the residents of their communities and their surrounding areas. The following discussions with the regional wellness councils, the chairs may also escalate concerns up to the board itself. We have set it up so that responses to concerns and questions brought by the leadership council to the board from Regional Wellness Council members have a 30-day turnaround time to get those Regional Wellness Council members a response.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that information. So a board member comes to the chair. The chair brings it to the meeting. The meeting brings it to the territorial leadership board. What is the follow-up? What I am hearing right now from a number of the board members is that they don't know where their concerns are being brought forth. I think the Minister has explained the system, and maybe I am missing something, but can he explain what that process is? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, there are several different ways for information to come in and different levels that it can go to, which means that there are several different ways for that information to come back.

If the Regional Wellness Council member is seeking just generic or general information from the chief operating officer, the chief operating officer can provide that directly to the council member or have their staff do so. If the information has been escalated up through the chair to the board, the information will pass, then, through the chair of that particular wellness council to the wellness council members.

As a note, Mr. Speaker, I did have an opportunity to meet with the leadership council in the spring, and there were a number of concerns raised about mechanisms to provide the council and the Regional Wellness Council members with some support to make sure that that information is flowing effectively, because, to the Member's point, it hasn't always. There have been some growing pains.

We are looking at providing some additional supports to that unit so that there are more people providing that information on a regular basis and making sure it is getting back. Much like all the Ministers have supports here, we want to make sure that there are supports to the board members as well so that they can help flow information as seamlessly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 500-18(3):
NICO PROJECT SOCIO-ECONOMIC
AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I have looked at the NICO Socio-Economic Agreement, but there are no sanctions or penalties for non-compliance or failure to reach targets. It is basically an unenforceable best efforts arrangement. For example, with employment and training targets, why not make a payment into a training or education fund or program if the targets aren't reached? Can the Minister explain why our government continues to sign best efforts agreements without any teeth, without any sanctions or penalties? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has long taken an approach of working in collaboration and partnership with industry and Indigenous governments, which has evolved from a time when we did not have the authorities and responsibilities that we are going to be having since devolution has taken place.

That said, we believe that our approach is working. These agreements have been signed and fostered billions of dollars in procurement and thousands of jobs for residents of the Northwest Territories since they were introduced in the 1990s, Mr. Speaker. The socio-economic agreements are one of those tools that we use to bring our partnerships to the table. There are targets that are set, but these are just targets. We are responsible for a degree of this because we are responsible for workforce development.

With that being said, again, as I have said, these are successful based on our accountability, and we do demand a face-to-face meeting with the companies and Indigenous governments and ourselves and local communities. We believe these things are working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for confirming that this is another one of those unenforceable agreements. I tabled a University of Victoria study in the fall that pointed out how our socio-economic agreements are rather poor, and lots of ways to improve that. I would like the Minister to explain how that review, or any other work that is going on within the department, of our weak socio-economic agreements played into what was negotiated with Fortune Minerals for the NICO Project.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As the Member may not know, this agreement with Fortune has been in the works for some time, and we will continue to work on it. We signed with them last week in Vancouver. Its structure and its approach has been based on previous agreements that we have negotiated and put into place with the Government of the Northwest Territories. While we are reviewing our socio-economic agreements, the work is ongoing, and it has not reached a point where any conclusions or decisions have been made or could be reflected in the Fortune agreement.

MR. O'REILLY: The Minister didn't answer my question, but of course, he is not obligated to do that.

The Tlicho government issued its own news release on the signing of this agreement, the NICO Agreement, and they said that they believe it is a breach of the Tlicho Agreement and entirely inconsistent with this government's policy on engagement with Indigenous governments. Can the Minister confirm that there was no real consultation with the Tlicho government before the signing of this agreement and explain why?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: For those of you who don't know, these are agreements on broad benefits for the Northwest Territories. It was negotiated with Fortune Minerals by our

government and my department specifically on behalf of all residents of the Northwest Territories, including those in the Tlicho region. There is no requirement to engage the Tlicho government. We had hoped that, given this level of benefit to the Tlicho people, they would participate in the ceremonial signing agreement and be witnesses to this, but they chose not to.

That said, in December we met with the Tlicho government to discuss the contents of the SEA. We presented them with the substance of the agreement, including employment and procurement targets, and took comments from them ahead of finalizing and sharing our final SEA with them and Fortune last week.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to thank the Minister again for confirming that there was no serious consultation. You would think that our government would talk to the Tlicho government before deciding where the learning centre might be located or where a legacy project might be located. That is not the way we should be doing business.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, it appears that this agreement was rushed through without consultation with the Tlicho government, signed at a mining conference down south, and entered into before a new higher bar might be established in the Mineral Resources Act. Can the Minister explained why this agreement was signed in Vancouver and rushed through before the Mineral Resources Act might establish higher standards? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As the Member knows, we are going to be sharing the specifics of our bill very soon in this Legislative Assembly, and that would be an appropriate time to comment on that.

With that, I would like to say that, generally, legislation of this type takes periods of years to come to and enforce after supporting regulations are developed. I wouldn't anticipate that we would want to wait until that act came into force to pass negotiation benefits for our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 501-18(3):
HYDROELECTRIC EXPANSION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of

Infrastructure, also the Minister responsible for the Energy Division.

Mr. Speaker, we have committed to capturing local alternatives to fossil fuel usage, such as hydro. This government, along with the federal government, has made some public announcements recently, as well as provided some funding recently with regard to the potential expansion of the Taltson Hydro Power Project. The Premier spoke about it proudly earlier today in his statement. There still remain concern and some criticism about this project, so I have some questions for the Minister responsible for the Energy Division.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of our existing hydro system, such as Snare, Bluefish, and Taltson, but does the Government of the Northwest Territories have a long-standing hydro strategy with plans to install dams on a number of NWT rivers? If so, could the Minister please provide that strategy to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories released a draft hydro strategy in 2010. The hydro potential was noted to be 11,520 megawatts in the energy report produced by the Government of the Northwest Territories in May of 2011. Hydro development is included in the vision for the 2030 Energy Strategy and Energy Action Plan. The Taltson Hydro Expansion Project is the best understood option that we have to develop industrial-scale hydro potential in the near term that connect three legacy hydro assets you've mentioned. There is no specific plans in place beyond that exploratory work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I thank the Minister for the clarity. We are really, when it comes to Hydro, just talking about the existing dams and hydro systems that we currently have. Mr. Speaker, it's been also stated that hydro power is not "green" energy. What is the GNWT's position on hydroelectric power? Is it ecologically and environmentally sound, or is it an unsafe way to generate renewable energy?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Government of the Northwest Territories believes that hydro power can be developed in an ecologically sensitive and environmentally safe manner for the benefit of the residents of the communities and our economy in the Northwest Territories.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Minister believes that this is a safe, ecological, and sound way in which to produce energy. I am happy to hear that the government believes in that.

I would like to ask the Minister: is it the intent of expanding the Taltson to lower the cost of living for residents, or is it to mitigate impacts on climate change, or is it in fact to provide carbon-free energy to the mineral development industry?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, we believe that all three of those can be achieved through doing this and as well as for future resource development in our territory.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, sometimes we are criticized that, if we put money in one area, then another area is going to suffer. Does the money from the GNWT or the federal government that gets directed at hydro power take away from money and/or resources to develop or expand alternative energy opportunities in our thermal, remote communities?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: No, it does not. Mini hydro is a firm and renewable energy option for three of our thermal communities that we will consider as part of our existing funding agreements with the Government of Canada, and we can set aside the funds necessary to build those projects where communities feel it is the best option to pursue. We will also consider other alternatives. Feasibility stage costs for the Taltson hydro expansion are included in the energy action plan, but significant new sources of funding and financing will be needed before it can proceed to construction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 502-18(3):
AVALON NECHALACHO RARE EARTH
ELEMENTS PROJECT

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I made a Member's statement on Avalon rare earth resources. I have questions for the Minister of ITI. I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister has been engaged in any discussion with the mining company that is hoping to continue or start operations at Thor Lake? Thank you.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we were down at the mineral roundup in Vancouver last week, I had a chance to have a discussion with the CEO, Mr. Bubar, and he actually introduced me to their new potential partner, a private Australian company, Cheetah Resources, and I had a brief discussion with them

of their exciting new project that they want to take on at Nechalacho.

MR. BEAULIEU: Does the Minister know if that company has any discussions or any engagements at all with the Aboriginal groups, Indigenous groups in the area, specifically I think maybe Lutselk'e, YK Dene, and Fort Resolution?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I would have to check into that, but my suspicion, talking to Mr. Bubar and his new partner, is Avalon would still be the lead on this project through engagement and the permitting process and the work that would have to be completed, and I would suspect that their new concept of a new mini, micro-mine concept, that they will have to engage our Indigenous partners and have discussions with them, as well, and update them.

MR. BEAULIEU: Has the Minister at any point during his discussions gotten into what might make that project viable and what might get that project started with the company?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: What I can tell the Member and the Assembly is, in my discussion with them, they are looking at a very small-scale development of a -- I know the acronyms for the elements are Nd- and Pr-rich concentrate. They want to do a low-cost mining operation for crushing, an ore-sorting operation, to have a look at specifically their T-zone and the resource that is there.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if during his discussion there was any feel for whether or not they will go beyond this small-scale mining operation that they are planning now? They must be doing it because of the current situation with rare earths right across the globe. I am wondering if the Minister had any indication whether or not the company wants to move beyond a small-scale mining operation?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: From the conversation I had with their financial partner there from Australia, his approach he says has been always a small-scale approach to see what the real potential is there without a whole large investment. This was over a \$1 billion investment to actually get Avalon up and going, their original pre-feasibility study, what they wanted to do. This is a new approach, and the department wants to follow this closely. Any type of economic opportunities that we can bring to the Northwest Territories for the residents and our Indigenous governments is a welcome opportunity, and we will work very closely with Avalon and their new partner to try to move

this small-scale project forward and have collaboration and meaningful input from everybody in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 503-18(3):
PUBLIC INFORMATION ON GNWT EMPLOYEE
PAY INCREASES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's important that this government provide clear information to the public so they can make informed decisions. There is a document on the Department of Finance's website called "Questions & Answers: GNWT Position on Pay Increases." A number of my constituents looked over this information and had some concerns that I would like the Minister to respond to today.

In one of the examples, for a classroom assistant, starting pay in 2015-2016 on this graph shows \$60,762, increasing to \$72,131 in 2020-2021. Now, the department then claims this is a total increased pay of \$30,000. That is nearly a 50 percent increase in base pay. That does not make sense with the first part of the graph and, if you look at all the positions contained in this document and posted currently on the website, they are all like this. It seems the department or the government is double counting its numbers to show an overly generous total increased pay. Can the Minister respond to this discrepancy and set the record straight on what expectations Northerners can have of these proposed pay increases? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the chart, and I wish I had it in front of me here, the chart the Member is speaking of does talk to the fact that, if you start at a pay level below level 16, pay level 1, you get this amount of dollars through the pay grade system and the step system. Once you get to step 8, I believe is the highest you can go, then it would be a significant increase. I do not think we are double counting our benefit. We are just stating the facts.

MR. TESTART: The fact, as I see it in this document, is that, when an employee would start at \$60,000, in five years they would be making \$72,000. Again, that is not a \$30,000 increase. Why is this information on the government website when it is hard to understand, paints a picture of an overly generous benefit from what is being presented to the public, and prevents the public from clearly understanding what is on offer?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: In a recent briefing, we gave committee a copy of the said document and we had our officials explain as to the steps of the document. I would be glad to sit down with the Member, go through the document with him, and explain it a little clearer, but I believe that the document is an accurate document and it gives people an opportunity to see where they might get once they get into the specific steps of their employment.

MR. TESTART: I think it would be clearer if the government created an apples-to-apples comparison of what someone is making in one year under the previous collective agreement to what someone is making in a given year under the GNWT's proposal. Can the Minister commit to creating a document like that, which provides a straight apples-to-apples comparison year-to-year of what an employee would currently make versus what one would make under the offer? Can the Minister commit to producing that?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I said, I will commit to working with the Member. Again, I am not sure if this is going to interfere with the process that we are going through right now with UNW. I will confirm that, but I will work with the Member to try to give a clearer understanding, and I will see if we are in a position, without going against our negotiation with UNW, to provide this information.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's offer, and I don't want to appear ungenerous, but I am not raising this because I am having trouble understanding. I am raising this because the public looking at this is having trouble understanding, and they don't have the benefit of being able to sit down with the Minister and his department to parse this out. Can the Minister commit to, again, providing clearer information or a clear cost accounting of how they came to this figure, which, again, represents a 50 percent increase from base pay, which I think is hard for a lot of our residents to understand as a viable pay increase, even under the new offer? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We will try to provide a document that is as clear as possible. Again, we are in the process of having discussions with the union. We are hoping to go to mediation by the end of the week, and I am hoping that this doesn't interfere with that, but we will try to provide a clearer document.

If the public is having trouble understanding it, they need to contact our folks over at Finance or contact myself. I have not heard from anyone. I have had a

briefing with members of committee, gave them an explanation as to the steps and how the document works, but again, I would be pleased to sit down with the Member. If there is an opportunity to clarify it out in the public realm, we would be willing to do that as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 504-18(3):
ADEQUACY OF MOOSE KERR SCHOOL

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have questions for the Minister responsible for Education, and I am sure she may need assistance from the Infrastructure Minister, because it is between those two departments.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard from the community that Moose Kerr School has been closed due to the building issues more than once this winter. How does the department monitor these kinds of issues, and when does the department step in? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right. There have been quite a few schools, actually, this winter that have actually closed, mostly because of cold weather. That, I can't monitor. I mean, we all can look outside. That, I can't have any say over, unfortunately. Cold weather is good for other things, though.

When there are smaller issues in the schools that come up, for example, if there are problems with boilers or problems with Internet and stuff, usually what happens is the principal is notified. The principal then notifies the superintendent, who notifies the school authority. We do give every school board's authorities, school bodies, we give them operating and maintenance monies. That is to take care of general maintenance in their buildings.

If they are bigger than that, they actually are brought to the attention of Education, Culture and Employment. At that time, we go in. We work closely with ITI to go in and do an assessment of the needs within the building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: I understand that the GNWT provided some small capital funding for the removal of hazardous portables and the creation of a play space at Moose Kerr School. What is the status of this work?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We did find, when we assessed the portables, that there were hazardous materials, so we were going to take them out of there. We thought that it would be completed in August. However, the bids were not successful and so the procurement process did delay the project, but we are on it now. We are expecting that the demolition will take place coming up this March, and then the playground will be completed. The playground will start in the spring, but the demolition should be completed by summer of this coming year.

MR. BLAKE: The Department of Education, Culture and Employment also planned to engage with the community to address safety concerns for children walking to school and using the parking area. What is the status of this work, and how has the department worked with the community over the past year?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I want to meet with the Member after session, because I am little bit confused as to whether he is talking about now or a previous meeting with the parents. Normally, whenever we do any major construction we meet with the community and with parents to get them aware and to address any concerns that they may have. When we are looking at the demolition of the portables, we will do that process, as well.

If the Member is speaking about something different, which I figure he might be, then if you could please let me know, and then I can address those issues, as well.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we were planning all of this work that was going to take place, like the parking area, the department said that they will meet with the hamlet and the community and speak with them to see what they would like to see done for the safety issues. Going into the 2019-2020 year, what is the department's current plan for Moose Kerr School? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Like I stated earlier, currently the future plan for the school is that we will be doing the demolition project. We will be doing the playground. I would love to say that we were giving them a new school. I know that they have wanted that for many years. I would love to have new schools in every community. The reality, though, is that we don't have the funding, so we have to look at schools based on the age of them, the condition, and the utilization rate. Unfortunately, the age is old; the condition rate is good; and the utilization rate, I think, is 36 percent or something

really low, so it does get bumped down in the process.

As for the parking, again, if there was a commitment made that we would go in and talk to them about the general parking at the school, then I will make sure that that commitment is fulfilled, and so I will make that a priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 505-18(3):
UNFULFILLED MANDATE COMMITMENTS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to my line of questioning for the Premier. The Premier is aware that the mandate belongs to all of us, as do the results of the mandate for the 18th Assembly. I would like to again ask the Premier if he can make a more robust effort to include Regular Members by creating a forum, such as using Caucus, for discussing outstanding commitments and prioritizing the completion of those that are possible in the next seven months. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't see why we need to create another forum. The information is updated on a regular basis. We meet at Caucus once a week when we are in session. I think the process is already in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Is the Premier prepared to come to Caucus to discuss prioritizing the remaining commitments in the mandate?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: If the Members want to take commitments off, that is always welcome.

MS. GREEN: I don't think of the Premier as a funny man, but he is apparently turning a new leaf. Can the Premier tell us why there are so many commitments still unfulfilled three years into our mandate?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In my mind, I don't believe that all of the Members took into account whether all of these commitments were doable in four years. Some of the commitments were very, very specific, and as such they are difficult to fulfill. Others are ongoing commitments that were there before; we have been doing a lot of work on it. Moving into the next Assembly, they will continue.

It is not an easy process, to just say, "Okay, we've done this," and move on to the next one, and that is why we are tracking all of the commitments that were made.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mandate and all of the commitments are something that all 18 of us came up with, and I am sure that, if we had our lives to live over again, we may not have chosen as many as we did, but the fact is that this is what we set out to do in this Assembly and we have a big chunk of work that remains undone that we need to address.

One possibility is that there are too many commitments, but another is that our agenda has really been hijacked by the money offered by Ottawa, meaning that, although the investment is welcome, we have ended up funding Ottawa's priorities rather than our own. Can the Premier say whether he agrees with that statement? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I don't agree with that statement. I believe that, at the time, if we had said no, we aren't going to do climate change, or we are not going to implement cannabis and we will just live with the backstop, the federal government was going to do it anyway. I didn't hear people saying, "Yes, let's just live with the backstop and just focus on our commitments," so I don't agree with that statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 506-18(3):
UNW STRIKE NOTICE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I am very mindful of the words that you offered at the beginning of this sitting about being careful how we are choosing our questions, and I do believe in collective bargaining, but there has been an event this afternoon that I need to ask some questions of the other side about. There was a news release put out earlier this afternoon about a strike notice being issued by the Union of Northern Workers, and I would like to ask which bargaining units have provided strike notice to our government. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I meant to ask that question of the Minister, and I just want, for information purposes, whether our government has actually received strike notice from which units from Union of Northern Workers. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Finance.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we received a strike notice from the UNW, which represents government employees. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to then ask the Minister of Finance whether we have received strike notice from UNW on behalf of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation workers and the workers with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have not received anything from NTPC, the workers at NTPC, and my understanding is that the Hay River Health and Social Services were having their vote. They may have had it yesterday, and we are just waiting for the results of that vote.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for that. Can the Minister tell us whether there are essential services agreements in place for the three bargaining units that I mentioned earlier?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to know from the Minister of Finance what the next steps are in terms of negotiations with the unions representing our employees and what sort of assurance he can give us that we are going to reach an agreement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As I said earlier, I think, responding to questions earlier, we have mediation coming up with the UNW on Friday. We are hoping to reach an agreement with them, and we will see what happens after that. As far as the other tables go, again, we are waiting to hear from Hay River Health and Social Services, and we are also looking to continue our talks with NTPC.

A strike is not something that anybody wants, and it is not something that the people of the Northwest Territories want, especially the employees. We feel that we have been very fair in our discussions with UNW. Again, that remains to be seen. We will have a better idea after the mediation this weekend to see what type of position that we are in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Member for Frame Lake.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 15-18(3):
GNWT PARTICIPATION IN THE ASSOCIATION
FOR MINERAL EXPLORATION ROUNDUP,
JANUARY 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier.

Cabinet and GNWT staff travelled to Vancouver during the week of January 28 to 31, 2019, to

attend the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup. Can the Premier provide a list of all NWT Ministers and staff who travelled to Vancouver for the meetings, and:

1. Total cost of travel, including transportation (showing air travel by executive versus economy class), accommodations, expenses, and associated allowances;
2. Any related contract costs for the trip, particularly costs of conference registration, exhibitor staffing, any fees for consulting services outside those provided by public servants, and any funding by the GNWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment of the costs of other NWT representatives attending;
3. A description of hospitality events, including catering, speaker, and other costs, and numbers of persons attending; and
4. What analysis, if any, has taken place of the value for money of the GNWT participation at this event.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 13-18(3):
PERFORMANCE OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LIQUOR AND CANNABIS
COMMISSION

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by the Member for Kam Lake on October 24, 2018, to the Minister of Finance regarding the performance of the Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission.

The Department of Finance has gathered the requested information, and later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the spreadsheets that detail the information that the Member requested.

The spreadsheets that I will be tabling in the House identify:

1. The total amount of sales for cannabis by vendor and product provided by the NWT Liquor and Cannabis Commission for the period of October 17, 2018, to December 31, 2018.
2. The total sales of each individual cannabis product by vendor for the period of October 17, 2018, to December 31, 2018.

3. The total sales of cannabis products purchased through the NWT Liquor and Cannabis Commission online store for the period of October 17, 2018, to December 31, 2018.

The Member also requested the quantity and type of cannabis products distributed to each cannabis vendor by the NWT Liquor and Cannabis Commission, but at the time of this report, the inventory on hand for all cannabis product is minimal. This is a direct result of cannabis product shortage across Canada.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-18(3):
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE PRODUCTION
AND ROYALTIES

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by the Member for Frame Lake on October 31, 2018, to the Minister of Finance regarding non-renewable resource production and royalties.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document containing the following information:

1. Annual values of production for all those non-renewable resource commodities upon which royalties are levied in the Northwest Territories for the years 1999 through 2017;
2. Annual production volumes for all those non-renewable resource commodities upon which royalties are levied in the Northwest Territories for the years 1999 through 2017;
3. Value of mineral production and royalties paid since Devolution 2014-2017; and
4. An explanation for how quarry royalties are collected and values received since devolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Infrastructure.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 301-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
365-18(3): LOW CARBON ECONOMY
LEADERSHIP FUND

TABLED DOCUMENT 302-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
428-18(3): INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING
PRIORITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 303-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
464-18(3): ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF
CANADIAN COAST GUARD ARCTIC REGION
POSITION

TABLED DOCUMENT 304-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
495-18(3): FLEXIBILITY FOR LARGE TENDERS /
NORTHERN BIDS FOR CONTRACTS

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 365-18(3): Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 428-18(3): Infrastructure Funding Priorities"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 464-18(3): Assistant Commissioner of Canadian Coast Guard Arctic Region Position"; and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 495-18(3): Flexibility for Large Tenders/Northern Bids for Contracts." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 305-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
371-18(3): DIALYSIS SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 306-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
395-18(3): HAY RIVER REGIONAL HEALTH
CENTRE

TABLED DOCUMENT 307-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
399-18(3): SPECIFIED CONDITION FUNDING
ELIGIBILITY FOR AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL
SCLEROSIS

TABLED DOCUMENT 308-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
436-18(3): FAMILY VIOLENCE CRISIS FUNDING

TABLED DOCUMENT 309-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
450-18(3): CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 310-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
455-18(3): CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following six documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 371-18(3): Dialysis Services"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 395-18(3): Hay River Regional Health Centre"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 399-18(3): Specified Condition Funding Eligibility for Amyotrophic Lateral

Sclerosis"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 436-18(3): Family Violence Crisis Funding"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 450-18(3): Child and Family Services"; and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 455-18(3): Child and Family Services." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Lands.

TABLED DOCUMENT 311-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTIONS
384-18(3), 387-18(3), 389-18(3) AND 432-18(3):
LANDS RIGHTS FOR TRADITIONAL CABINS

TABLED DOCUMENT 312-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
427-18(3): LAND AVAILABILITY FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TABLED DOCUMENT 313-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
454-18(3): STATUS OF VACANT LAND
SPECIALIST POSITIONS

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Questions 384-18(3), 387-18(3), 389-18(3) and 432-18(3): Lands Rights for Traditional Cabins"; "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 427-18(3): Land Availability for Community Development"; and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 454-18(3): Status of Vacant Land Specialist Positions." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 314-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
385-18(3): COMMUNITY LANDFILLS AND WASTE
DISPOSAL

TABLED DOCUMENT 315-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
491-18(3): FUR HARVESTING PROGRAMS

TABLED DOCUMENT 316-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LIQUOR AND
CANNABIS COMMISSION TOTAL CANNABIS
SALES

TABLED DOCUMENT 317-18(3):
NWT RESOURCE PRODUCTION 2014 TO 2017

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 385-18(3): Community Landfills and Waste Disposal"; and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 491-18(3): Fur Harvesting Programs."

Further to my return to written questions 13-18(3) and 14-18(3), I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission Total Cannabis Sales"; and "NWT Resource Production 2014 to 2017." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Workers' Safety and Compensation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 318-18(3):
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS
TRIBUNAL 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 319-18(3):
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS
TRIBUNAL 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 320-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
482-18(3): MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal 2016 Annual Report"; "Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal 2017 Annual Report"; and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 482-18(3): Municipal Funding Gap." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 321-18(3):
STATEMENT FROM TLICHO GOVERNMENT
DATED JANUARY 30, 2019: TLICHO RATIONALE
FOR NOT ATTENDING FORTUNE AGREEMENT
REGARDING NICO PROJECT SOCIO-
ECONOMIC AGREEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following document, a Tlicho Government news release dated January 30, 2019, Tlicho Rationale for Not Attending Fortune Agreement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. We have with us Lena Peterson, former Member for Central Arctic, 7th Assembly. I believe she was the first woman to serve in this House. Welcome to our Assembly. Masi. 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 131-18(3), with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

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

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

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 131-18(3), February 2019 Sessional Statement, 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: Do I have a seconder? Member for Frame Lake. The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion carried. Masi.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, the orders of the day for Wednesday, February 6, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions

10. Returns to Written Questions
 11. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
 12. Replies to Budget Address (Day 1 of 7)
 13. Petitions
 14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 15. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 16. Tabling of Documents
 17. Notices of Motion
 18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 19. Motions
 20. First Reading of Bills
 21. Second Reading of Bills
 22. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
 23. Report of Committee of the Whole
 24. Third Reading of Bills
 25. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 6, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

