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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, November 2, 2016****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 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, colleagues. Colleagues, in support of our Take Our Kids to Work Day we have Riley Menard, daughter of Cheryl Menard our finance manager. Today, Riley will be assisting our table officers, so please join me in welcoming Riley to our house.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Transportation.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 103-18(2):
CLIMATE CHANGE AND TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on the Department of Transportation's research and development activities into adapting our transportation infrastructure to the effects of climate change. Increasing our knowledge and better understanding how climate change affects infrastructure is a step in developing adaptation strategies.

The scientific information gathered through the climate change research has already made a difference in northern infrastructure planning, design, construction and maintenance and will be a game-changer in the future.

We can already see climate change affecting the transportation system in the NWT. In recent years, the department has experienced situations including permafrost degradation, which leads to highway embankment and airport runway instability; changing ice conditions which affect the construction and durability of our winter roads; fluctuating seasonal atmospheric conditions that impact the runway maintenance activities and flight services; and low water conditions that affect marine operations.

The most significant impacts, Mr. Speaker, are on our operation and maintenance budgets, which are increasing every year. That is why investments in climate change resilient infrastructure, such as all-weather roads instead of winter roads, and permanent bridges instead of ice bridges, are key to addressing economic, environmental and social impacts on our territory and our residents for years to come.

One of the department's three main strategic priorities under its 25-year Transportation Strategy is embracing innovation. Through this priority, we aim to improve service delivery and modernize our transportation system. The Northwest Territory's unique environment makes it an ideal location for conducting climate change research and collecting data which can be used to protect valuable infrastructure assets and support a resilient transportation system. Research and development tells us about the nature and severity of climate change impacts and the significant risks to infrastructure it creates. It lets us examine adaptation options and costs, and define further research and monitoring needs.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives depend on collaboration with the scientific community. The department is currently involved in numerous research and development projects across the territory. The second phase of the Northwest Territories Transportation Monitoring Program was announced earlier this summer. Through a long-term partnership with Transport Canada, a total of \$747,600 will be invested over the next two years into research operations and into an extension of existing test sites.

The research will focus on the effects of climate change on the permafrost and on our transportation infrastructure. Phase 2 of the program is made up of four components located throughout the Northwest Territories. These include two test sections along the newly constructed Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway to monitor the structural stability of highway embankments, the installation of 24 thermistors along both newly constructed sections of the highway and off right-of-way locations, monitoring alternative watercourse structures at various locations along the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway and the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road, and four different sections along Highway 3 for testing and monitoring new

rehabilitation techniques for roads constructed on discontinuous permafrost under warming conditions.

Prior to this, in 2015, the department had received an initial amount of \$669,000 from Transport Canada for Phase 1 of the NWT Transportation Monitoring Program. That phase included two Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway permafrost research and development projects, a geotextile-reinforcement deep fill embankment section near kilometre 82 and an alternative plastic drainage culvert structure near kilometre 20. The department also conducted light detection and ranging surveys on the Dempster Highway and the proposed alignment of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway to produce high-resolution digital elevation maps. The surveys provide topographical baselines for monitoring future change.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to work collaboratively with all our partners. The Department of Transportation is providing support to an initiative led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to develop an updated NWT Climate Change Strategy.

This strategy will act as a road map for our government's efforts to deal with the impacts of climate change over the next five to ten years. The Department of Transportation also continues to support our government's work with federal partners on the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change. We are participating in three interdepartmental working groups on climate change, which address the topics of mitigation, adaptation, and clean technology and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, adapting to climate change is a significant challenge. Climate change has added a new level of uncertainty to our daily lives, and what happened in the past is no longer necessarily the case in the future. That's why it is important for us to continue to promote research and development, cultivate partnerships, incorporate climate change data into all decisions, and share best practices to meet these challenges ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 104-18(2):
CARIBOU EDUCATION IN NOVEMBER

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past two decades, caribou herds in the North have declined and are at or near historic low numbers. There are many factors contributing to this decline. Some, like

climate change, are known; others we urgently need to understand better.

As Northerners, knowing what we can do to help the recovery of caribou in the North is important. ENR Regional and Headquarters staff, co-management partners and traditional user groups offer caribou education every year. This November, Regional ENR staff is making a special, coordinated effort to provide caribou education throughout the NWT. ENR presented a caribou education workshop to regional staff and will be offering a similar opportunity to co-management partners in November. Materials will be made available to hunters, NWT residents and educators seeking classroom resources about caribou. These efforts will enhance ongoing caribou education.

Throughout November, ENR will engage hunters on caribou conservation; including Sight-In-Your-Rifle events, encouraging harvesting bulls to reduce effects on reproduction and providing information regarding ongoing research projects. Information will also be presented to school-age children, in the hopes they will share important facts about wildlife with their parents. In the Sahtu Region, Sight-In-Your-Rifle and caribou sex identification workshops are being offered in nearly every community.

In the North Slave Region, a renewable resource officer will be talking to students about the need to conserve caribou for the future, and the importance of harvesting only bulls. The students will make signs and post them on hunting trails, so keep an eye out for these messages. In the Dehcho Region, Sight-In-Your-Rifle training is planned for Fort Simpson and Wrigley. November classroom visits are planned for Fort Simpson schools as well as for smaller communities.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, ENR will continue to work with communities to assess and promote alternative traditional foods such as moose, muskox, and fish to minimize harvest pressure on caribou.

Mr. Speaker, ENR is committed to working with NWT residents to conserve caribou for future generations. These efforts, along with those of our co-management partners and other organizations, will help Northerners play a part in the recovery of this important species. Together, we can work towards conserving this precious resource for generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 105-18(2):
TOURISM INVESTMENTS ARE SHOWING
STRONG RETURNS

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the tourism industry offers enormous potential to create economic growth and diversification in our regions and in our communities. In fact, while other sectors around the world are experiencing challenges, the Northwest Territories tourism sector continues to grow. Between 2010-2011 and 2015-2016, the number of visitors to our territory has increased from 65,000 to 93,000. Visitor spending in this timeframe has also increased from \$94.1 million to \$167.1 million.

These numbers represent new money for our tourism operators, hotels, restaurants, shops, festivals, and events. They mean that our tourism businesses can grow and expand their offerings to attract and meet even greater demand. Ultimately, they mean that the tourism industry is thriving in the Northwest Territories, giving us a foundation for further growth. Later today, I will table Tourism 2020: Opening Our Spectacular Home to the World. This five-year strategy is our government's plan for creating a \$207 million a year industry by 2021.

Tourism 2020 is a follow up to Tourism 2010 and 2015. It was developed collaboratively with Northwest Territories Tourism, the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council, Parks Canada, Aboriginal communities, municipal governments, Government of the NWT departments, and our many stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry. Mr. Speaker, investment in tourism translates to investment in communities. For the first time, we have formally identified community tourism development as an independent pillar in our plan.

In addition to training and mentorship opportunities, we have identified continued funding for the Community Tourism Infrastructure Program and will be developing a Territory-Wide Events and Festivals Strategy. We will be introducing a support program for communities looking to establish Tourism Coordinators in their communities who will develop marketable product packages for sale directly to consumers and travel trade partners.

To invigorate the Aboriginal cultural tourism sector, our plan outlines new and engaging approaches including the Take a Tourist on the Land Program, Elder-in-Residence Program, Aboriginal Community Tourism Guidebooks, and the Aboriginal Youth Tourism Career Path Program.

This week, the Northwest Territories Tourism Annual General Meeting and Conference is taking place in Yellowknife. We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the partnership that was created

between the GNWT and NWT Tourism to market our tourism territory. The theme of the conference is especially fitting: Looking Back, Leaping Forward.

As we look back over the past fiscal year, we have much to celebrate. Not only did our tourism industry reach an all-time high for visitors and spending, we also welcomed more people to NWT campgrounds. Our Visitors Centre at the 60th parallel welcomed over 20,000 visitors.

We saw the number of prospective visitors accessing the territorial NWTT website increase by over 12 per cent. One story, generated as part of the NWT's Spectacular Stories brand, went viral, generating 46,000 shares. We welcomed cruise ships in two of our Arctic coast communities, setting a new bar for well-orchestrated community Aboriginal tourism. Our new Conference Bureau passed the \$1.8 million mark in conference commitments. We hosted seven conferences, all secured by our bureau since it opened in January 2015.

Mr. Speaker, the investments that we are making in tourism are working. I would like to thank the men and women who make up our industry — operators and service providers who take pride in delivering excellence and providing true Northern hospitality when welcoming the world. They are the foundation of our industry and we cannot grow without them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Members, before I proceed with Members' statements, I would like to draw your attention to the audience in the gallery. Mr. Roy Erasmus is here with us. He is a former Member of the 13th Legislative Assembly. Welcome. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOME CARE SERVICES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Today I would like to talk about how we are going to help the elders. That's what I'm going to talk about. NWT Seniors' society, the way they had written to us, the elders that are living in their home. That way, they can stay out of the old folks' home, and stuff like that. That's what I'm going to talk about. [Translation ends]

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Seniors' Society recently wrote a letter to raise their concerns and questions about the state of homecare services in the Northwest Territories. In their letter, the society states their wish to warn MLAs, other government officials and bureaucrats, as well as the general public, that the goal of enabling older adults to age

in place, to remain in their homes and in their communities as they age cannot be realized unless we recognize and act upon enhanced home care as a serious priority.

Mr. Speaker, the government must put money into enhanced home care if they are to make a difference in home care services available to older adults. This makes good social sense, Mr. Speaker, and also makes good financial sense. More money in home care today will result in huge savings today and in the future. For instance, we know that the Department of Health and Social Services wants to make serious inroads into the prevention and management of chronic disease in the Northwest Territories over the next 20 years. A strong, well-funded, quality home care program can help accomplish that, resulting in happier and healthier seniors.

Mr. Speaker, increased home care spending is one of the strategic spending methods that I've emphasized in this Assembly. Home care, along with the NWT Housing Corporation's program designed to extend seniors' ability to live comfortably and safely in their homes, will empower seniors to age in place. To get there, though, the department must work with other groups, including groups like the NWT Senior's Society, as well as other GNWT departments and agencies, to enhance available services.

Home care and the management of chronic disease go hand in hand. The department has developed a chronic disease management strategy, but this strategy cannot be delivered effectively without the delivery of necessary, strong, well-funded home care.

Mr. Speaker, far too often the burden of caring for seniors falls to the spouse, someone who may not be in full health themselves. Grown children with their own families do the best to provide support, but they are ill equipped to do so. Older citizens wish to remain independent as long as possible. Mr. Speaker, let's do all we can in our power to make sure our seniors and elders are able to age in place. Marci cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that our Legislative Assembly is moving toward open government. Changing our process conventions to hold more public briefings by Ministers to committees is a positive start. We have promised our constituents we would do this, Mr. Speaker. The mandate that

we adopted unanimously in this House calls on us to establish an open government policy to enhance civic participation, improve public access to information, and improve public input into government decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, standing committees are doing their part. They are working on ways to do more of their business in public. This is vitally important to public understanding of consensus government and of the work being done on behalf of citizens of our territory.

Yesterday, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures provided its thoughtful interim report on public engagement and transparency. Members of that committee have made useful suggestions for improving the openness of committee's work. These can begin to be implemented before the committee's final report and recommendations. I encourage anyone with an interest to take a look at the interim report and to take part when the rules committee begins its public consultation.

I was glad that the committee noted that much of committee's work is driven by action by the government, and that transparency of committees is a necessary follow-up to effective engagement by the government itself. This is one reason we have a Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency, and I am sure he has his hands full with many tasks. Mr. Speaker, there is still much to be done.

We have not yet seen a full, open government policy. We are still looking forward to a draft legislation and concrete plans to establish an Office of the Ombudsman. I would also remind government of our mandate promise to maximize citizens' ability to access government by using consistent approaches to social media, visual identity, and overall communication. Also, I know Members are looking forward to the launch of the government's public reporting on its progress in implementing our mandate. Mr. Speaker, almost a year of our term is behind us. We cannot rest on our achievements. We must forge ahead and continue to make public business public. Later, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN POLYTECHNIC PROPOSAL

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many times in this House I have spoken about the importance of building a knowledge economy. Though we can never abandon our

world-class mining and energy industries, we need to ensure that our territory is strong enough to withstand the volatility of commodity prices and downturns in resource markets, and an innovative knowledge economy will provide us with the kind of long-term sustainability for growth, attract new residents and create opportunities for investment that our southern neighbours take for granted.

While often my focus to this point has been to spotlight the great work of Dechinta Bush University that they've been doing for almost seven years now throughout the NWT, today I want to speak about another important issue for our future: a Northern Polytechnic.

Mr. Speaker, a polytechnic is a publicly-funded college or institute of technology that offers a wide range of advanced education credentials, four-year bachelor's degrees, advanced diplomas, certificates, as well as in-class training for apprenticeship programs. Polytechnics provide programs that are skills-intensive and technology-based, taking a hands-on approach with experiential learning opportunities that provides students with practical training for jobs in demand. They can also provide R and D for Canadian businesses because an essential aspect of a polytechnic is creating a close partnership with industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, during the election one of my major commitments to my now constituents was to promote the creation and implementation of a 10-year strategic plan to grow Aurora College into a full polytechnic. This would give Northerners a chance to learn a range of technical, technological, vocational and professional training. This polytechnic would offer apprenticeships, accredited diplomas and certificates without ever leaving the North; also giving these students and Northerners the opportunity to connect locally with industry and begin their professional careers where they grew up and went to school; at home. This commitment also included calling for the construction of a new campus facility here in Yellowknife with full accommodations for students and modern research facilities and upgraded classrooms. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford for this government to take a short-sighted outlook on how to manage our economy that puts the next generation of Northerners into a future shrouded by uncertainty. It is clear to me the most significant challenge that this government faces is the lack of skilled northern workers and an aging population on the cusp of retirement. Building a true knowledge

economy will undoubtedly require a significant investment by this government, but we need to invest today for the jobs of tomorrow. We need real concrete action and world class knowledge facilities to make that future brighter for the next generation and for all others who choose to call the North home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY AND NON-MEDICAL ESCORTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to speak about medical travel policy. This past week, I have been dealing with three different medical travel issues. Each issue involved individual patients over the age of 65. Mr. Speaker, the first patient had to move from a small community to a major center because of medical challenges their family was facing. Recently, this individual had to go out for medical travel. Because of the move, this individual does not have the support system in this community.

Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, this patient was informed that non-medical escorts will not be provided to accompany this person. This individual is over 65 years old. Not only does this patient need a non-medical escort for physical support but for emotional support. Mr. Speaker, to further this issue, the patient continues to tell Edmonton that more advanced notice is needed so arrangements can be made. I understand they are trying their best on their end, scheduling surgery upon cancellations et cetera, but we need to think about the patient too.

Mr. Speaker, the second situation that I had to deal with was a patient that was almost 70 years old. This patient was medevaced out of the community with a non-medical escort. To say the least, this trip was a bit confusing for the patient. He was not sure where he had to stay and did not have enough funds for food. Once this issue was brought to the attention of the staff at Deh Cho, they worked hard to ensure the situation was improved. The family and I are thankful for them and the staff from Yellowknife to ensure the patient was looked after once they were aware of the problem. However, we still had to deal with a person over the age of 65 without a non-medical escort.

Mr. Speaker, the third situation dealt with a patient that ended up travelling to Fort Nelson BC for a medical appointment. The family felt the patient who was over the age of 80 needed to go to Fort Nelson instead of Fort Simpson. They felt the extra hour's drive was not good for the patient. Mr. Speaker, the family ensured this patient had an

escort that could help and ensured the concerns were translated to the doctors. Unfortunately, this did not stop here. I spent the Friday afternoon working with a person from BC and the Deh Cho staff to get them home. Thanks to all staff involved, they were able to get a place to stay, have something to eat and made it home. Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the issue is the ministerial policy on Medical Travel Benefits. I was directed to Section 6 provisions for clarification on benefits of approved non-medical escorts. Mr. Speaker, nowhere in the policy does it state that past the certain age a person requires an escort, nor does following up with our HSS System Navigator looking for help if the people are not computer literate.

Mr. Speaker, we were very lucky that these three elders made it home safe and sound thanks to staff and people working together, and I'm thankful for that; however, we should not always rely on luck. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I served on Yellowknife City Council for nine years and understand the importance of that order of government to our communities and the need for them to have broad powers to manage their own affairs. As in other parts of this country, our local governments are creatures of GNWT, established under territorial laws. We have a duty to ensure local governments have the authority to meet the needs of their citizens.

Usually, this works pretty well, so long as the government responsible for the enabling laws meets its responsibility to keep the substance and detail of the law up to date, to meet the challenges of changing times. Unfortunately, the GNWT has been failing in that responsibility and the City of Yellowknife is suffering as a result. Changes are needed to territorial statutes including the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, the Property Assessment and Taxation Act and the Summary Convictions Procedures Act. These changes would give the city authority to do good things. They could loan homeowners money to do energy retrofits that allow citizens to save money and reduce their carbon footprint. Changes would allow the city to introduce

a hotel tax to invest in tourism development, to phase-in municipal tax increases, to make it easier for the city to collect back taxes and to allow the city to serve parking ticket notices through the mail, rather than serving summons in person.

For up to a decade now, the city has been politely calling for changes. Some of these changes have been discussed since 2007 when I was still on city council. Resolutions of the NWT Association of Communities have been proposed and adopted. The city has requested these changes in countless meetings with territorial officials, MLAs and Ministers. Losing patience, the city has passed a motion calling for action on the changes and written the MACA Minister to strongly request action. The response seems to be that the Cities, Towns and Villages Act will not be opened for amendment until the next Assembly, and the city must continue to wait. That's not good enough and it fails to meet a number of commitments in our mandate.

I will have questions for the Premier on how this government intends to respond to this clear request from the City of Yellowknife and meet our mandate commitments to enable community governments to meet the needs of their citizens. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to a study published this year by YWCA Yellowknife titled "Hush Hush No More: Improving NWT Community Response to Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls." It contains some important recommendations about new responses by health providers and communities to sexual violence as well as prevention.

Mr. Speaker, by way of background, this study is based on interviews with women who have experienced sexual assault and service providers from five NWT communities. The study notes that men and boys also experience sexual violence but they were not part of this particular study. The details are depressing. Sexual assault occurs on a continuum from unwanted touching to rape; two-thirds of the female victims are under 24 years old and fewer than 10 per cent report what happened to them to the police. Statistics Canada says these assaults occur in the NWT at nine times the national average.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight the need for a better society-wide understanding of consent.

Consent is the means to reduce these shocking numbers. Consent means that people freely agree to engage in sexual activity with one another. A person can't consent if he or she is impaired by drugs or alcohol; when there's a physical or psychological threat present; or when there's a difference in their power and authority. It's also possible to consent and then later change your mind. Children under 12 can't consent to sexual activity of any kind, and between the age of 13 and 16 they can consent if their partner is a teenager as well. If consent doesn't fall within those very strict guidelines, then sexual assault is taking place.

Mr. Speaker, the YWCA study highlighted the silence that surrounds this issue. It quotes elders warning younger people not to report assault and not to make trouble. Secrecy has been the norm, in part because of the possible repercussions of reporting these incidents, especially in small communities. As a result, victims often blame themselves for what happened. Sexual assault creates feelings of powerlessness and it's time to turn that around. The report contains 10 recommendations and some of them can be implemented immediately. For example, it's important to engage and support people who have disclosed sexual violence in a non-judgmental way. It's also important for us as parents --

MR. SPEAKER: Your time for Member's statements has expired.

MS. GREEN: I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. May I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's also important for us parents to talk to our daughters about the danger of sexual assault and how they can keep themselves safe and the need for consent. The government also needs to put a high priority on increasing awareness about consent, and responding effectively to girls and women who report being assaulted.

Mr. Speaker, sexual assault is a chronic problem in the NWT; but the biggest lesson of all is that it's preventable. What stands in our way is talking openly about sexual assault and creating a culture where it is unacceptable. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED WOOD PELLET MILL IN THE DEH CHO

MR. NADLI: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the biomass industry presents a great opportunity for the Northwest Territories. In May of this year, Aurora Wood Pellets got a legal title to 2.2 hectares of land in the Deh Cho, near Enterprise. Mr. Speaker, I've been a major supporter of biomass initiatives. Land tenure was a huge step towards developing a wood pellet plant in our region.

Mr. Speaker, a wood pellet plant would create much-needed jobs and help develop the local and regional workforce. The pellet mill is expected to produce at least 150,000 cubic metres of pellets each year and create 45 to 50 jobs, plus additional work for truck drivers and other spinoffs. The South Slave boasts excellent forest resources. Processing black wood for pellets is another way to benefit from the forest fires that swept through the area two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, community involvement and support is essential to Aurora Wood Pellets becoming a viable contributor to our economy. I encourage the Government of the Northwest Territories to do all it can to support stakeholders in establishing a wood pellet plant. New forest management legislation is needed to recognize the opportunities we have related to biomass and non-timber forest products in the NWT and the role of First Nations and all residents are stewards of the land.

Mr. Speaker, I remain hopeful that an agreement between Fort Providence and Aurora Wood Pellets can be reached. Meanwhile, I'm pleased that Fort Resolution has reached an agreement on timber supply and the community can look forward to the benefits of the proposed wood pellet mill.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the determination and effort behind Aurora Wood Pellets' pursuit of this project and the community's willingness to come to the table. Mr. Speaker, it is our chance to diversify a sustainable economy and show the North and the rest of Canada what a success our biomass industry can be. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIOR HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to share with the elders who are watching across the Northwest Territories about the Senior Home Heating Subsidy. Mr. Speaker, winter has arrived here in all the communities across the Northwest Territories. Heavy snowfall

and sudden drop in the temperature ended the moderate autumn and reminded us that we live in the Northwest Territories.

With the days getting shorter and the snow piling higher and the mercury dropping, I want to make sure that NWT residents know about the Senior Home Heating Subsidy. This program is run by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and helps elders and seniors aged 60 years or older access funds to reduce home heating costs. This can include funds to purchase cut wood, electricity, natural gas, propane and/or fuel oil, as well as newer and environmentally-friendly options like wood pellets.

If a resident is 60 years or older, owns and lives in their own home, meets a household income test and is not receiving income assistance, this program may work for them. You can complete an application or learn more about the program at the local ECE service centre.

Through the cold dark winters, sufficient home heating is an absolute necessity; there's no two ways about it, Mr. Speaker. If residents are starting to worry about paying their heating bills as colder temperatures set in, I encourage them to contact the local ECE staff to access these funds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DROP THE POP CAMPAIGN

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is on Drop the Pop Campaign, an Education, Culture and Employment program. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that back in June of 2016, the Fort Good Hope Chief T'Selehye School won the contest. Drop the Pop is an annual campaign that encourages students, families, schools and communities to drink healthy beverages, especially water; eat a wide variety of healthy, local foods from the land. It also encourages long-term health food intakes so families can maintain and or improve their overall well-being.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme is "Celebrating Successes," marking 10 years of school in the NWT encouraging healthy behaviours to students, like reducing the consumption of pop and other sugary beverages. Schools have until November 21, 2016, to apply for the necessary funds to pursue this campaign in their community. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON A NEW DAY MEN'S HEALING PROGRAM

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I must paint a dark picture for you and for my colleagues. We are often told that Canada's northern territories have the highest rates of domestic and family violence; the second-highest in the country. We also know that in violent relationships, women are most likely to experience the most severe forms of spousal assault and three times more likely than men to report being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or knife. Women are also more likely to experience chronic domestic violence over multiple incidents and to be physically injured when this violence occurs. But are we becoming numb to these statistics?

Let's consider what these rates really mean in practical terms. If 100,000 Canadians gathered together, 594 women would have reported intimate partner violence to the police at least once. But, when you compare that rate to the Northwest Territories, that number jumps to 3,536 women. Northern researchers have also shown that Indigenous women are often more likely to be subject to intimate partner violence.

Western society shows an inherent disregard for women and girls and, further, NWT's specific problems drive these terrible statistics, including the intergenerational and ongoing impacts of colonization, and residential school, and inadequate and overcrowded housing. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. To address these NWT-specific problems, we need an NWT-specific program, and, Mr. Speaker, I believe we've found that in the work of the A New Day program administered by the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre here, in Yellowknife. This pilot project was built on 10 years of research and advocacy by the Coalition Against Family Violence, and it was designed specifically based on engagement with the NWT women to help men heal and to prevent further violence.

This program has been praised by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The NWT also included it in their report under response to calls to action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Tree of Peace reports that every one of the program's 300-plus clients attended residential school or has a family member who did. We can't be blind to these connections.

As my colleague said in his recent motion, violence against women will not end until those individuals who commit such acts are equipped to choose and do choose another path. A New Day is a valuable tool in our territories' fight to end domestic and family violence. If we care about ending violence against women and girls, especially the Indigenous women and girls at greatest risk, and if we care about honouring the TRC's call to action, then we must care about this program and ensure it continues in the new year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REMEDICATION OF CONTAMINATED SITES ON
NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY
LIMITED LANDS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I made a statement in this House about contaminated lands in Hay River that are owned by and leased to NTCL. There are many sites in Old Town that are strewn with old equipment, rusted barges, derelict buildings, and garbage. I'm concerned that, if this government doesn't take the lead on remediation, those sites will remain in that condition for yet another generation. However, the answers I was receiving when I brought this up from the Minister of Lands led me to believe that this government was waiting to see how the NTCL saga played out and would then look into what action they could take. I wasn't happy with their lack of a plan, and today I was going to make another statement and try and spur the government to action.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that I don't have to make that statement. I was offered a briefing on the situation by the Minister of Lands and received that briefing today over lunch. It was presented by the interdepartmental working group that is tasked with creating a plan to deal with the environmental eventualities related to NTCL. It was an expensive room. The Ministers of Lands and ENR were in attendance along with the deputy minister of Lands, the Lands ADM of planning coordination, the acting deputy minister of ENR, ENR's director of environment, and legal counsel from the Department of Justice.

I'm glad to report that I'm encouraged by the work that the departments are doing, and I want to assure the residents of Hay River that the government isn't just sitting on their hands. They're creating and assessing an inventory of sites, preparing for different possible outcomes, and engaging with the appropriate federal agencies. This doesn't mean that I can stop doing my due diligence. I will continue to press the departments and ensure that they keep on top of their

responsibilities because this issue affects my town, my constituency, and my neighbourhood. However, I am now more optimistic and look forward to helping clean up Hay River and create jobs remediating the land in the process. So a good news story, and congratulations and kudos to the department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize some people from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. I'd like to recognize in the gallery William Buggins. He's from Rocher River, so you will hear more about Rocher River later on this week. Caitlyn Beck from Ndilo, from Range Lake North School, is working with us here today, as a page. I have two interpreters interpreting for the languages from Tu Nedhe-Willideh, Mary Rose Sundberg and Tom Unka from Fort Resolution. Mary Rose is from Detah. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mayor Mark Heyck, from the City of Yellowknife, and Sara Brown. She's the executive director with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, and I believe she's still a constituent, but I know that there's a larger delegation here, as well, on behalf of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities. I want to welcome them to the Chamber today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Charlie Furlong, long-term leader at the community level as well as the NWTAC, leadership level, and also Laura Boileau, William Greenland with the new day care program, who we just met yesterday with a very meaningful presentation, and also, Ernie Abel the executive director of the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize all the members of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities. I'd like to single out Donna Lee Jungkind, the deputy mayor of Hay River, and also

Craig McMaster, the mayor of Enterprise. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Charlie Furlong from Aklavik, president of the NWT Association of Communities; Clarence Wood, councillor from Inuvik and a member of Inuvik Twin Lakes. I would also like to recognize Mayor Mark Heyck, a man that I've had the opportunity in the past to do a lot of work with; and the rest of the NWT Association of Communities. Although I'm not the Minister responsible anymore, I still support 33 Strong. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. I'd just like to remind Members that, if you're going to speak, wait until the light goes on on the microphone, just so we can keep records. Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my constituent and uncle, the mayor of Aklavik and also former Chief of Aklavik for many years. Also, I'd like to recognize the mayor of Paulatuk, as well, Ray Ruben. When I first started in leadership, I sought these two leaders and learned a lot from them, and I'd just like to thank them for that. Mahsi.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize staff in A New Day program, Laura Boileau and Mr. William Greenland, and also I believe Mr. Roy Erasmus is in there. Also the leadership of the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre as well, Ernie Abel. Then also acknowledging of course the people from the Northwest Territories Association of Communities who I believe also include Mayor Craig McMaster from Enterprise. So welcome. Mahsi.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome constituent Ray Ruben, the Mayor of Paulatuk. Ray's sat on the Paulatuk Community Corporation, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers. I just want to welcome him here today. It's nice to have a constituent travel from your region to visit the Legislative Assembly during session. Also Charlie Furlong who's sitting up there with Mr. Ruben. Welcome to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Mr. Clarence Wood, long-time councillor for the Town of Inuvik, also His Worship Mayor Heyck, as well as a couple other leaders who have paved the way for us, Mr. Charlie Furlong and Ray Ruben. I'd also like to welcome my cousin William Greenland joining us here again today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Laura Boileau and William Greenland from A New Day. I'd also like to recognize Ernie Abel from the Tree of Peace. My good friend Annie Harry who I'm glad to have here. Then the NWT Association of Communities, Ms. Sara Brown, the Chief Executive Officer; Mayor Mark Heyck, the City of Yellowknife; Mayor Charles Furlong from Aklavik; Mayor Ray Ruben from Paulatuk; Mayor Craig McMaster from Enterprise; Councillor Donna Lee Jungkind from Hay River; and Councillor Clarence Wood from Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome many of the people who've already been welcomed: the staff from A New Day program; the leaders of the NWT Association of Communities; and I saw Alex Lambrecht, the new President of the Northern Territories Federation of Labour. I think it's really important for us to have leaders here who we can collaborate with and who support us in the things that we're doing. Thank you.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to welcome the staff of A New Day, as well as everyone here from the NWTAC, including Deputy Mayor Constituent Donna Lee Jungkind, as well as Enterprise Mayor Craig McMaster. Welcome, we're happy to have you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to recognize two pages from my riding in Kam Lake; Josh Saturos and Storm Robbiard. We really appreciate all the work they've been doing, along with the other pages here, who help make our lives a lot easier. I'd also like to recognize all the mayors and members of the NWT Association of

Communities who are here working in partnership with us, and also the staff of A New Day program, Laura Boileau, William Greenland, and also Ernest Abel, Executive Director of the Tree of Peace. Keep up the good work and thank you all for joining us today.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this time to recognize facilitators of A New Day men's program; William Greenland, Roy Erasmus, and Laura Boileau. Also, William and Roy are residents of Yellowknife North, so I welcome them. I'd also like to take this time to welcome my former city council colleague and the mayor, His Worship Mayor Mark Heyck, as well as all the members of the NWTAC, but in particular president Charlie Furlong and Executive Director Sara Brown. Welcome everybody, and thank you for being here.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to our proceedings, it's always great to have an audience. Masi.

Item 6, acknowledgments. Member for Sahtu.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 14-18(2): CECE HODGSON-MCCAULEY, 2017 INDSPIRE AWARD RECIPIENT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge a well-known lady who is passionate and also a very strong leader that needs no introduction down the Mackenzie Valley. Mr. Speaker, this is a lady who does not stand to any obstacles and when she speaks, she is heard. She is an excellent role model to the youth community, education and the Mackenzie Valley strongly support her. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Sahtu Region, I would like to congratulate Cece Hodgson-McCauley who will be receiving the 2017 Indspire Award to be held in Ottawa on March 24, 2017. An award that recognizes the successes of people who have achieved significantly and made a high level of contributions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 437-18(2): INCREASES TO SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACT THRESHOLDS

MS. GREEN: Today, I have two sets of questions. I'm going to start with the other set, which are questions for the Minister of Finance, and they're about sole-source contracting. These questions are important, Mr. Speaker, because they help us understand how this special set of contracts is managed, and it reassures the public that their money is being well-spent. So, first of all, could the Minister explain for the benefit of the general public, vendors, and the Members of the House, why increases to the threshold for sole-source contracts were approved and what value that brings to taxpayers? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these were raised after some consultation, and we'd heard from the business community that because these hadn't been raised in 20 years, they thought it was time to raise them. The value that it brings to residents is that they will be able to then go out and secure some services right away without going out for RFP, because that takes up a lot of time and money for \$5,000. So this was made at the request of the business community and in consideration of the cost to administer small contracts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. In 2012, as the Minister is aware, the Auditor General of Canada released a status report on the 2009 audit on GNWT contracting for goods and services. They found that significant improvements had been made, but the errors were still found in 15 of 44 sample contracts. As a result, the Auditor General considered progress on contract administration to be unsatisfactory. Can the Minister tell us what improvements and quality assurance processes have been made since then?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the procurement of shared services was established which improved the consistency of the approach, and the procurement of shared services ensures that all steps required for RFP or tender are followed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's commitment to quality reporting, which he made earlier in this sitting, on government contracts will help increase accountability, or course. In 2012, the Auditor General also found cases where departments had updated their own records but not the contract registry and reporting systems report

that is tabled in the Legislative Assembly like the one we saw yesterday. What has the government done to ensure this registry and reporting system is reconciled with its internal departmental records?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: In the future, all reporting will be linked to SAM, which is our financial management system. So departments won't be maintaining separate systems.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's a logical solution to that issue. Given that contracting services are mainly provided through the shared services model, over which individual departments have very little authority, can the Minister please explain our current system for monitoring and evaluation to ensure that contracts meet departments' needs and the public gets the best value for money? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Procurement Shared Services was established in part to ensure that our government gets value for money, and departments continue to be involved with all aspects of the contracting, including reviewing tenders and the RFP processes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 438-18(2):
EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Premier in relation to our mandate commitments to empower local governments. Earlier today I raised the City of Yellowknife letter that requested a number of territorial government acts be changed. The city has been after our government here for almost a decade to make changes to these pieces of legislation. How will our government respond to the city's request for changes to territorial legislation on making what amounts to housekeeping changes that the city urgently requires to better meet the needs of its citizens? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We received the letter yesterday from the mayor of the City of Yellowknife, and also the Member has been a city councillor for nine years, so he doesn't seem to appreciate the good working relationship that this government and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has with the NWT Association of Communities. However, having said that, we will take the letter; we will break it out into different

pieces; even though we are working on many, many legislative priorities, we will work with the city to make sure that these proposals are dealt with in a timely fashion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I'm disappointed that the Premier is going to talk about my track record here in working as a city councillor. I know that when I was on the city council, we always worked well with the Yellowknife MLAs, so I'll try to keep this as a fair set of questions here. But why I raise these questions to the Premier is he is responsible for intergovernmental relations. He's also responsible for mandate commitments, and so I'm just going to ask the Premier for firm commitments when it comes to changing the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to allow for local improvement charges in relation to energy retrofits and the visitor levy. Is that something that we're prepared to do in the lifetime of this Assembly?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have been doing some research on a number of these initiatives. I was around when the hotel tax was proposed and was introduced, and so we have the research completed on the hotel levy. We are very close to finalizing research on energy retrofits, and we will be moving forward with consultations with other communities. As a matter of fact, MACA officials met with the city on September 29th and they agreed on a work plan. We expect that, in early 2017, we will be able to move forward. We also need to work with other departments, Ministers, MACA, Justice and Finance, because some of the proposals, we've heard for the first time.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to reassure the Premier, though, that this is not the first time these changes have been requested. Some of them date back to when I was on city council in 2007. So I'm pleased to hear that we're going to have some more research done; research is great, but I'm looking for action. Changes have been requested to the Property Assessment and Taxation Act. Is that something that's going to happen within the lifetime of this Assembly?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I believe I mentioned that we are looking to be able to move forward in early 2017 with some parts of the requests in the letter.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response and thank the Premier for that. But I'm still a little bit concerned here, more than a little bit concerned, that we're not going to make progress on these legislative changes within the lifetime of the Assembly. So is the Premier prepared to work with Regular MLAs who might bring forward a private Member's Bill to make these legislative

changes, which are essentially housekeeping matters, if the other side can't do it in a reasonable period of time? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are always open to any methods that will move legislation faster. If the Member has some ideas, we would certainly be prepared to entertain them. We would also like to work with all of the Members to help us identify what should be the priorities.

Some of the legislative priorities we're working on, the Department of MACA is working on, is to update the civil emergency procedures, the territorial emergency procedures, the fire prevention and community fire prevention plans, the Western Canada Lotteries legislation, legislation for 911, access to information for communities, energy efficiency. So we have all of these other priorities, and I'd be very pleased to work with the Members on the other side to help tell us which ones should be advanced the fastest.

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

QUESTION 439-18(2):
MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY AND NON-MEDICAL
ESCORTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I spoke about medical travel and some of the issues I had to deal with this past week with medical travel and the policy. First of all, I would like to thank the staff. The patients were able to work with the staff given the numbers and they worked really well together, so I thank them for that. However, Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Can the Minister please advise this House if his department is looking at the Medical Travel Policy as it pertains to ensuring that anyone over the age of 65 has a non-medical escort made available for them on all medical travel flights? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health and Social Services is doing a review of the Medical Travel Policy. We've already made a number of changes and improvements, including putting in an appeal mechanism. With respect to whether or not we intend to modify the Medical Travel Policy specifically for an age requirement, that is not something that we're doing right now, Mr. Speaker. I've had an opportunity to travel around the Northwest Territories and meet lots of different individuals, including seniors, and I've had many seniors tell me, just because I'm 65 doesn't mean that I need or should get a non-medical escort.

We have some tight criteria for when an escort is supported, a non-medical escort is supported. In fact, it also has to be based on a clinical referral from a practitioner. Non-medical escorts will be supported when a patient is under the age of 19 and requires an escort, when a patient is breastfeeding an infant and requires an escort, when a patient has a mental or physical disability of a nature that he or she is not able to travel unassisted, and when the patient requires an escort for interpretation during their travel.

In many situations, if a senior has got some mobility issues they will likely get a non-medical escort; if they have communication issues, they will likely get an escort, but it does have to be referred to a physician, and I'm hearing people across the Northwest Territories, as I said, say just because I'm 65 doesn't mean that I'm physically unable to attend meetings on my own.

MR. THOMPSON: I appreciate the Minister for his answer. I guess we're talking to two different people or different people out there because the people that are coming to me with issues are over the age of 65 and say they want to have a medical escort, and some of the challenges that I understand with the Minister saying, however we need to work with our seniors and our elders because when they come to us they should be treated with respect. However, I'm going to go onto my next question 'cause instead of arguing we could spend days on this issue together.

Mr. Speaker, last sitting I spoke about patience from the smaller communities and asked the Minister if they were working on setting up a place for these people to stay. So can the Minister please advise me if this is happening? What work is being done? I've been hearing this for non-elders and elders that say, you know, we come here in the morning, we go back at night and we don't have a place to stay. So can the Minister please advise the House what the department is doing in this regard?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is right. We could probably debate this for an extended period of time, but at the end of the day we do respect our seniors. We are putting programs and services in place in support of seniors. We have a healthy relationship with the NWT Seniors Society. In fact, one of the members of the NWT Seniors Society said just because I happen to be 65 doesn't mean I'm infirm or unable to do these things.

When an individual is challenged, they have some limitations. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide non-medical escorts. With respect to the situation that the Member is describing where an individual comes to a community is left for hours or their appointment is hours away from when they

land or when they take off. If you're in Yellowknife or Inuvik or I think it's Hay River, we actually have facilities where an individual can go and spend some time, whether it's the hospital or Vital Abel House or one of our other facilities. It's helpful if the Member, the individual who's travelling gives us some head's up that they need some place to go because we can help coordinate that.

The other communities we haven't been able to resolve those issues at this point. We are coming out with a medical travel book or a passport, if you will, a handout that will go to residents as they're going to be travelling on medical travel that outline all the different numbers by communities, where they can go, where there might be places where they can spend some time so that they have options available to them, but we haven't finalized all those details. We're continuing to work on it.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Member for that answer. Maybe we can get together so I can get that information and we can share it with people. It's just not people that need it or want it, you should be able to provide that quick knowledge beforehand.

Mr. Speaker, in my previous statements I talked about Fort Nelson Hospital as a first place for residents of the Hamlet of Fort Liard to go and set up residence going to Fort Simpson then to Yellowknife. I realize it's only a three or four-hour trip to Fort Simpson depending on the ferry and only a two-hour drive, but however it's only a two-hour drive to Fort Nelson.

I know it doesn't sound like a big difference of time, but it's huge for our elders and the people from the community of Fort Liard. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise this House if the department is working with the BC government to arrange referrals to Fort Nelson for residents of Fort Liard instead of Yellowknife?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to meet with residents of the community of Fort Liard, as well as the Nahanni Butte prior to the election last government where this issue was raised. At that time, I made a commitment that we would follow up with BC once we concluded our negotiations with Alberta. Alberta is our go-to province when we have individuals who need to go out for services that aren't available here in the Northwest Territories. We have agreements and other procedures or protocols in place to have our residents go to Alberta and receive services there.

Once we're done negotiating our new agreement with them, I made a commitment that I would follow up with BC. We haven't finished that agreement; I haven't followed up with BC.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Minister for that answer. It's great to hear. So we're waiting for negotiations in Alberta, but it still doesn't help the residents of Fort Liard. So will the Minister give us a timeline when he expects to talk to the BC government, so that the residents of Fort Liard can be prepared to get service in BC? Closer service, I should say, because it's great service in Simpson and Yellowknife; it's just the distance. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, residents of the Northwest Territories when they travel to other jurisdictions like BC and they go to a hospital or health centre for medically necessary care through reciprocal billing agreements and whatnot, those services are provided to those residents and there's no cost obviously to our residents for doing that.

Where we have a challenge with BC is where a health practitioner in the Northwest Territories makes a referral on behalf of one of our residents to something like an MRI or a specialty clinic that's available in Edmonton or Calgary or in Alberta for specialty services that are not provided in the Northwest Territories.

In those situations, we have to have solid agreements with those jurisdictions. It's not a matter of just showing up and just saying, hey, I want an MRI. You actually have to have a referral; it has to go through a proper protocol. We are finalizing and updating our agreement with Alberta. We hope to be done this year. Once that's done, I will certainly raise the issue with BC and follow up accordingly.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. We've gone through three Members' oral questions and it's been 20 minutes already, so I'd like to remind Members and also Ministers to keep your questions and answers short and concise so we can get through all the oral questions today. Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 440-18(2):
HOME CARE SERVICES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci Cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke about homecare services. I'd like to ask the Minister what the status is of a departmental review of the current homecare services? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've already mentioned

several times in the House over the last couple of weeks that we're currently working on the Continuing Care Services Action Plan for the Northwest Territories which includes review of our home care services provided to date and what level of services we need to provide to meet the needs of our residents, you know, addressing the fact that we do have an aging population in addition to demands on home care. It's also looking at our long-term care demands and how we're going to address those as well as our palliative care demands and how we're going to address those. We're hoping to have that action plan out by the end of the fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister what actions were taken this fiscal year, 2016-2017, to improve the home care services even if it's within the continuing care?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we have been working on some of our respite and home care services for seniors across the Northwest Territories. We have identified respite beds that are available across the Northwest Territories in our different facilities, and we're looking to get more information out there about the types of programs that we provide under home care.

We do provide home support in most communities and certainly all regions in the Northwest Territories. They are based on a medical referral. You do have to be referred for home care and a physician or a practitioner will identify the degree or range or level of support you need under home care.

We do provide that across the Northwest Territories, but we do acknowledge more needs to be done. We do acknowledge with our aging population we do need to put in some additional supports.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to ask the Minister how the department is working with the NWT Housing Corporation on the whole idea of aging in place?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, one of our key partners in aging in place within the Government of the Northwest Territories is the NWT Housing Corporation who has a number of programs for seniors so that they can make modifications to their homes as they age to help them stay in their homes for as long as possible. There is a recognition that even if we provide greater levels of home care and the housing corp. does provide some programs to help modify homes, unfortunately, some individuals will have to go to different living situations like independent living units.

The Housing Corporation is building five independent living units throughout the Northwest Territories. We just recently attended the opening of one in Fort Liard. One of the nice things that has happened as a result of our relationship with the Housing Corporation is in those independent living units they've allowed for some programming space, for group activities and for other things to happen, and it's also an opportunity for Health and Social Services to have the home support workers come in to those facilities and do some interaction and supports for the residents who happen to live in those buildings.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister if there will be financial resources available in 2017-18 for enhanced homecare services or if it is part of the continuing care services? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we won't have a clear indication of whether or not we need some additional resources, how much those additional resources might be until we're actually done the Continuing Care Action Plan. I'm certainly going to bring that to committee so we can have some discussions.

Before we ask for more money, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we have to do is make sure that the current dollars available for homecare are being spent wisely and that we're getting maximum benefit for every dollar that we're spending; that we're getting the outcomes that are intended.

The Members know, all Members in this House know that we do have some limiting fiscal situation on top of us, and any money that we're going to spend on homecare has to come from somewhere. So we're going to have to work together as a legislature to identify where resources are in order to re-profile them.

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

QUESTION 441-18(2):
911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, honourable Members raised the issue of 911 previously in this session and were told that the department is not in a fiscal position to provide this, more research would be done, and the Minister has committed to working with standing committee on developing some options. However, the honourable Member for Frame Lake just asked the Premier some questions and we heard that they are now working on legislation for 911. Can the Premier

please clarify whether or not 911 is coming to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We always work with the Members on the other side; we are looking at 911.

MR. TESTART: I'm always willing to work with honourable Members on any side of the House. Are we currently developing legislation? Not just working on it, not just exploring options, but developing legislation.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As we indicated, that is our intention and that is part of the business planning process of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, perhaps my memory is a bit foggy, but if it was included in the business plan it certainly was an oversight when we developed the mandate but it is an issue that is important to Northerners so I'm pleased to see that we have some willingness here; however, previously in this Assembly we were told that it was not in the cards. So can the Premier explain that? Is this a knee-jerk reaction to some questions that were raised in this House or is this a long-standing initiative that we've just simply never been told about?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have said in the last Assembly, I believe, and also that we would work with Members to find the commitment. I'll go back through Hansard for the Member and see where the discussions on 911 took place.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell the honourable Premier now that won't be required. Can the Premier tell this House when Northerners will be able to dial 911 on their phones? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I don't like to speculate so I'll respond to his question when I have the exact date.

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

QUESTION 442-18(2):
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY
INITIATIVES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are a government that is taking necessary steps to conduct our affairs in public, and I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency if he could provide the House an update and maybe some

specifics, if possible, on what work is being done with regard to the Open Government Policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We have created a working group that is guiding the development of the Open Government Policy and part of this work, of course, will be consulting with residents and we will be undertaking to do that in the early part of the next year.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you Mr. Speaker and thank you to the Minister for his response. Further to that, this government made a commitment that we, within the first two years of our term, were going to create legislation in support of an Office of the Ombudsman. Can the Minister please provide us an update on what work is being done to establish that legislation? Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, of course this is a priority under the mandate of this government and I think all Members will recall we had an interesting discussion on this very issue at the Caucus retreat in August. I expect to have a legislative proposal to committee on the establishment of the ombudsman in the first half of 2017.

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

QUESTION 443-18(2):
STAFF RECRUITMENT FOR NEW SAHTU
REGIONAL HEALTH FACILITY

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services here. I heard from the Minister referring to training and staffing of the upcoming Norman Wells Sahtu Regional Health Facility. Can the Minister elaborate a little bit more on which positions are going to be advertised competitively? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the opening of that new facility, and we plan to be moved in there and fully operational towards the end of the next calendar year, we do have to fully staff a long-term care unit. There is no long-term care unit in the Sahtu at this point so it's all new positions.

We're just in the process of quantifying how many positions that will be and they'll obviously include some kitchen staff, some support workers for the residents in the building, as well as some other

janitorial positions, as well as some support positions like RNs. I don't have the exact numbers at this point. As soon as I'm aware of those numbers I will certainly share it with the Member. Thank you.

MR. MCNEELY: Could the Minister also highlight how many positions are going to be created on the higher-up administration level? Not so much a janitorial, sweeping the floor type positions here, but the administration.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we have moved forward with Health Transformation, so we have the one authority here in the Northwest Territories as well as the Tlicho and Hay River. The senior management complement in the Sahtu is the same and is going to remain the same.

We have a CEO and a number of directors who are providing leadership within the region as well as some manager level jobs moving down. We aren't intending at this point to create any new jobs in that region in the senior management area; however, I will say that I have made a commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories and to the Member and to other Members that I want to support as much as possible training local people for local work. There are a number of those jobs that certainly we can train local people to do; other jobs are going to have some statutory requirements which makes it a bit tough.

In the health and social services system we have moved forward with some training of some local people for CEO roles; well, we're doing it in the Deh Cho, we've done it in Hay River. We're about to go out for staffing for a developmental COO position in the Sahtu and we're hoping to get a local person and train them up so that they can take over the role of the CEO after they have completed their appropriate training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very glad to hear that there is a vacancy in the secondary role, as COO trainee under the Northern Management Development Program. Could the Minister keep me posted on the progress of the advertising of this position? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We hope to go out for an open competition on that developmental position shortly. I will certainly keep the Member informed once we have a candidate; I'll also let him know who the candidate is, and hopefully we'll be able to find a solid person who in a couple of years can take over that CEO role in the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 444-18(2):
EXTENSION OF A NEW DAY MEN'S HEALING
PROGRAM

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of Justice. The A New Day Program is going to sunset at the end of December, and I understand that a clause in the current contract would let the department and the Tree of Peace extend the program by one year. So I would like to ask the Minister what funds are available within the department's planning budget to continue the men's program in 2017-2018? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we are waiting for an evaluation of the A New Day Program, as I have mentioned previously, and I'm not certain of the exact amount of funds that we may have available. So I will look into that matter and get back to the Member opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: If the A New Day ends as the department plans, how long would it take for the department to reinstate the men's program following that gap in services?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Again, Mr. Speaker, we are waiting for the evaluation of the program. Certainly we recognize the concerns expressed about there being a gap, and we will try to address that matter once we have had a full review of the report.

MR. BLAKE: When does the department plan to complete and share with the Regular Members its evaluation of the A New Day Program?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The final evaluation of the A New Day Program is being finalized even as we speak. I'm expecting to receive that within the next week, and I will share it with Members opposite as soon as possible after that.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know we are meeting in December as Regular Members, so I'm sure we will get an update at that time. Hopefully we have some good news that this program will continue, as it is making a big difference for a lot of people and is successful, so it only makes sense to continue. So will the Minister ensure that the program continues? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to this type of program. But we are, again, waiting for the evaluation of the A New Day Program and we are very much looking forward to receiving that report.

As I said, we should be receiving it shortly. Again, we are committed to the type of program. We are very much looking forward to this evaluation, as we recognize that this is a very important issue within the Northwest Territories. So as soon as we get the report and have reviewed it in Cabinet, we will share it with the Members opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 445-18(2):
BIOMASS ENERGY POTENTIAL

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I made my statement regarding the wood pellet progress towards establishing an operation in my riding plus the South Slave region. Recently the community of Fort Providence and Aurora Pellets renewed their discussions and negotiations, so my questions are to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. My question is: what level of commitment does the GNWT have in terms of ensuring that the biomass industry has a role in the NWT economy? Mahsi.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories is very committed to the development of biomass in the Northwest Territories, as we believe this project will create regional economic development opportunities and local employment. It will also probably help revitalize the NWT forestry industry, which could bring in sawmills and other such things. The department itself has committed to the FMA holders in both Fort Resolution and Fort Providence SEED funding for assistance under that program for marketing and business planning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Could the Minister maybe explain in terms of the progress at this point, from the perspective of the department in terms of the advances towards finally establishing a business that could be in operation? What is the latest progress in terms of an update?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As the Member stated, the community of Fort Providence is reengaged with Aurora Wood Pellets. These negotiations are ongoing and they're proprietary information. We can't get into those details to share

with the Member, but I can reassure him that the Government of the Northwest Territories, as well as the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and ENR, are working closely with the proponents to get this project under way.

MR. NADLI: The Minister has indicated that there is some cooperation between his department and ENR in terms of trying to advance this business initiative forward. What role does ITI have within the forest management agreement that was reached between the project proponent plus the community in terms of ensuring this business initiative is realized?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: ITI's role, as I've said, in this whole project is to help facilitate to create regional economic development opportunities and local employment. We are working closely, like I said, with ENR and the proponent and Aurora Wood Pellets. Aurora Wood Pellets has moved this project along without any resources from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We continue to work with both FMA holders to bring this project to reality, as we believe it will bring substantial economic opportunities to the South Slave region, and particularly the three communities of Fort Providence, Enterprise, and Fort Resolution, and we will continue to do so.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is maybe hinging on the Department of ENR, but ITI obviously has the lead on this. Could the Minister indicate perhaps a timeline in terms of how it is that the Forest Management Act would be updated, and whether that should be a precursor before the Aurora Pellets is established? Mahsi.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was the previous Minister of ENR, I know a little bit about the Forest Management Act. Hopefully we are going to have that coming forward into the life of this Legislative Assembly to move it forward. ENR continues to move that legislation along, and ITI will be working closely, as I've said, with all Members of the Legislative Assembly and all departments to help move this project along. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 446-18(2):
SENIOR HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the Senior Home Heating Subsidy. My questions are for the Minister

of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, my first question for the Minister is the Senior Home Heating Subsidy guidelines were last updated in June 2016. What do the recent changes mean for the current and prospective clients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was just one change actually, and that was to clarify that seniors who maintain a residential land lease with the Department of Lands were eligible for the subsidy. What I want to maybe inform the Member is that we're actually going through a review, and we did get a lot of concerns from almost all the Members during our sitting earlier this year about the threshold levels, the amount of fuel that elders can receive. As the temperature drops below zero throughout the North, we want to make sure that this program is providing the best services to those in need, the seniors. We've actually got a working group right now that's reviewing this particular program. We're looking at income threshold levels, we're looking at the zones for communities, fuel allocations, and looking at ways to make it easier for seniors to access the program as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mr. Speaker, my second question to the Minister is how many residents used the Senior Home Heating Subsidy in the last fiscal year?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We had 513 NWT seniors access the program last year. I believe 230 seniors used their full fuel allocation, not all the seniors use up what they're entitled to. As I said, we're reviewing the program so that those 230 seniors who've actually used up their fuel allocation might have some months where they need that fuel for the rest of the winter months. We're going to be looking at those threshold levels.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It's good to see that seniors are accessing the program. My third question for the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is how does the department advertise the program to make sure that everyone who might need it can access it?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Various ways, Mr. Speaker, radio ads, newspaper ads, we ask our MLAs to go out and promote it. Recently, we've been going out doing a lot of community meetings. We were just in Nahendeh. Every meeting that we went to we talked about the Senior Home Heating Subsidy. A lot of seniors that come to our open houses, we bring that up as well. We get our staff to promote as well in the communities so that seniors

who are accessing the program, they can let other seniors know about what's available to them.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the answer from the Minister. The Minister was talking about thresholds, and my final question for the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is what is the current income threshold for seniors who qualify for the home heating subsidy program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Currently, we have three zones throughout the Northwest Territories, to get the maximum threshold for each zone, for Zone 1 is just over \$46,000; Zone 3 is high as \$56,000, and those are in the more rural and remote communities and the communities in the high Arctic, and those are what we're looking at, whether or not we need to change those so that more seniors can access the program and have fuel and heat up their homes throughout the full winter months.

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

QUESTION 447-18(2):
A NEW DAY MEN'S HEALING PROGRAM

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions about A New Day Program, I'd like to direct them to the Minister of Justice. Last year the Auditor General of Canada released a report on corrections and pointing out some of the deficiencies, which included a lack of access to programs while in remand. I'd like to ask the Minister what programs are offered in remand? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER : Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are programs in remand. I believe the name of the program is called A Partner Program. A New Day is a voluntary program and is not accessible to those in remand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I believe the Minister said A New Day is not accessible to those in remand. It's my understanding that twice a month A New Day goes to remand and provides counselling sessions for inmates. So am I wrong or is the Minister misinformed?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, A New Day program is a community-based pilot program that takes place outside of the jail system. Certainly people currently in custody, who will ultimately of course be released, may be encouraged to take the full A New Day program once they are released.

MR. SIMPSON: I recommend that the Minister checks his facts on that. I'd also like to ask the Minister, being our Attorney General, he's aware of the Gladue decision of the Supreme Court, which says that, in sentencing, courts must look at culturally-appropriate sanctions for offences when it comes to Aboriginal offenders. Seeing as A New Day is the only program really aimed at men when it comes to issues with domestic violence, if the government doesn't continue this program how is it living up to its obligations to provide these sort of programs for the judiciary so the judiciary can live up to the expectations and orders of the Supreme Court?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned several times already, the government is interested and dedicated to this type of program. We are simply asking for time to evaluate the report that should be provided to me very shortly. Of course, I am aware of the Gladue case which was referred to by the Member opposite. The judiciary is aware of A New Day program. But, as I mentioned, it is a voluntary program, so I don't think it would be appropriate or wise to have a requirement to attend the program imposed as part of a probation order. The whole point of the program is voluntary for men in our community. Certainly, A New Day program can be advertised to those in custody, but the program is for those who have finished their period of custody or have never been in custody that are on the street, if I can put it that way.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is also my understanding that there are referrals from probation, from parole, from the Wellness Court to take A New Day. So, again, I'd like the Minister to maybe read his briefing notes again on this topic.

My final question is in July the Minister wrote a letter to me in response to questions I had earlier on the program. In that letter it said, "The Department of Justice is in the process of determining what options are available to continue the men's program should the evaluation find it to be ineffective." This is Tabled Document 127-18(2). So in the four months since that letter was written, what has the department done? Where are they in the process of determining options? What have they come up with? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned in the House earlier, we are having a report prepared, which we are eagerly awaiting. It is a comprehensive and rather expensive report. I haven't seen the report, I haven't seen even the early draft of it, but I'm sure it will have options. It may be that this type of program should be

expanded, but we're waiting for the report to determine that.

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

QUESTION 448-18(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO
IMPROVE RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. One of the issues revealed in the YWCA Study of Improving Responses to Sexual Assault is addressing confusion, especially in small communities, about where to find the kit used to collect evidence of an assault. What steps is the Minister going to take to ensure nursing station staff know where to find and how to use rape kits? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I'm under the impression that we actually have rape kits in the vast majority of our health facilities in the Northwest Territories, but I can't actually say a hundred per cent that we have one in every health authority or health centre. So the first step, obviously, is I will confirm whether or not we have them in the communities and figure out how to get them into the communities so that they're there, and then I'll work with the Member and committee to figure out how best to get that information out to residents across the Northwest Territories, including staff.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that. So am I to understand that in addition to identifying whether there are rape kits in every place, that the Minister will also commit to ensuring each nursing station staff knows how to use them?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I just need to confirm whether there's one in every health centre across the Northwest Territories; I can't remember off the top of my head if that is the case. I'll also work with the authority to make sure that appropriate training is available.

We do have challenges. We do have a significant amount of turnover, and sometimes we have individuals who are only in for a couple of days, but I will work with the authority to make sure that there's reasonable training to ensure that most of our nurses can be trained in a timely and reasonable way.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the report from the YWCA also references development of a new policy and guidelines for health providers on how to support clients who report sexual assault. I wonder

if the Minister can tell us whether that work is now complete?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the report that the Member is referring to, Hush Hush No More, I believe that's the one the Member is referring to, came out in June and it was shared with MLAs, but the YWCA never directly sent it to myself as a Minister asking us to take particular action. I have asked and directed that this report be put on the next Committee of Cabinet, the next Safety and Wellness Committee of Cabinet, so we could discuss it as a whole government.

If you look at the report and look at the recommendations, many of the recommendations are cross-departmental and government as a whole, but not just government. I mean, this report talks clearly about residents of the Northwest Territories, NGOs, many other groups, getting out and talking about sexual assault. There is a significant stigma.

There's people not talking about it and then people, in fact, encouraging people not to talk about it. We work with our partners across government, across the Northwest Territories to encourage people to talk about it. I applaud the Member for obviously raising it in this House and bringing the report to the floor, and I think we all must work together to break the stigma and get the information out there.

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

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that. One of the things I spoke about in my statement was consent and the issue of raising public awareness around consent would be a multi-departmental issue. So you referenced the Cabinet Committee on Safety and Wellness; is this the kind of work that they might do? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, one of the roles of the committees of Cabinet is to help to break down barriers between different departments and get departments working together on cross-purposes. This is certainly an area that I think would fit nicely within the Safety and Wellness Committee of Cabinet, and, as I said, I've referred it to that committee for discussion to see what we're currently doing, what we can do within existing finances, existing resources, and what partnerships we need to work on in order to get that information out.

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

QUESTION 449-18(2):
911 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs in light of the earlier conversation -- or the earlier questions I asked the Premier. The Minister tabled a document, Tabled Document 103-18(2) which was in response to the question on funding 911, which stated: "In light of the Government of the Northwest Territories' current fiscal environment, 911 is not included in MACA's 2017-2018 business plan," and yet the Premier announces that through the business planning process we're making progress on that. Can the Minister confirm if 911 is included in the 2017-2018 business plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, the implementation is not in the business plan.

MR. TESTART: Can the Minister then explain why we're hearing two different versions of the story on 911? I appreciate that the Premier might not know as much as the Minister, so I'm hoping we get to the bottom of it with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, the complete implementation of 911 is currently not in the new business plan; however, we have been working with the MLAs and the Minister responsible for Finance has promised that if we can get reductions during this business year that we will be looking at spending money on new initiatives. 911 is one of the new initiatives that we are looking at pushing forward if we can save money currently and use that money for later implementation.

MR. TESTART: Thank you for the clarification from the Minister. The Minister talked about finding reductions to pay for the new initiative. The government has already indicated it is constantly in the process of finding savings. So I'll defer to the Minister and ask if she's ready to find savings to pay for this program for the 2017-2018 business plan?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We have made proposals to committee and we're currently awaiting feedback from the committee on the acceptance of our proposals.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the work of the standing committee is important in this process, however, it seems earlier comments pre-empted that work. So again, if the standing

committee says go on this initiative, will the Minister commit to do it? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated before, we have put forward a proposal to the standing committee; we are hoping that they will be reasonable and in recognizing that 911 is one of the initiatives that we are looking at if we can get the reductions that we need to be able to put money into new initiatives.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 216-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SURFACE RIGHTS
BOARD 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 217-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SURFACE RIGHTS
BOARD 2016-2017 BUDGET

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board 2016 Annual Report" and "Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board 2016-2017 Budget." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 218-18(2):
TOURISM 2020 OPENING OUR SPECTACULAR
HOME TO THE WORLD

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Tourism 2020: Opening our Spectacular Home to the World."

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 219-18(2):
HUSH HUSH NO MORE: SEXUAL ASSAULT IN
THE NWT

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the report "Hush Hush No More: Sexual Assault in the NWT." Mahsi.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 220-18(2):
100 PER CENT RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BY 2050

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table this document entitled "100 per cent Renewable Energy in the Northwest Territories by 2050" by Alternatives North dated October 2016. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 221-18(2):
2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. I hereby table the "2015-2016 Annual Report of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories." Item 15, Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 28-18(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
JANUARY 31, 2017

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, November 4, 2016, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on November 4, 2016, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, January 31, 2017; and further, that any time prior to January 31, 2017, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Colleagues, before we get to the debate on the motion, the Chair calls for a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, we left off on item number 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Motion 27-18(2): "A New Day" Men's Healing Program. Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Deh Cho has the floor.

Motions

MOTION 27-18(2):

"A NEW DAY" MEN'S HEALING PROGRAM

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. "A New Day" Men's Healing Program: WHEREAS taking action on the crisis of family and community violence is a priority of the 18th Legislative Assembly and the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories commits to continuing support for a healing program for men who use violence in intimate relationships;

AND WHEREAS colonization and the residential school experience are recognized factors contributing to intimate partner violence in northern Canada and the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories commits to implementing the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, especially related to violence against Indigenous women and girls;

AND WHEREAS northern research indicates that male violence against women is committed across the Northwest Territories, including communities where victims have no access to local RCMP detachments, local victims' services workers, and or local women's shelters and that, even where these services exist, communities continue to have high rates of gendered violence;

AND WHEREAS "the Northwest Territories has the second highest rate of police-reported family violence, at roughly 7.8 times the national average, as well as the second highest rate of police-reported intimate partner violence, at roughly seven times the national average and 3,536.1 women victims for every 100,000 people";

AND WHEREAS the "A New Day" Men's Healing Program is the only program in the Northwest Territories which directly addresses the healing needs of men who have used violence in their relationships to change men's behaviour and prevent future violence;

AND WHEREAS uncertainty surrounding the "A New Day" Men's Healing Program has negatively impacted current program delivery, and future program disruption would negatively impact both current and potential participants as well as their partners and families;

AND WHEREAS violence against women will not end until those individuals who commit such acts are equipped to choose, and do choose, another path;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the

Department of Justice take immediate action to extend the service contract and funding for delivery of the "A New Day" Men's Healing Program by one year, to December 31, 2017, thereby granting sufficient time for the completion of a program evaluation as well as any subsequent required program transitions;

AND FURTHER, the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Justice inform the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning of its plan to implement the recommendations of this motion before the end of the 2016 calendar year;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi to the seconder of the motion, the MLA for Yellowknife Centre, Ms. Julie Green. I also thank my colleagues for support of this motion. I also acknowledge the presence of the staff at the New Day Program and the leaders of the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre who are in the public gallery.

A New Day Program has helped me. I made a wrong choice and sought help to understand myself and how abuse affects our families and our communities. The Dzene K'oonii Program offers an immediate circle of support that enables one to review the things in slow motion to reflect upon one's self, learn about resolve conflict and make healthy choices to maintain balance in one's family.

Today I'm doing well with my children and family and it's because of the A New Day Program. Mr. Speaker, the A New Day Program is recognized by the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canada's Aboriginal Best Practices Programs. It is part of a national network of addressing family violence and violence against women. Mr. Speaker, family violence in the Northwest Territories is at a crisis level. Reported domestic violence rates in the Northwest Territories are nine times the national average and second highest rate in Canada.

Sadly, the scenario is like this. Too often there is alcohol or drugs involved, there is an intimate relationship and an argument ensues about an issue that leads to an escalation of violence that leads to hurt and pain and sometimes tragically the death of a loved one.

This vicious cycle of family violence and violence against women must stop. The A New Day Program is an initiative that meets the goals of the

mandate of the 18th Assembly by addressing family violence. Mr. Speaker, healing is recovering from a wound or trauma. Wellness means living a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Healing and wellness are critical needs for our families and our communities. While it is easy to associate the legacy of family violence to the abuse of alcohol and drugs, the impacts of residential schools and its effects are far reaching and intergenerational.

I remain hopeful that the recommendation for action of the Truth and Reconciliation Report will help address healing and wellness initiatives that we need for our families and communities. This motion, if passed, will recommend to Cabinet that the A New Day Program continue functioning without interruption while evaluation is completed.

Mr. Speaker, I'm living proof that the A New Day Program can help us come to terms with our past and move beyond the use of violence as a way of coping with the things we all struggle with. There is far too little support for our residents who accept that they need assistance. Let's not eliminate one of the few programs that is available and working. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. I'll allow a seconder to make her remarks. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by saying how very proud I am of my colleague Mr. Nadli. He has taken constructive steps to make himself a better man by starting on this healing journey, and we are all the better for it.

Mr. Speaker, women experience violence in greater numbers than men, but it's true that men also experience violence, and the effects of this violence include things like injuries, depression and other mental health issues, disease, addiction and even death. There are economic costs as well, mostly with loss in productivity but also the cost of treatment that amounts to billions of dollars a year.

Violence against women is a worldwide problem being addressed by the United Nations, national governments and territorial governments like ours. The recent report by the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada says, as you've heard, the NWT rate is nine times the national average, and believe it, Mr. Speaker, from December 2011 to December 2012 five women, five women, in the NWT were killed by intimate partners, and I'm going to name them because they should never be forgotten: Jenny Pingo of Tuktoyuktuk, Mary Laboucan of Fort Resolution, Carol Buggins and Linda Lafferty of Hay River and Yvonne Desjarlais of Yellowknife and most recently May Elanik of Aklavik.

Mr. Speaker, this is a problem everywhere in the Northwest Territories, and this is what's important to know in the context of this motion. Violence against women is not inevitable and it is preventable, and the key word here is prevention. Prevention involves reducing the number of new incidents of family violence with actions that address systemic issues. Why do men use violence against women and how do we stop them?

The Coalition Against Family Violence and the Department of Justice spent more than two years looking at programs that would help men to stop using violence. What they came up with is not an off-the-shelf program, but one which is culturally appropriate and community-based, and as my colleague Mr. Nadli said, the Public Health Agency of Canada has designated it an Aboriginal Best Practices Program. It is on the face of it the right program for this territory.

The department decided to pilot the program. It got off to a rough start because the non-profit contracted for delivery collapsed. The program really didn't start until two years ago and it was supposed to be a three-year pilot, but it's been incredibly successful in the time it has been going with more than 350 people who have attended some aspect or all of the program since it started and the anecdotal evidence is overwhelming in saying that it's effective.

Mr. Speaker, this program starts with asking men to take responsibility for their violent actions. They then go on to engage in individual and group therapy, they explore the circumstances and feelings that trigger a violent reaction such as their residential school experience and the feelings of anger and powerlessness that go with that memory. They begin a healing journey that addresses their unresolved trauma.

Some steps along the way include, as I said, defining abuse and taking responsibility for it, creating a relapse prevention plan, talking about the physical and psychological effects of abuse for women, and they also talk about how they can be part of the healing process for the women they've abused if the partners agree to participate. Many, many men have started their healing journey with the help of this program and more are ready to start. A New Day is set up and it's ready to continue and continuity is very important in this context.

I have no quarrel with evaluating the pilot. That is the right thing to do, but the prospect of shutting the program down before coming up with a replacement is completely unacceptable. Women have the right to be safe from violence, and that means intervention like family violence shelters, but it also means systemic addresses such as the A New Day program. This program needs to be

extended for a year while the evaluation is not only finished but shared and plans are made for next steps. Mahsi. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of this motion on A New Day Men's Healing Program. The motion speaks clearly to the need for this program, Mr. Speaker. Taking steps to combat family and community violence are among the priorities identified by the 18th Assembly's mandate. Similarly, our mandate commits to implementing the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission especially related to violence against Indigenous women and girls.

These are among the most difficult and pervasive problems facing our communities. The impacts of violence are felt throughout the family and community and don't just go away. Indeed these impacts can be multi-generational if they're not addressed. Most clients of A New Day are self-referred; they go to the program because they choose to. Many of them are residential school survivors. Colonization and residential schools are recognized contributing factors to intimate partner violence.

Family violence is well known to be cyclical, and only through active, directed intervention will the cycle be broken. So it is important that we take immediate steps to preserve this program. We must make sure that the service continues to be available to NWT men and their loved ones, and we must demonstrate clearly that this Assembly is dedicated and determined to confronting this issue.

In my view, the continuation of this program should not even be in question. When men choose to find help, confront issues within themselves and seek a path away from violence, there must be support available to them for that journey. Helping make sure that support exists may be among the most important steps we take as an Assembly. I offer this motion my strongest endorsement. Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: To the motion. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support this motion. The government is mandated to provide a men's healing program, and morally there is no question that we should be. Whether the funding for A New Day continues beyond next month is dependent as the Minister says, upon the findings of a third party evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that we are in difficult financial times, and I'm not against cutting costs,

nor am I against ensuring that the programs we fund are effective, but I am worried that the government may just see this as a cost saving opportunity. I might not even advocate for the extension of the program if the department had something similar ready to go. But as it stands, if this program is cut, the territory will be without a men's healing program, with no guarantee they will get another one and no apparent plan from the department to implement something similar.

If the department is looking at this from a purely economic standpoint, it should consider the immense cost savings of preventing family violence. Keeping one person locked up in jail in the NWT costs over \$100,000 a year, nearly half a year of funding of the A New Day program. What are the costs associated with multiple visits from the RCMP, or ambulance trips, emergency visits, nights in emergency shelters, removing children from their home, legal aid, time in court? If the program can help one individual to stop perpetrating family violence, cost savings in all these areas will be realized; and if the program stops the propagation of intergenerational trauma in one family, the cost savings are exponential.

The department also points out the number of graduates of the program, with the implication that the number may be too low to justify the cost. I know that some sort of metrics need to be used to assess programs, but I don't know if counselling for intergenerational trauma lends itself well to the idea of graduation. Over 300 men have accessed the counselling service, and just because they haven't all graduated from the program doesn't mean that there is no value in receiving counselling. What it does mean is that hundreds of men have reached out thousands of times. There is a clear and pressing need for these programs.

There is much more to be said about this motion, but I'll yield the floor and conclude by reminding all Members of this House that this motion simply asks to extend A New Day by one year. It's not a big ask. In fact, it offers a solution to the department's failure to prepare for this eventuality by not completing the review sooner or evaluating the program on an ongoing basis. I encourage all Members who believe that we need to address the issue of family violence to stand up in support of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I stand in support of this motion. Mr. Speaker, the A New Day has a saying: we built it, they came and keep coming. Mr. Speaker, as of September, 299 men and 59 women were served

through the program as of September 2016, and the number has risen as we are now in November.

Mr. Speaker, you see the intake we've had, yet we only have 2.5 people working there; two full-time positions and one part-time. Mr. Speaker, there are four stages of the program. The first stage is defining abuse and taking responsibility; number two is developing a relapse prevention plan; third, studying the effects of abuse; fourth, skills to repair and heal the effects of abuse.

Mr. Speaker, this is approximately 18 weeks to complete, depending on client participation. One thing the people at A New Day have noticed is that sometimes people can't complete the whole sessions, because they have to travel back to their home communities. But what they do notice is, when people do come back to the capital, they continue with the programs that they were taking.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we had a presentation this spring from A New Day and just with all the progress that they've made, at that time it was roughly a year and a half, it's pretty clear that the program is successful. Even if we could help a handful of people stay out of our correctional facilities, the cost savings there, that's one thing that the department needs to look at. How much have the numbers dropped in our facilities in the Northwest Territories in the last two years?

I'm hopeful that, you know, it's a small amount to look at the big picture of all the people that we're helping here. It's roughly \$250,000 to keep the program operating, Mr. Speaker, and there are 350 people that this program is helping. That says a lot, Mr. Speaker, and for that I am in support of this motion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to support this motion. I went to the open house that A New Day had yesterday and I was pleasantly surprised by how much help they provided to people in the communities. I know that people from the communities I represent would be people that would attend the A New Day program. One stat that they gave us that kind of really hit home with me was the number of individuals that walked in off the street and voluntarily went there to get the help of these individuals running the program. I think, for me, that's an indication of how well this program is working. When people are there trying to get help, then they're not getting into trouble.

I think the first step to assist many of these individuals to understand the reasons they do the things they do, and I think the program provides

that information to them. If you look at the group, and we throw numbers around like 299 men and 59 women up until the end of September, when you think about the families and the children and the spouses that are involved, that's a huge number for the NWT, of people who almost appear to be non-productive members of society to become real productive members of society. That's very important, because productive members of society don't go to jail, and productive members of society send their children to school, and they become a support to the family. When there is violence in the home, the persons who are the most affected are the smaller children.

We've seen this in the NWT. There are all kinds of statistics that indicate that we have a very high ratio compared to the rest of the country, in the NWT, in violence. If we could bring that down, this group is working to bring that ratio down, working to bring the ratio down to as far as they can. If they could eradicate family violence, that would be absolutely awesome. That would be something that the whole of government wants. That's something that everybody that's elected should want.

When you move forward and you say, "We will eliminate violence," and you're creating productive people that are going to help their children go to school, I mean, the long-term positive ramifications of something like that are enormous. I've seen this program for the first time, and I've heard a lot about it. The honourable Member from Deh Cho has told me about the program, but, for the first time, I've seen it. I was amazed.

They're in very cramped quarters. As the Member said, all of us could hardly fit in their office, and that's where they provide the program. They don't have all of the space necessary maybe to run the program, but they've done a real good job, I think, of running the program. You know, you get people coming back from the communities, as the Member for Mackenzie Delta said, come back into the community. After they've left, they come back to the program.

People have done some stages of the program, come back and finished the program or try to come back to finish the program. Just overall, it's a good feeling to see that people who are walking in off the streets and are trying to do something and they're recognizing, trying to do something positive for their lives which is ultimately going to affect the people that they love and the people that are in their homes.

So, I strongly support this program. I think that a by-product of a program like this is lower medical costs to people, to the spouses, to the individuals, lower justice costs, lower RCMP costs. There are all kinds of reasons that this government should

support this. For the low amount of money that is being spent, there are all kinds of positive and huge impacts, positive fiscal impacts to our government, positive fiscal impacts to the NWT. For that reason, I think we have to have this program continue. Merci cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion, Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of this motion, as well. What I found really interesting -- I supported this program since I first heard about it, and I had the pleasure of attending their session last night and we were able to get a whole bunch more information to help us understand even further the importance of it. I was a former JP, so I understood what emergency protection orders were and why that was important, and that was prevention, stopping it. Well, here's a great program that is all about prevention.

The Government of the Northwest Territories states that A New Day is part of the commitment to address the call to action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, so the government has already said that it's part of that.

Mr. Speaker, 83 per cent of people are self-referred, 83 per cent. People come off the street and go there to help themselves, 83 per cent. That means 83 per cent may or may not be in the system. That's amazing. How can we not support something like that?

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to listen to the messages and that, and what I want to do is I want to put a voice to this. It's not my voice that I'm talking about here. Here's the voice of the people that are part of the program. This is how powerful this is, and I'm only going to read certain ones. I could we here for a while, but I just want to read about five of them. The first one:

"I wish all people had this knowledge that you guys have here so violence among our people would stop." Wow. What does that say?

"Now I understand abuse can be verbal, mental, emotional, spiritual, physiological, sexual, financial, and physical." That is what EPOs talk about. Abuse is not just physical; it's a whole area.

"I'm so proud of myself for facing the charges and going to court. I'm okay if I go to jail. That's how I will take responsibility, help others feel safe." Taking responsibility, that's what we're trying to do. That's why we're trying to educate people is taking responsibility, and they're learning that from this great program.

"I notice when arguments are going to come up, and I can stand up for myself in a good way and avoid it getting worse. This will stay with me as long as I use it. I just walk away if it gets to that point. I'm learning as I go." Human nature, how we learn to deal with issues, wow, that, to me, is amazing. We all should be able to do that, and this program is teaching people how to do this.

The last one I'm going to say is, "I don't know, but something clicked with him. He went to this program and switched his shifts so he can spend more time helping me with the kids. This program really works. Thank you." This is coming from a lady who wasn't prompted to bring this up. She spoke at a meeting and said how well this program is.

Mr. Speaker, it's about families. We talk about over 350 people being impacted by this, but we're not talking about all the families and the repercussions going on afterwards and how it has an impact on that. That there is huge. We want to look after our people? This program is looking after our people.

The 2.5 staff, the volunteers, the students, they've made an impact, not just on the 350 people but the families and 11 of our colleagues and seven of them over there. They've had an impact on us, and society has said, "Great job." It's recognized nationally. We should be supporting it. So I will be supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Speaker. First off, I want to thank the mover, the Member for Deh Cho, and the seconder, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, for bringing forward this important public policy matter before the House and before the public. Really, it's about the future of men's healing programs in the Northwest Territories. That's what this is really about.

I recognize that the A New Day program was a pilot, but it's a pilot project that actually works. I think we will all welcome the evaluation report as it's likely to improve whatever the programming is and this program in particular, so that's something I think we all look forward to.

I visited with the A New Day program last night, like some of my colleagues here, and I understand that it's based on best practices and so on. To me, this works. What I'm most concerned about, Mr. Speaker, is there are no plans for filling the gap in service here. We've got an evaluation. We've got a Minister who says: I'm waiting for the report. But there are no plans for what happens after December 31st, no plans whatsoever. There is going to be a loss of momentum, a loss of capacity,

and a loss of continuity, as some of my colleagues have said. So this lack of planning is causing extreme uncertainty for the staff -- I want to recognize the important work that they do -- but it's causing uncertainty for men in the Northwest Territories, as well. I don't think that's a good thing, and I don't think it's fair.

It's important that the public also understand that this motion is not binding. It's going to send a very strong signal to the other side that the Regular MLAs want this kind of a program to continue and want this program to continue, but it's not binding on the other side, so it's important that the public understand that.

I am going to be supporting this because it's simply the right thing to do, and I want to go on record as supporting this program. So, with those words, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion, Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to support this motion here. I was grateful in attending the gathering last night there. I can see a lot of passion in the staff and the surroundings that they have to work within, and I'm extremely proud of our House Members that showed up in support of this program. Just showing up there has really shown to the staff that you've got passion to deliver the programs.

I think it's not only incumbent upon us but our fiduciary obligation to support this, continue it, and moving it from the category of pilot to continuance. So I would not urge or recommend, I wish to see in the evaluation report that we have client submissions as well as staff submissions so that the end reviewers of the evaluation could not only see the department's evaluation but the recipients of the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the department absolutely supports the government's mandate to take action on the crisis of family and community violence. This includes the commitment made to continue the support for a healing program for men who use violence in intimate relationships such as the A New Day program.

There is no question that this program is needed and has helped individuals. We think that this program holds tremendous potential to help address the crisis of family violence in our territory. That is why the government has piloted the program since 2012 and why we are investing in an independent evaluation of the pilot project. We need to learn what has worked and what might

work better in order to have the most effective program we can.

Since 2012 the GNWT has provided \$978,905 for the delivery of A New Day. Thirty-one clients have entered the program, and 16 have completed the full sessions. There are important lessons to take from the experience of this pilot project. The evaluation will help tell us what is working and if any changes are needed to improve outcomes, including increasing the number of men participating.

The evaluation report on the New Day program pilot is being finalized by an independent contractor now, and the department will work as quickly as it can to respond to the evaluation. The current intake of clients in the New Day program will complete their sessions prior to the end of the current contract on December 31st, so we expect any changes to the program will not impact these clients. I know that there is a strong support for the program and keen interest in seeing its delivery continued. Not only is the existing contractor interested in continuing the program, other potential partners have expressed interest as well.

All Members of the Legislative Assembly want the best tools possible to eradicate family violence in the North. We agree with you and are working to achieve this goal. As a government we are committed to providing programming for men and we will continue to do so, but we need to make sure we are delivering it in a way that is effective and as accessible as it can be. Until we have seen the final evaluation report, however, it is premature to make a final decision on the best way to support men who want to make a change in their relationships.

As this is a recommendation to government, Cabinet will be abstaining from this motion. I have committed to share with Members the evaluation of the pilot project and will be pleased to make evidence-based decisions on how to best deliver the New Day program with the advice of the Standing Committee on Social Development.

The funding for A New Day program will remain part of the department's budget and decisions on how to best utilize those resources to deliver the New Day program will be made with the benefit of the lessons learned from the pilot project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again in support of the A New Day program. It's not the first time that I've had the opportunity to support this very important program and to speak about the issue of

the crisis of family and spousal violence in the Northwest Territories. I'm very proud also to stand with so many honourable Members who have spoken today in support of this program and who have taken a keen interest in the work that the staff of A New Day have done since their program started, to try to turn the corner on this.

We've heard a lot about the evaluation holding up this process, and although it is important to use measurements such as evaluations, this program deals with a very systemic problem, and a problem linked to generations of abuse and violence, and that trauma is hard to treat; it's hard to measure. Recidivism rates in the Northwest Territories are notoriously hard to measure, so we have to be careful about how we use our resources and one of the things this motion calls for is to ensure there are no gaps in programming. As we know, this is the only program for men who use violence in the Northwest Territories, that's why it's so important the recommendations of this motion is heard by government. If there is a gap until we figure out what to do next, we're not going to have anything, and that's a situation that, quite frankly, is unacceptable.

I'm sure every citizen of the Northwest Territories has an intimate experience with family violence and that is also unacceptable, and this is a priority for this government, a priority for all governments. The Premier in the last Assembly spoke about this as well and spoke about the initiatives that they were taking; it's not a new problem. Finally we have a program that's sensitive to the needs of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; it's sensitive to the needs around Indigenous identity and it needs to stay and it needs to be supported, and we need to find a way to better support it and better understand the numbers.

We've also heard very different numbers coming from the department. We heard it earlier today and we heard it just recently from the Minister. The numbers we're hearing from the Minister are 39 and the numbers we're hearing from the New Day program providers are 348. The 348 is a very helpful number, and I worry about the evaluation criteria if we're using 39 instead of a number of several hundred clients. So we'll have to see what happens with that evaluation, but in the meantime this motion takes us exactly where we need to be. It holds course on a program that is proven to be effective for clients and where staff is seeing a direct result.

As they told us last night at the open house, if you build it they will come, and they have come and they continue to come back. Once those doors close there is nowhere for these clients to go except back into dangerous situations without the

supports that they've come to use to make positive, healthy choices for themselves and their families.

I hope that the "such as" in the mandate commitment, such as programs like the A New Day, does not hinge on the future of this program. The reason A New Day is mentioned in the mandate is because Members see the potential in it and continue to support it, and the future of this program should not hinge on two words: such as.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying I stand in support of this motion and I appreciate that we will all continue to work on this, use the evaluation data to make an even stronger program, and keep the same experts who have been building strong client relationships on the ground helping families heal where they belong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. To the motion. I'll allow the mover to make his concluding remarks. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, family violence and violence against women is rising at an alarming rate, and it's pretty logical and basic that the A New Day program is trying to curb and eradicate what we're facing here in the NWT and also our communities. Mr. Speaker, it's a very difficult personal matter to talk about and I did seek counsel with one of my aunts and she's advised me well, this matter, we need to talk about it; we need to bring it out in the open so that our families and our communities are not alone. We have to address these matters, and the A New Day program is trying to do that.

A New Day has been a pilot program. It's been in operation for some time and it's been a growing experience, you know, and we had staff. But the important thing is that it's provided opportunities for people, you know, to really examine themselves and work on themselves, you know, for the ultimate interest and well-being of their families, and that's what it's doing.

The evaluation process is more likely, as a colleague has stated, that it's almost like yardstick or a measurement tool that we use to almost analyze whether the program is sufficient or not. I'm quite concerned that the Minister states that, you know, close to 40 people have gone through the program since the program was first established in 2012. It's alarming to know that, you know, perhaps the students are being misguided.

The other point that I wanted to make is, okay, well we've got this program, A New Day, what are the options, what are the choices for people? We see it right across Canada in First Nations communities, a large number of our people, a majority of First Nations people live in the correctional system. We

need to embrace these initiatives that are novel and innovative and touch the core of community, First Nations people, at the ground level. We need to ensure that these programs continue.

Mr. Speaker, simply, this motion asks for more time, an extension, that maybe it'll give an opportunity for the Department of Justice maybe to reach out with the Department of Health and Social Services to see how it is that, you know, we could do more to work with the federal government to ensure that, you know, the actions and recommendations of the truth and reconciliation report reaches us in the NWT, especially in the far reaches of the NWT so that our communities and our families are able to take advantage of programs such as A New Day program.

You know, all I can say at this point is I encourage my colleagues and I appreciate their stand but, you know, throughout this whole process I appreciate their support. Mr. Speaker, those are the remarks that I have at this time. I'll ask for a recorded vote. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member requests for a recorded vote. All those in favour please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Member for Deh Cho, Member for Nunakput, Member for Hay River North, Member for Mackenzie Delta, Member for Sahtu, Member for Yellowknife North, Member for Kam Lake, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Member for Nahendeh, Member for Frame Lake, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstained, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Member for Range Lake, Member for Great Slave, Member for Yellowknife South, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Member for Hay River South, Member for Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those in favour of the motion: 11. All those opposed: 0. All those abstained: 7.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Members. Motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Health and Social Services.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 13: MARRIAGE ACT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 13, Marriage Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is on the floor. Motion's in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

---Carried

Bill 13 has had first reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 14: APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), 2017-2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2017-2018 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called.

---Carried

Bill 14 has had first reading.

Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 14: APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), 2017-2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2017-2018 be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make appropriation for infrastructure expenditures for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called.

---Carried

Bill 14 has had second reading.

Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 14:

APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), 2017-2018

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2017-2018 be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. Member requested for recorded vote. All those in favour please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Member for Hay River South, Member for Thebacha, Member for Hay River North, Member for Mackenzie Delta, Member for Sahtu, Member for Yellowknife North, Member for Kam Lake, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Member for Nahendeh, Member for Frame Lake, Member for Yellowknife Centre, Member for Nunakput, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Member for Range Lake, Member for Great Slave, Member for Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: For the record, Member for Deh Cho is also in support of the motion.

All those in favour of the motion: 18. All those opposed: 0. All those abstained: 0.

---Carried

Bill 14 has had third reading and is now ready for assent.

Third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, November 3, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 13, Marriage Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 3-18(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2014-2015 NWT Human Rights Commission Annual Report
 - Committee Report 4-18(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2014-2015 Public Accounts
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 3, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

