

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FINAL REPORT

June 4, 2019

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to continue consideration next of Committee Report 14-18(3), Special Committee to Increase Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly final report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Thank you for clarifying that. I thought that committee might have different intentions. Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 17-18(3). I will go to the Chair of the Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly for any opening comments that she may have. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you know, earlier today, the Special Committee to Increase the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly presented its final report. The committee report included three recommendations, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss the report and recommendations in Committee of the Whole. Members of the committee may also have individual comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. I will open up the floor to general comments on the report. Do any Members have general comments on this report? First, we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to take this opportunity to let the committee know that I am very grateful for the work that they have undertaken over the last year or more that the committee has been put together. It has done extensive travel throughout the territory. It has held a number of public hearings to gather very important information as it relates to increasing the representation of women. I was very pleased to see that a number of the public hearings were presented to the public through various forums, in particular Facebook Live, so I was happy to tune in and listen to what a lot of different members of the public had to say, both men and women, through a number of the communities.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to really let the committee know that I commend their efforts and appreciate the information that they have presented to us here in the report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, we have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, want to take this opportunity to commend the special committee on their work. Both this report and the previous report that was considered by the Assembly represent a great deal of time, effort, and sincere dedication to an issue that we set out to address as an Assembly on day one, which is

increasing the representation of women.

As the committee noted in its interim report, it is a slow process. There are no simple solutions, and it takes this level of detailed analysis to really come to grips with this issue, which is very close to the good functioning of any representative institution, which is ensuring that it is representative of the public body that it serves.

Parliamentary reform and democratic reform are great interests of mine, and many of the models addressed show that the committee did its homework. This issue is not just one of institutions, but also one of culture, traditions, and gender roles reflected in society.

I have had the opportunity to meet some Samoan MPs through interparliamentary conferences, and as it turns out, you need to be chief before you are allowed to stand for MP. It is one of the eligibility requirements. That is my understanding, at least. Right there, you understand how difficult it can be to ensure adequate representation of minorities and women when there is a cultural component like that in place. The initiative that they took was very progressive, but also very much required for their context. Of course, the NWT has a very different social, cultural, economic, and political context, and it takes work like this to properly understand that context.

I have additional comments around some of the recommendations, but I think that this is solid work. It speaks well to the level of interest that Northerners have. One of the things that should be particularly noted about this report is some of the appendices where the committee took time to show their list of public hearings and the list of written submissions. That just shows, again, that this was very much a public process that had a lot of engagement and shows that our institution is being responsive to the concerns of Northerners and, in particular, the concerns of northern women, who have had enough with Assemblies that just simply don't reflect the gender make-up of our populations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to thank my colleagues and our chair for providing the leadership in terms of our travel, our meetings, and our discussions throughout the Northwest Territories communities that we had the good fortune of visiting and holding public forums and discussion. I think that that was the basic approach, trying to create at least an understanding of the issue of why women don't get elected to the territorial level, and trying to have some discussion and raised awareness of how it is that we could create, perhaps, possibilities of changing that whole issue and dilemma that we face now.

I think that that was the sole purpose of our discussion, but at the same time, we examined some changes that we thought that we could make. We did it in an interim report, and now we are concluding the final report. We wanted to make some strategic changes. I think that those recommendations that we are going to be talking about later on capture at least some of the key things that people had expressed to us, especially in the forums that we held in the communities.

I just wanted to take the opportunity to explain in my language what this whole

discussion was all about, if I could, Mr. Chair. [English translation not provided]

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just explained that the way that I see it, from the perspective of the people that I represent, considering some of the really deep-rooted traditional values that we have. We have a basic dilemma at this point. There are 19 MLAs, and there are only two women. In the Dene perspective, if you are going to make a decision, half of your decision-making input is not there, so you are only making half of a decision.

I don't know how to describe it or explain it in my language, but it is a matter of perception, and that is how I explained it, that half of our decision-making is not present. This was very important for me to at least share that perspective with the many people that we met during that time of our travel throughout the communities. I look forward to the ongoing discussions. Once again, I wanted to thank my colleagues and the staff that helped us out and our chair for leading the charge on this matter. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Next, we have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will likely speak on the recommendations. For general comments here, I would like to also thank my colleagues on the committee. There were six of us on the committee, and I would also like to thank the committee staff for providing us the assistance that we needed to visit the nine communities and sat in front of well over 100 people to hear their recommendations. I think, I feel, it will work. I know already that, as we are moving into the next territorial election, we are hearing names of a lot of women that would like to become MLAs, who will be running in the territorial election. I would say that we will, we could, I suspect that we are probably going to have the highest number of women in this legislature after the next election. Throughout, the methods and as we worked our way through it led by our chair, I was not sure if something like this would actually work, and now, after seeing the report and at the conclusion of our community visits, I strongly feel that this will work and that the numbers that we are trying to achieve, we will achieve easily. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next, we have Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to start by thanking the Speaker for bringing it forward, the idea of guaranteed seats. I want to thank our chair, MLA Green, for stepping forward and asking to be the chair for this committee. I thought it was very appropriate that it would be a woman taking on the chair position. I want to thank our staff, who did more than their share of research, were there on the road, put up with a lot of us, and did great work. Our colleagues, I want to thank them. It was very difficult, I think sometimes. We are talking about women taking over seats, half the seats ideally. Although we are not striving for that, eventually, if we are to be equally represented, in a population of 50 percent, then it would be nice to have 50 percent, so I imagine it's hard for men to actually have those conversations because it means that some of the men in these seats would be looking at losing their seat, so I recognize that.

I also want to thank the MLAs in whose regions we went because we went into their

regions trying to talk to women about getting their names on the ballot, and, again, that must have been very difficult for some of those men to accept that and to be humble within that and allow us into their communities to push that because I am not sure, if we were looking a get anyone else, if we were looking for another man, if that would be as welcomed. So I know it was difficult, and I want to thank them.

I really want to say that it's critical, in my opinion it's critical, that women are equally represented. I have heard a lot of different opinions here since I have been here in the last almost four years now, and I know I have had people say to me, men come to me and say: why can't they represent women's issues? I appreciate that men are willing to be our allies. However, I am a strong advocate who says: if you don't live it, you can't know it. You know, there are a lot of issues that I have not experienced in my life, and I do not pretend that I can speak for those people. I try to use their voices whenever possible instead of my own thinking of what they should do, so I am respectful of that process.

The whole key when we started out was to find out if we were going to have special seats or not. It turned into more than that, Mr. Chair. It actually turned into: the number of people who came to these meetings, the number of women, the generation of discussion in itself I think will make a huge difference, and I am hoping that we will see this in the next election. I am looking forward to this election. I think that this committee did an excellent job. I think that it was represented fairly well. I think that it's going to make a difference in this next election.

I also want to say that, this committee -- I have never been a Regular MLA. When I was elected, I first got into a ministry, so I never experienced the committees, but, if this committee was an example of all committees that the MLAs have, then I want to say that that is a true example of consensus government because at no time did our committee argue, fight. It was not one person's voice over others. We were very respectful in it. We did not always get our way, but at no time was there fighting, and there was no showcasing. We all worked together equally in what I feel was a consensus form of government, so I really thank you for that process, as well, and for giving me that experience that I have never experienced here other than that committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, lots of thank yous going around, and I too want to recognize the work of the Members who volunteered to serve on this committee. This was not something that people had to sign up for. People volunteered their time, and this was time away from their families, time away from their communities to take this work on the road, hear what people had to say. There was a lot of hard work that went into this, and I really appreciate the time of the MLAs who volunteered to do this, as I said.

The other thing that I think is unusual about this committee is that it's one of these rare creatures where Regular MLAs actually sit together with Cabinet Ministers. I think that is a good thing, not all the time maybe, but certainly in this situation I think it was great to have people from the Cabinet side and the Regular MLAs who worked together on

these issues.

It's certainly a well-researched report. I had the privilege of sitting in on the public hearing that was held in Yellowknife to hear people's passion on the issues and on some of the internal committee proceedings, so I can certainly attest to the vigour of some of the debates and discussion, but I think it's a well-thought-out report with some sound recommendations.

The interim report really dealt with what we might call the low-hanging fruit and making some of the easier policy changes that we can do right now to make this a more family-friendly place and encourage policies and procedures that better meet the needs of women and young families where one of the parents might serve as an MLA. Those were all accepted. I agreed with them. This report is a little bit more forward-thinking in terms of how to bring more systemic change forward. Unfortunately, not much is going to happen in terms of the next election, but I think, if all the work that has been put into this issue by some of our colleagues in this House and others outside of the House does not lead to the kind of change that we all want to see happen, there are some specific measures recommended in here that I think will lead to the change that we need.

Once again, Mr. Chair, I want to thank all of the people who volunteered to serve on this and our staff, as well, for supporting that effort. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to thank the chair and everybody else on the committee, as well, and the staff. I know they worked hard at arranging travel and enduring times. Being Indigenous myself and the challenges we face in the small communities, I think women do have it a lot harder than we, as men. We have more accessibility to almost anything that we want, and I think naturally that is the way the structure of politics in the Northwest Territories and in a lot of places where we have a lot of Indigenous people and mixed cultures really are. I think we are making steps in the right direction.

I would like to say that this was, out of the reports that have been generated and are being generated, this is the most respectful document, and I think it will be over the term of this Assembly. This is one where there has been fair input from everybody. If you look at some of the other reports where we were actually fighting to put our own personal points on some of these reports and recommendations, I think that is why women sometimes choose not to get into politics, Mr. Chair. Politics can be very dirty, and some of the reports that are coming out are an example of that. This one, I would have to say this is quite a respectful document and has a lot of respectful names along this.

You know, going to Inuvik where we sat, we started off up in my region, in Inuvik, and hearing from the working professionals, the women who are working, some of them are fine where they are; they are community leaders; they are coaches; they are mentors, and they choose to take on responsibility and leadership roles in that manner. I hope that this report will entice, definitely encourage, more women to run during this next

upcoming election in all the regions that need equal representation.

In some fields that we struggle much, mental health is one of bigger ones, I think having a female MLA, a female mayor and other leaders in different governments is key to those areas of developing policies, whether it's at the municipal level, the territorial, or the national level, we definitely need that. I see that in some of the Inuit organizations that I work with nationally and internationally. They are definitely strong leaders.

I think we need to use this model as a foundation to develop something that is going to be unique for the Northwest Territories and not follow so much everywhere else around this world but maybe match those numbers by what we can do here. Again, I would just like to say thanks to everybody for their participation and leadership in this. The outcomes, sometimes, the turnouts in some of the communities where they are harvesting this spring is hard to bring out anybody, but it shows that when people want to make a point and show up and share their opinion, there is always time for that. I would just like to say thank you to the chair and all the Members and especially the staff for this. Mr. Chair, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. There is no one further on my list. Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 141-18(3):

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FINAL REPORT - PLEBISCITE ON OPTIONS TO
INCREASE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN, CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that, if the 2019 election does not meet 20 percent women representation, the 19th Legislative Assembly will call a plebiscite to determine which of the options set out in the discussion paper is preferred by the electorate.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you heard in our report, we had a mixed reception to the Speaker's paper on guaranteed representation for women. We didn't have an agreement on how to move forward on that issue at this time. We decided to defer a decision about a plebiscite on guaranteed seats until after the next election and leave it in the hands of the 19th Assembly. Of course, we hope to see an improvement in women's representation in October. As some of my colleagues have said, they feel that the time is here for that to happen.

We are also hoping that the increased focus on campaign schools, better communication about the role of MLA, and the attention that is being paid to make this an easier place for women to work will also encourage women to run. In the event there is no increase in numbers in the fall, then our hope is that the 19th Assembly will revisit the issue of guaranteed seats. That is the purpose of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be supporting this motion mainly because I think that we will easily achieve four women MLAs in the next election. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

**COMMITTEE MOTION 142-18(3):
SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FINAL REPORT – ELECTION REBATE FOR
CANDIDATES, CARRIED**

MS. GREEN: Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this assembly create an election rebate for candidates who receive at least 5 percent of the votes cast in her or his electoral district in the NWT, reimbursing 50 percent of eligible personal election expenses up to a maximum rebate amount of \$3,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Many women told us that paying for a campaign is a major barrier to them deciding to become a candidate. We looked at rebate schemes across the country and used that information to create our recommendation, which I have to tell you is unique in the country since it is a recommendation that applies to independent candidates rather than those in parties.

First, we set the threshold to qualify for a rebate low. Candidates only have to earn 5 percent of the vote to be eligible for a rebate. Second, the expenses eligible for the rebate exclude cash and in-kind donations but do include the money the candidate spent from his or her own pocket on the campaign. We set a cap at 50 percent rebate on these expenses because it is one of the most generous rebates available in the country in this scheme and the cost to government, given the 2015 election results, would be about \$60,000. If there was no cap, so if expenses were rebated in full, the cost to government would jump to \$163,000.

Mr. Chair, as you see in Appendix C of the report, we looked at the option of providing a rebate of 50 percent on up to \$10,000 worth of expenses. We ultimately decided against this number because so few people spend enough to require this greater reimbursement. In fact, it would have been just four candidates in the last election. Reimbursement at this level would favour those who spend more and can afford to wait for a rebate, in other words, candidates who probably don't need our help in the first place.

The option we chose was to rebate 50 percent of \$6,000 in expenses because it reflects

the level at which most candidates spend. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MOTION TO AMEND COMMITTEE MOTION 142-18(3),
WITHDRAWN

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that Committee Motion 142-18(3) be amended by striking out the words "up to a maximum rebate of \$3,000." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the parent motion, I am very supportive of this, but I wanted to address a concern here. The mover of the motion addressed the rationale behind the caps that were set in this motion. The first cap is at 50 percent of eligible personal election expenses, and the next cap is the maximum rebate of \$3,000. I think that these kind of expense returns are really important to an effective participatory democracy. It levels the playing field for all candidates. What the motion contemplates is not the methodology around how exactly the rebates will be calculated, which I think is important. Really, what this motion speaks to is establishing a rebate and setting out some hard caps for that rebate.

However we want to figure that out, that is fine. I think a 50 percent cap is sufficient, and it levels the playing field across the board. I think \$3,000 is probably too low to really impact the state of play in the seven Yellowknife ridings. Typically, incumbents can muster much more financial resources to support their re-election, and furthermore, candidates who can muster the range of finances you need to run a campaign with full advertising, with full election signs, that can run you anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000. That is to be competitive and in particular with incumbents.

I think having a rebate in place allows potential candidates and particular challengers to handle a lot of their upfront costs, knowing that they will get a return on that at the end of the day. I think that is really important because right now, a lot of fund raising happens after the writ is dropped. It is kind of "Let's close the gap." This just takes the pressure off and allows candidates to do what they really need to: focus on running and focus on reaching out to voters and on honing their ideas to be more effective.

I support the motion in principle. I just think it is too restrictive and doesn't represent the maximum benefit that could really be put out there. I think if we enrich this rebate, it is going to have better results and it is going to maximize the impact, in particular for women candidates and for all candidates in general and provide much needed levelling of the playing field for challengers to successfully mount campaigns against incumbents. Rather just speak to my concerns of the initial motions and vote for it, because I do support the motion, I wanted to take the step to bring forward an amendment to represent what I think will be an improvement to what the committee is asking for. I appreciate the work that has gone into it. I appreciate the calculations. I just have a difference of opinion and would like to resolve it by putting this question to the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion to amend. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will not be supporting the amendment to the motion. I had spoken earlier to the committee about the amount of work that the committee put in, the amount of time, the amount of public engagement that we had, the colleagues that we worked with. I felt, in my opinion, that the committee worked very diligently. We didn't always agree on everything, but we came to a consensus, and we came forward with opinions. We took the time to actually review each recommendation and have the hard discussions and do the research on them.

I find this a little bit disrespectful, Mr. Chair, in honesty, that this was brought onto the floor when a special committee has been working for months on this, and it was never brought to the committee's attention and never had a chance to review this.

Out of respect for the special committee on women, I, again, state that I will stand by the committee that did the work, the staff, the chair, and all the committee members, and I will not be supporting an amendment that comes at the last minute on the floor. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion to amend. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Earlier on, we were talking about how appreciative we were of the committee. The committee did a lot of hard work, and I am looking at this and the email that we got earlier today. I was thinking about it all day, thinking, "Well, maybe it's a good thing," but at the same time, this wasn't a recommendation from the committee. It really does undermine the work, and Mr. Chair, when you look at the big picture from a 30,000-foot view, it looks sort of like a greedy motion. This is elections for public office, and we are not here to make amendments for ourselves personally or switch it to something that might look like a party.

I have a really hard time actually looking at this, Mr. Chair. We are public servants. We are here to work for people. We are not here for our own personal benefits, and I think that this kind of sits on the wall of that. I am almost thinking that maybe I would like to request a recorded vote when it comes to this, to show that this is the work that we are here to do. We are here to report and hopefully fulfill moving forward.

Mr. Chair, I will be requesting a recorded vote on this. This does not look good on committee's part. It really doesn't. I have a hard time supporting this. Out of all these reports, this had respect up until now, and I want to keep it respectful. For committee's sake, for all of the hard work that people did and all of the input, I will not support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion to amend. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that my colleague is trying to improve the motion here, but I think that not having a cap on the rebate amount will encourage people to actually spend more money. There is no reason to encourage people to spend more money.

What will happen in this case is that people who have the financial means to spend

more will get more money back, and historically, that has meant men, when you look at who the big spenders are in the last two elections. Granted, there are always fewer women candidates, but the benefit would be primarily to those male candidates.

There is also a possibility that this motion will discourage people from fundraising, which I think is very unfortunate. I think that fundraising for campaigns is the cornerstone of connecting with the community and having people support your candidacy in a very tangible way so that they have, literally, a buy-in into having the candidate here as an MLA.

For the reasons that I don't agree, no cap with an unlimited rebate amount, and I am not sure that an unlimited amount will be particularly effective for women, I do not support this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion to amend. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To be honest, I appreciate what some are sharing as it relates to their concerns, but frankly, this report just came to us here today. We are moving motions on it today. I think that any Member has a right to move an amendment to a motion. That is part of our procedural process. By no means do I see the presenter of the motion trying to, in my view, undercut or undermine the committee's efforts.

I appreciate that, in fact, the mover is trying to make the motion better and allow for the cap to be a one-stage cap rather than a two-stage cap, but I have heard what was in the report. I have heard from the Member from Yellowknife Centre. I tend to agree that, if you look outside the City of Yellowknife and look into the other districts, if you go and look at Elections NWT's financial reports and see the budgets of others who have paid for elections in other jurisdictions, they tend to have a much lower budget than those who are in Yellowknife.

Those who are in Yellowknife probably are averaging somewhere between \$10,000 and \$20,000. There is a good chance that you have good resources to help you fund that to begin with, and \$3,000 would still be a very welcomed rebate. Outside of Yellowknife, there is a good chance that \$3,000 would, in fact, end up being about 50 percent. In some instances, it might end up being 100 percent of your campaign expenses.

I think that the motion was originally presented is well-meaning enough and would be welcomed. For that reason, I won't be supporting the amendment to the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the amendment to the motion. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will not be supporting the amendment. I think that the initial motion, which was arrived at after a good deal of discussion, is appropriate to our situation. I think that it is a good first step, again, arrived at after a great deal of discussion.

As has been mentioned by Ms. Green, there are some concerns that, should the amended motion pass, it could incentivize candidates to spend the maximum amount

and could favour candidates with the financial means to spend the most funds.

I think that we have taken the right step here. I think that the amendment is a bridge too far, so I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion to amend. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I saw the report for the first time today, and I was very happy to be sitting in the gallery listening to the Members as they read it in. I think, as the Members read in the report, that I got a sense of what they were trying to accomplish through the recommendations, and I support the recommendations that the committee had put forward.

I saw earlier today that there was going to be a motion to amend. I wanted to maintain an open mind as that motion came forward. It is before us now. I have been listening to the Members talk. Frankly, I listened closely to the Member's rationale as to why the motion to amend was necessary, but I feel that the honourable Member for YK Centre's rationale for why it shouldn't be supported was solid, on point, made sense, and I agree with what the Member suggested it was saying.

As a result, I will not be supporting the motion to amend, but I will be happy to support the motion as it was originally written and intended. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion to amend. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. This concept of election rebates was brought to the attention of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures in the context of the report from the Chief Electoral Officer in the last election. There was a presentation made by an individual who suggested that this was something that should be done here in the Northwest Territories. Committee, at that point, thought that it was not something that could be pursued easily, that it was a big change to our electoral system and something more in keeping with, perhaps, the way things are done in southern jurisdictions.

I did have a chance to sit in on the committee meeting where the draft report was discussed, and I was certainly persuaded that one of the biggest barriers for women getting into politics is the cost of running a campaign. I think that this may not be the best way to address the issue, but it's certainly, I think, a viable option and one that I certainly support.

I don't support the amendment that's been brought forward by the honourable Member for Kam Lake. I want to thank him, though, for bringing it forward because I think it's got some debate discussion. I don't agree with some of the comments that have been made about the motives behind this and so on, but I do believe it's an honest effort to make sure there's an informed discussion and debate around this issue. The research that I've seen prepared on this would indicate that, if there was no cap, this would tend to benefit, at least in the last two elections, candidates largely from Yellowknife. I don't think that that really accomplishes where the committee wants to go, and I don't think it really addresses the barrier by having no cap whatsoever. I will vote against the

amendment, but I will support the motion when we get to vote on it. Thanks Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion to amend. I will allow the mover of the motion to close debate. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that this is the first opportunity to speak to this report, this is the first opportunity to consider the amendments and, hearing the debate now, I seek unanimous consent to withdraw the motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to withdraw the motion. All opposed? Any opposed? I didn't hear anyone opposed. The motion is withdrawn.

---Unanimous consent granted

To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? Just for clarity, the motion to amend has been withdrawn. To the original motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 143-18(3):

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FINAL REPORT – POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly support the new NWT Polytechnic University to establish a leadership program designed to assist women to gain the skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles, including territorial, Indigenous, and municipal political positions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. There's a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We heard from women that they would like campaign schools, certainly, but also leadership training that goes beyond the specific skills that are offered in campaign training. We heard from women who had attended programs in Banff and in Nova Scotia who felt that they had been very useful, and so, providing more in-depth training on leadership seems like a good idea for women, and a good fit with the new polytechnic university. Thank you.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to again thank the committee for presenting this. This is great to see. I think that it could be considered by some to be a little bit presumptuous, however, that that polytechnic university is a given, but I think we need to remind ourselves that maybe that is not the case, but that certainly, I can see that most people here are going to probably support this here today because it makes sense. Notwithstanding that a polytechnic university could be 10 years away, that maybe there would be consideration, for sure, to have similar programming established sooner rather than later in the likes of Aurora College. That will be my comments. I will be in support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank MLA Vanthuyne for actually for bringing that point forward. You're right. The actual polytechnic university might take some years, but it's important to note that we're also building on the Aurora College, so it's not starting from scratch. Right now, the president is the president of Aurora College

When we were doing our travelling, when I was taking the new associate deputy minister of post-secondary renewal to the three campus communities, we met with Indigenous and municipal governments, and it was brought very clearly by Indigenous governments that they were interested in some kind of a leadership support to support them in governance of their own governments. I know that Municipal and Community Affairs provides that for municipal governments, but not so much for the Indigenous governments.

When we're doing this vision statement, we've been looking at strengths to the North. I think that Indigenous governments are a strength to the North. I think our population is a strength to the North. It makes sense for me to actually promote that we would have some form of leadership courses within the polytechnic university or Aurora College as it is now to start off. I am a huge supporter of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I support the motion. My concern is the polytechnic university. I mean, it's great that we're talking about Aurora College and MACA, but we should be enforcing that now. We should be looking at the college. We've heard the Minister talked about the Aboriginal governments looking for this type of leadership training and that, so I think that maybe moving forward, even though we're talking polytech, that we actually say, Aurora College and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs moving forward, that we can get this training out the door.

It's not just for territorial politics, but I think it's for boards and for municipal governments. Whether it's designated authorities, hamlets or tax-based communities. I would encourage the next body to look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be supporting it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate colleagues staying and spending this extra time debating this report on short notice. Thank you for your kind comments of support for the work that the committee did. I would like to thank my colleagues who were on the committee and those who dropped in. I would like to give a very special thank you to the staff who worked very hard. Our first meeting was November 28th, last year, and we've now produced two reports on our work, so that's really a testament to how hard they've worked to sew this issue up at this time. I'd also like to thank the people who came to the hearings and provided written submissions, as well. I am looking forward to the favourable results that some of my colleagues are predicting of being able to double the number of women sitting in this House very soon. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. I take those as closing comments. Does committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 17-18(3)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. This concludes our consideration of Committee Report 17-18(3). What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

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

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

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.