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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 10, 2020****Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Hon. Katrina Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Diane Thom, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Colleagues, staff, and friends, it is my duty to advise this House of the passing of Ms. Haylee Carlson, who passed away yesterday, February 9, 2020. Ms. Carlson has been an employee of the Legislative Assembly for more than 16 years, but more than that, she has been a friend to us. She became family to us. On behalf of the Assembly, I extend our condolences to her family and friends. Colleagues, please join me in a moment of silence.

---Moment of silence

Thank you, colleagues. Please be seated. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 7-19(2):
STUDENT AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
INITIATIVES**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to supporting and providing employment opportunities to northern students and graduates. As part of this commitment, the Department of Finance manages programs and initiatives aimed at creating employment opportunities for northern students and at helping to provide diverse work experiences for young people.

Part of the success of these programs depends on people knowing about them in order to access them. The Department of Finance wants to improve our communication about all available programs, and to set an example, I will spend a couple of moments highlighting the existing summer student and internship programs.

Our government's Summer Student Employment Program offers priority hiring to northern students between the months of April and August every year. Students pursuing post-secondary studies can

apply to this program for government summer work placements. Students can register for the Summer Student Employment Program through the GNWT Careers website beginning December 1st of every year. Last year, 351 students were hired by the GNWT throughout our territory, meaning that over half of the registered students received a summer placement. Beyond providing employment, the program also provides students with valuable, real-world work experience, which can enhance their employment prospects upon graduation.

Another program that provides meaningful opportunities for students is our internship program. The GNWT internship program allows departments to recruit post-secondary northern graduates into positions related to their field of study for up to two years. Interns gain valuable work experience and have the opportunity to apply their theoretical, practical, and academic knowledge within the context of the GNWT workforce.

Last year, the GNWT hired 34 interns, which was in line with the Department of Finance's funding availability. Departments may access the internship program without funding; however, these placements will be dependent on departmental budgets. This year, we are looking to increase the number of student interns. Recruitment efforts for 40 internship positions are underway within our departments. Intern pay varies and each position is evaluated based on the job duties and the knowledge and skills required for the position. An intern job description is developed as an entry-level position in that they are learning their role and gaining experience in their field. Once the intern has fully learned the role and gained the experience required, they are then qualified to take on the substantive role should a vacancy arise. This method of recruitment assists GNWT departments with succession planning and building the workforce of the future.

More information about these programs, including how to apply, can be found at gov.nt.ca/careers.

Mr. Speaker, the Summer Student Employment Program and the GNWT internship program are two important ways that our government supports northern youth and students. These programs provide opportunities for Northerners to be part of

our public service; expose students to the GNWT as an employer; and assist the next generations to develop knowledge, skills, and job experience that benefit our entire territory.

By providing northern students with exposure to what it is like to work for the GNWT, we are supporting Northerners with job opportunities and are doing our part to make sure that our public service reflects the people that it serves.

Making this statement to communicate available programs that provide employment opportunities for Northerners is a first step in an ongoing effort to provide Members of this House and the public with this important information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 8-19(2):
EDUCATION RENEWAL FIVE-YEAR
EVALUATION

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, education is vital to the success of our residents. Increasing student outcomes in the Northwest Territories to the same level as the rest of Canada is a priority for the 19th Legislative Assembly and one of the key objectives of the education renewal and innovation efforts underway in schools across the territory.

Last week, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment released its first five-year evaluation report on the education renewal and innovation framework and action plan, which is guiding systemic changes to the way we approach junior kindergarten to grade 12 education in the Northwest Territories.

This 10-year strategic initiative was launched in 2013 to address gaps in student achievement and increase accountability at all levels of the Northwest Territories education system. Student outcomes continue to be a central focus, with a number of ongoing programs and activities dedicated to improving student and teacher wellness, achieving educational equity for small communities, strengthening assessment and accountability, and improving the quality of education.

The evaluation, which reviewed the first five years of implementation, looked at broad outcomes for students across the Northwest Territories, as well as nine specific initiatives supporting ongoing education renewal.

Mr. Speaker, evaluators found encouraging results and early successes in a number of areas related to students' achievement, health, well-being, and engagement. They reported that a number of

programs, such as northern distance learning and child and youth care counsellors, are showing promising results with respect to achieving equitable education in small communities and providing necessary mental health and wellness supports. Similarly, there was a high level of satisfaction with the "Our Languages" curriculum, supporting Indigenous languages revitalization, and the residential schools awareness training being implemented by the department.

Mr. Speaker, though I am pleased to see positive results emerging from our education renewal and innovation efforts in the first five years of implementation, the fact is that education renewal is still a work in progress. I recognize more needs to be done to address remaining gaps in student achievement and outcomes, especially for our smaller communities and Indigenous students.

Key recommendations from the evaluation include prioritizing our education renewal and innovation commitments to make small communities a greater priority. This includes potentially revising our funding formula to increase supports for small schools and working more closely with Indigenous governments on initiatives that will support our students.

The evaluators also found areas for improvement within the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices initiative. While the program was found to be effective in improving the work-life balance and collaborative learning for teachers, it also created unexpected challenges for families and households. This is important and the department has already begun to make adjustments to the initiative to help mitigate these challenges and will be able to report on early results in the summative evaluation scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021.

Mr. Speaker, the evaluators' recommendations mirror many of those found in the recent audit by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, demonstrating that the department is both aware of and actively responding to known challenges within our education system.

We will be taking a new approach for measuring graduation rates to provide a more accurate snapshot of grade 12 graduates within a given year. We know our graduation rates need elevating, especially in the small communities, and improving how we measure and interpret this data will help us move forward.

The results of both the evaluation and audit will be essential in informing how we continue to work with education partners, families, leaders, and experts to improve experiences and outcomes for students in every community of the Northwest Territories. Our programs and activities will continue to be

assessed to adjust their approach for better student success.

Mr. Speaker, how we deliver quality education in the Northwest Territories is critical for ensuring the development of healthy, capable Northerners. It is not something we can do alone. Lasting change takes time, financial investment, continual planning and monitoring, and the long-term commitment of all of our partners. Support for Northwest Territories students must also come from strategic work on health and housing, connection to land and language, economic prosperity, and access to infrastructure. It is truly a shared responsibility, and I look forward to continuing to work with our families and partners to improve outcomes for students in all of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the Government of the Northwest Territories Affirmative Action Policy. This policy was implemented to ensure equal representation of Indigenous people in the government workforce.

An article in News North on February 4, 2020, indicated that the NWT Bureau of Statistics states that only 30 percent of the Government of the Northwest Territories workforce is Indigenous, while 59 percent non-Indigenous and 11 percent non-designated. At the senior management level, this number is even lower with only 20 percent having Indigenous ancestry. These numbers are not representative of the Indigenous population of the NWT, which stands at a little more than 50 percent.

Mr. Speaker, one of the common complaints from Indigenous leaders, leaders within the community, and long-term, non-Indigenous residents is that the affirmative action appears to be in name only and is not implemented as designed. Conversations at local levels also speak to this being an issue, and these conversations have been questioning this policy for many years now.

Mr. Speaker, considering the high number of non-Indigenous Government of the Northwest Territories employees as compared to Indigenous employees, it appears that the Affirmative Action Policy is not being followed or implemented as planned.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we ensure our government is representative of the people it serves, and that we are following the priority hiring when competitions are held.

Mr. Speaker, neutrality in the hiring process must be followed. Every citizen of the NWT should have access to a fair and equitable interview and hiring process. The way it is now, it is not what you know. It is who you know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just over a month away, Nunakput athletes will be gearing up to head to Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse, Yukon, from March 15 to 21, 2020. They are part of a delegation of 375 athletes representing our communities from across our great territory, representing the games.

Mr. Speaker, in 1970, the Arctic Winter Games started, growing across the circumpolar world in celebration of sports and culture, and in friendship. The games give children the opportunity to demonstrate their skills while learning good sportsmanship, inclusivity, and northern pride. There will be 21 sporting events under the headings of traditional supports, such as Arctic sports and dog mushing, Nordic sports, indoor sports, and ice sports.

This year, NWT will compete against eight other teams from Alaska, Northern Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, Nunavik, Russia, Greenland, Finland, and Norway. Together, more than 2,000 athletes, officials, supporters, volunteers, and cultural performers will gather in Whitehorse for the Arctic Winter Games and this celebration.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of all our athletes across our territory, but I am really proud of my athletes that are coming out of Nunakput for trying so hard to get to where they are at because of the travel to get to their sport. They will be participating in the games: James Keevik Jr., Joe Nosagaluak, Riland Keevik, Kobe Kikoak, Edward Pokiak, Mikayla Jacobson, Jasmine Gruben, Noel-Leigh Cockney, and Davy Kuptana.

Mr. Speaker, I want these young athletes to do the very best and let them know that Nunakput and our territory is behind them, rooting for them for next month to compete in Whitehorse. Also, I want to take a moment to thank Diane Nasogaluak and Gary Okheena for travelling with our youth as coach and managers.

Mr. Speaker, it is called "Bring It North," the official theme of this year's Arctic Winter Games. I have no doubt that Nunakput's young athletes are going to bring it in 2020. Mr. Speaker, they have got it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WOOD HEATING FOR PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I, myself, we remember the passing of our friend. We send prayers to the family and also her friends.

Mr. Speaker, living in the North can be very harsh, particularly in the winter months. Just recently, we experienced windchills up to minus 40. The majority of our people should have wood stoves. Almost every single house should have a wood stove, at the very least as a backup heat source. Thinking of a minus-45 cold snap combined with a six-hour power outage, you do not have to imagine it [translation ends] to buy or install a wood stove, but we can ensure that our substantial stock of single-family housing units are equipped with wood stoves. This is not only for the safety of our tenants but also to protect our investment since the government owns these units.

Mr. Speaker, it is not acceptable that this is currently not the case in the Northwest Territories, in our climate, minus 45, minus 50. We need to be proactive instead of being reactive, prevent cold-weather emergencies and support self-sufficiency and resilience for the renters of our social housing. I will have questions for the appropriate Minister at the appropriate time. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SECURITY CLIENT BANKING ISSUES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. ECE provides much-needed service through the Income Security Program. The program is helping people to make choices that are right for them. There are many people falling through the cracks when it comes to banking and related information-gathering, such as bank statements. In the small communities, people do not have access to banks to get the required bank statements in order to access income security. This has put unnecessary stress on the clients as they may have lost bank cards or forgotten bank card passwords or just do not know how to get a bank statement as there is no bank in the community. People are afraid they will fall behind in rent payments or utility payments

and find themselves being evicted and face a homelessness situation.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the ECE Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RCMP HOUSING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased that the RCMP will have 45 new housing units available to them within the next year. The service the RCMP members provide is invaluable to communities and the residents they serve here in the Northwest Territories, and as such, I am pleased with the initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation is set to supply the RCMP with these new housing units throughout the NWT. These units will go primarily into market communities where there are established real estate developers. Some of these developers have expressed concerns as to why the NWT Housing Corporation is encroaching into the private sector supply of market housing and not providing them an opportunity to supply the units.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation indicated that the construction of these new RCMP units is not to impact the current housing programs and not to impact the public-housing stock or wait list. However, for Hay River, where RCMP are receiving 12 units, this will require the demolition of several public-housing units.

Mr. Speaker, how is this not impacting the public-housing stock when the land is being re-profiled for use by non-public-housing tenants? This eliminates the land available for future public-housing use. The NWT Housing Corporation has stated on many occasions that they would like to see current tenants own their own home. Now they have their chance to make that happen. Instead of demolishing the existing units, units should be first made available at reasonable cost to tenants who may be in a financial position to own and maintain a home.

Mr. Speaker, turning to the construction of the units, it is my understanding that the RCMP units will be put out to tender shortly. What I am expecting and what I will hold the NWT Housing Corporation accountable to is that all the units will be built in the North by northern contractors and workers. It is not in our best interest as a government to bring in modular homes from southern Canada as all that does is bleed money out of the North and provides no benefit to our businesses, suppliers, and

workers. With this project, we have an opportunity to put our businesses and people to work while providing much-needed training. Let's do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We have in this room today the largest number of women ever elected to the NWT Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

The election of nine women in October was the result of hard work by current and former Members of this House and many others. The question now, and it is not too early to ask this, is: how do we maintain the equality of political representation we have now achieved?

Mr. Speaker, by way of background, I am going to recap some milestones in the 18th Assembly that got us here. First, Members made correcting the underrepresentation of women a mandate priority, and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, now the Premier, and I took every opportunity to raise this issue. Second, all Members unanimously supported a motion to increase women's representation with specific targets. Third, the Speaker got on board by tabling a paper in June 2018 about a potential solution: guaranteed seats for women. Next, a special committee, with me as chair, visited 10 communities to talk about guaranteed seats and to find out what barriers prevent women from running to become MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, we gathered a tremendous amount of useful information from the people who attended our hearings. We distilled their ideas for policy changes into seven recommendations in our interim report that were adopted unanimously. These were simple but important changes, such as creating a parental leave provision, making childcare an allowable expense for MLAs, and creating a space in this building for parents to be with their young children. The committee didn't find much support for guaranteed seats, yet it got the conversation started.

Mr. Speaker, another reason for our success in electing so many women is because of training and education efforts. The Premier and I attended campaign schools throughout the NWT in the 18th Assembly. I offered a series of workshops last spring, attended by all the women who were elected in Yellowknife. There were also private

mentoring efforts and the launch of a new campaign school curriculum.

I am thrilled that this change took place so quickly and so decisively, but we can't rest. We need to continue educating women to develop the skills and confidence to take part in public life. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The North loves its monopolies, whether it be Northmart, Northwestel, Northland Utilities, or today's topic of my statement, Northview Apartment Real Estate Investment Trust.

Mr. Speaker, our residential tenancy system, by design, is a neutral arbitrator of individual disputes and, as such, is not empowered to address larger systemic issues and abuses by landlords. We have seen this recently in Northview's illegal collecting of pet deposits, yet this is not a one-off issue, Mr. Speaker. There is no shortage of human rights or residential tenancies' complaints that point to larger systemic negligence on the part of Northview Apartment REIT.

Northview is the North's largest private landlord, with a near-monopoly on rental apartments in both Yellowknife and Inuvik. Northview is an unincorporated, open-end real estate investment trust, a corporate entity which, by design, treats real estate as an investment first and foremost, and pleasing its shareholders above treating those houses as people's homes.

The company has a portfolio of over 24,000 residential suites in over 60 markets across Canada. It was formed in 2015 following a merger of Northern Property REIT, True North Apartment REIT, and a number of privately held residential properties. Prior to that merger, the Competition Bureau conducted an investigation and issued a no-action letter, Mr. Speaker. I, myself, have filed a complaint in regard to Northview's monopolistic practice, but found no traction in the federal legislation. It falls on us in this House to ensure we have adequate legislative powers to address this.

Mr. Speaker, it is our role here as a government to ensure there is fair and adequate competition in our territory. A dominant landlord reinvesting rent collected in the North into properties located in the South has a significant impact on the people living

in a territory with one of the highest costs of living in the country. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the high cost of construction in the North limits the building of any new rentals. This means that a competitor emerging is not going to happen.

Yellowknife and Inuvik have significant income inequality, with a large section of the population living below the poverty line. Given these factors, there is an increased necessity to avoid market domination in the North. The solution to this issue is complicated. It requires competition to emerge in the market. Mr. Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, the solution to dominant market share is complicated. It requires competition to emerge in the market, it requires punishment for consistent violations of our legislation, and it requires our Housing Corporation to increase its housing supply. Today, I will have questions for the Minister of Justice to begin the discussion of how to address Northview's dominant market share in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANTUNG AND MACTUNG

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. A number of Ministers recently returned from another Roundup mining conference in Vancouver, so I am hoping they were able to unload the Mactung property, which this government bought in 2015.

Just how did we get here? North American Tungsten, the owner and operator of the former Cantung Mine, went into creditor protection on June 9, 2015. Somehow, the federal government let that company put up the Mactung property as part of its financial security for its water licence. When our government inherited the management of the Cantung site under devolution, nothing was done to change that arrangement, even though the GNWT had total discretion over the form of security that was held. So much for polluter pays and the devolution promise of responsible resource development.

As part of the creditor protection proceeding, Cabinet ended up purchasing Mactung for \$2.5 million with a special warrant that bypassed the Legislative Assembly. That way, we could hand Cantung back to the federal government for remediation. When we acquired the Mactung property, a lot of junk and hazardous materials had been left at the site, even though I was told that

there was nothing there. A non-compliance letter was written by the Yukon government to GNWT about Mactung on February 4, 2016. I kept pressing Ministers to have an assessment done of the site. That was done, finally, but the report has not been released publicly. GNWT paid about \$126,000 to do a partial clean-up at the site in the summer of 2018.

Two reports on the Mactung deposit and surrounding area were prepared for about \$30,000, taxpayers' money, and released in January 2018. The previous Minister promised to share that marketing plan with the standing committee, but that didn't happen.

In December 2018, a Vancouver consultant was paid about \$16,000 to submit an application for a Class 4 Mining Land Use Permit to the Yukon government for 10 years of exploration "as part of a means of increasing the appeal of the Mactung property to prospective buyers." This was clearly an effort to hype the value of the property. A decision to proceed with the permit was made on November 19th of last year, with numerous terms and conditions.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment as to whether we finally sold the Mactung property. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HONOURING HAYLEE CARLSON

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I was lucky to grow up in the North. The North has a way of wrapping itself around the people who call it home, embracing people, land, and culture. Regardless of whether people plant their feet for a year, ten, or a lifetime, their roots are bound to this place and, more importantly, its people. In the North, bonds extend beyond traditional friendships because, here, we don't make friends; we make family.

Yesterday, the North lost a member of its family, Haylee Carlson. As children, we shared dance classes. I was drawn to Haylee's enviable vibrant confidence; as a photographer, to her smile that started in her eyes; and, as a public servant here in the Legislative Assembly, I was impressed by her professionalism, unwavering ability to always stay two steps ahead, and as the glue that holds this branch of government together. Haylee was assertive, confident, and motivated. She was fiercely independent and fiercely loved.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, I met a man who told me he was going to die, and that made him one of the lucky ones. He explained that, of all the eggs in

the world, he made it to a viable pregnancy and, of everything that could go wrong in pregnancy, he was born. After his birth, his mother was told he had a degenerative disease and wasn't expected to live past the age of eight. On the day we met, we were the same age and both parents of young children.

He beat the odds given to his mother on his birthday, but every day he knew that life may take a devastating turn; but he lived. He learned to ride a bike, graduate high school, started a business, got married, and welcomed two children. Despite the uncertainty, he lived, and every day we are here makes us the lucky ones.

Mr. Speaker, Haylee left behind a beautiful daughter, Shanli, who she shares with her husband Mike; an incredible memory bank shared with her sisters, family, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues; and, for the 19th Legislative Assembly, a well-trained clerks' office.

Haylee also left us with a painful reminder that we don't live forever. We all die, and our time here is not infinite, not for any of us. We don't know how long we have, and it is not within our control, but what we can control is what we choose to do with our time and the legacy we choose to leave behind. Haylee left us a great legacy, and we are the lucky ones.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Premier.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Miss Nadine Yousif, who is with Maclean's magazine and is up here doing an interview on women in politics. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome two Pages from the community of Kakisa to the Assembly, Raine Simba and Kaedyn Simba. They are accompanied by their mother, Jennifer Simba. I am not sure if she is in the House. I can't see them, but I would like to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome our two pages from Inuvik, Pearl Gillis and Tyra Bain. Welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] We have interpreters here for the Tli Cho language. Mary Rose Sundberg is here. I would like to thank her. When we have meetings, we have interpreters, and we also had Harriet Paul as a Tli Cho interpreter, but her mother has passed, so that is why she is not here today. We send prayers to the family. Masi. [Translation ends]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 32-19(2): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, what efforts are being made to ensure those listed in the priority hiring are receiving appropriate access to interviews and employment in the Government of the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Affirmative Action Policy is one tool that the Government of the Northwest Territories uses to ensure that we have a representative workforce, and in so doing, in addition to having that policy and having that in place for all hiring across the Northwest Territories, there are efforts made in the course of the careers recruitment process to provide assistance. There is a help section within the website and within the department that could assist individuals in terms of resume writing and can assist them with interview preparation. In addition to that, there are officers within the department of human resources that can assist with maintaining and following the Affirmative Action Policy to see that it is, in fact, working as hard as it can.

It is but one policy, Mr. Speaker, and we do recognize that recruitment to the service of the Northwest Territories is going to be one that requires us to look across all of our departments to make sure that we are providing supports and assistance to the people of the Northwest Territories so that they are ready and able to apply

to the positions as they become available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Who is involved in the appeal process when priority candidates are unsuccessful at obtaining employment?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Candidates who apply and who are eligible for an appeal, which is individuals who identify themselves as being candidates, would be potentially able to appeal. Those processes are reviewed by independent staffing officers. Independent staffing officers, there is a regulation that applies in terms of identifying who those individuals are. They have to meet a certain set of criteria including the fact that they are outside of the service of the GNWT, and those are the individuals who would review those appeals.

MS. MARTSELOS: The Affirmative Action Policy states that all departments and agencies within the public service will plan and implement affirmative action measures. Senior management made a statement to Regular MLAs that there have never been an evaluation of the Affirmative Action Policy. What action is the government going to take to evaluate the Affirmative Action Policy?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Many, many years ago, there were some reviews of the Affirmative Action Policy but it has certainly not been any time within recent memory. I can confirm, Mr. Speaker, I have already requested and received a briefing on specifically the issue of the Affirmative Action Policy from the department. It, certainly, is on the radar, if I might say so in that way, that it is something the department is alive to, and that there may be a need to modernize that policy. For the moment, the next step would simply be to do that work within the department, and to bring it to Cabinet to see that it does see action within the next Assembly, if considered appropriate.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories, policy 14.03 pertaining to the Affirmative Action Policy states, "The Government of the Northwest Territories will give preference in employing, training, and promoting qualified suitable and eligible target group persons." What has the government done to train and promote these target group persons?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of programs existing already within the Department of Finance and specifically within the human resources department that are meant to address exactly the challenge that I am hearing. For example, the Indigenous Career Gateway Program is an opportunity for Indigenous

candidates to be given training in order to assume positions within the GNWT. Regional Recruitment Program is another opportunity that is meant to link opportunities that come available within regions and to identify when there is an opportunity that requires some training in order to help a person become eligible for that position. Indigenous Management Development and Training Program, that is an opportunity for individuals already within the GNWT's public service to see that they have appropriate skills and training so that they can continue to advance their careers within the GNWT.

There, certainly, are a few programs within the Government of the Northwest Territories, and as I mentioned earlier today in my own Minister's statement that there is a recognition that, perhaps, more efforts can and should be made to ensure that those programs are well communicated to the public, to our staff, and to all Members of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 33-19(2):
CAMPAIGN SCHOOL FOR WOMEN

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. As I mentioned in my statement, women found the campaign schools helpful in preparing them to run and win in the last territorial election. My question for the Minister is whether she is a supporter of the campaign schools for women? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I am in support of offering the training for the women across the Northwest Territories. Empowering and encouraging women to participate fully in public office is essential to ensuring that government reflects the societies they represent. The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that women face many challenges when considering to run for office. Our government remains committed to ensuring that women's voices are heard at all levels. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. My next question for the Minister is: when will the campaign schools resume, and who will be offering them?

HON. DIANE THOM: A facilities workshop is scheduled to be held here in Yellowknife March 10th and 11th. The purpose of this workshop is to teach women from across the Northwest Territories how

to teach the Campaign School for Women. By increasing the number of trained facilitators who can provide this training, more workshops can be delivered and the content can focus on more specific regional community concerns. A call for expression was advertised, inviting potential facilitators to submit their names to take part in the facilitators' workshop. Up to 15 regional community participants will be selected. Once this workshop is complete, the Women's Advisory Office will work with the trained facilitators to schedule workshops to be held in all the regions in this calendar year.

MS. GREEN: Lots of good news in that answer. My understanding is that there will be wide-spread campaign schools and they will be offered by local people. One of the things that I was told, and the Premier was told when we were offering campaign schools, is that it was useful to have people who were in elected office be part of the teaching group so that there was the "see it, be it" dynamic there, that people could meet actual politicians doing the job. Is there any provision for this kind of "see it, be it" dynamic to continue in the campaign schools?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes. We have the special advisor of the Women's Advisory Office, and we will work with the communities that are interested in hosting workshops.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the special advisor for the Status of Women does some great work in the Northwest Territories, but I was thinking about ways in which to involve women who are currently in leadership and political life in the workshops. Is it possible to find a way to involve these women in the campaign schools? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: Absolutely; that is the intent. I also would like to add that the Women's Advisory Office will be scheduling workshops in the communities where campaign school workshops have not been held. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 34-19(2):

INCOME SECURITY CLIENT BANKING ISSUES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are related to the Income Security Program and the shortfalls of client banking in the small communities. I believe that it is the Income Security workers who advise clients to open bank accounts. The onus is now on clients to produce bank statements. Can the Minister advise if the

Income Security employees are advising clients to open bank accounts? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that it is advisable to have a bank account. It is easier to keep track of your money; direct deposits can make their way into that bank account sooner. There is also the option to cut a cheque at the Income Assistance office, so it is not an absolute necessity to have a bank account. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: From what I understand and what I have been approached by, they are required to have a bank account because part of the process to get Income Security is the Income Security employee needs the bank statement. That is what I understand of that program, and that is what is stressing out many of the clients, especially the ones who aren't working. There are some of the seniors who are involved in that, too, and they are not meeting their obligations to pay their rent. That is why I asked that, because I understand that they are being sent away from the Income Security office to go get someone else to help them print those bank statements. That would be my next question to the Minister, is if their employees are required, if they are opening the bank accounts, to assist with inquiring and printing bank statements for the clients.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: There have been some staffing issues in Fort Providence, and there hasn't been someone there, permanently, every single day for quite a while. I am happy to announce that, on January 27th, that position was permanently staffed. A lot of those issues that the residents have been facing are going to be cleared up. This person has previous experience as a client service officer, so the client service officer can help clients access their banking information. There is office equipment, phones, faxes, and computers at the office that they can use. There should be no reason that they are being sent away.

That being said, the Member has brought these concerns to me, and so I am going to dig deeper. I can look into this and get back to the Member with more specifics.

MR. BONNETROUGE: It seems like, with the Income Security Program, there is always one problem after another. Since the inception of the program, there are changes here, changes there. The headquarters office doesn't know what the regional or the small community offices are doing. I would really recommend that they have an overall review of the program to make sure we have all our Ts crossed and our Is dotted so that the program is

uniform and runs smoothly, as is happening with all the other programs. That is just a comment.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we have done with Income Security is take a continuous improvement approach. I was a Regular Member for four years, and I am still an MLA. I do get concerns from constituents about Income Assistance, but the vast majority of times, things go off without a hitch; there aren't problems. There are going to be hiccups in any system like this, but we are committed to continuously looking at each case, learning from it, and improving our system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Deh Cho. Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 35-19(2):
ENFORCEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
LEGISLATION

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice. Has the GNWT ever laid a charge under its Residential Tenancies Act?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Justice.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have once -- once -- to my knowledge laid a charge, back in 2001.

MR. JOHNSON: That one charge, I believe, points to the larger systemic issue that it is not worth pursuing a prosecution under our Residential Tenancies Act, as presently the maximum fine available to a corporation is \$25,000. I talked about Northview earlier today; \$25,000 is not even a rounding error on a multi-million-dollar corporation. My question for the Minister of Justice is: is the \$25,000 fine for corporations under our Residential Tenancies Act consistent with best practices?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The maximum fine of \$25,000 is actually among the highest in all of the country. To my knowledge, there are only two provinces or territories that have significantly higher fines, and a third, namely Quebec, that has a fine set at \$29,000. We are in line with what is happening in other jurisdictions.

MR. JOHNSON: One of the issues with fines is that, in a residential tenancies dispute between a landlord and a tenant, the fine then goes to the GNWT, which doesn't necessarily resolve the issue. Under more recent legislation in the Northwest Territories, we have provided territorial judges with

a suite of remedial powers, such as orders that would allow some of that money to then go to the tenant in the dispute. Is it best practice to provide our territorial judges with remedial powers under the Residential Tenancies Act?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The powers under the Residential Tenancies Act were recently transferred from being restricted to the Territorial Court to Supreme Court, which certainly did increase the suite of options available to judges and improve the options in terms of their enforceability. The Residential Tenancies Act is aimed at essentially settling disputes between individuals who have civil disputes. Certainly, the suggestion that there should be powers more akin to criminal law powers is not going to be appropriate or even possible within the jurisdiction of the act. To that extent, in my view, it is already doing what it can to provide options for tenants to take action and to enforce their orders and to do so within the powers that are available within our court services.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have found ourselves in a situation where, in only ever laying one charge, even if it is aligned with other jurisdictions, the North does not have any tools to address such systemic abuses. My question is on a larger scale. Does the Department of Justice regularly review the various offences and penalties sections across NWT legislation to assure they are consistent with what other jurisdictions are doing and best practices? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: There is not a set program in place to review every single set of regulatory enforcement penalties that are available under every single piece of legislation. That certainly is something that is done when individual items of legislation or regulations are up for review, which is indeed when the Residential Tenancies Act itself sought itself to receive an update in terms of the fine provisions that are included therein. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 36-19(2):
INDIGENOUS CAREER GATEWAY PROGRAM

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Minister of Finance has brought up the Indigenous Career Gateway Program, I just have a couple of questions. Can the Minister provide us with the number of people they have hired through this program per year since this program was started? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a fairly new program. I believe that is the first year, and, if I am wrong, I will commit to correcting that. In 2018-2019, in that fiscal year, there were 12 department applications, and in 2019-2020, there were seven. In total at the moment, there are 19 positions that are going through that Indigenous Career Gateway Program. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Can the Minister tell me where these positions were located?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In 2018-2019, there were seven in Yellowknife, one in Fort Smith, one in Behchoko, and three in Inuvik. For 2019-2020, there were an additional two to Yellowknife, three to Inuvik, one to Behchoko, and one to Hay River.

MS. SEMMLER: Was the money that was allocated for these positions utilized annually?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: It is part of an annual budgeting process where there are \$40,000 in total available through the Department of Finance to departments that they seek to avail themselves of the program, to a maximum of 15 positions per year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to my calculations, no, it has not been utilized. Will the Minister commit to ensuring that her department does more training with managers and supervisors about this program, focusing especially in the regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I appreciate that this shows people are listening to a Minister's statement. I acknowledge certainly, and I believe the department acknowledges, that we can and should, must, do a better job of getting word out on the programs that we have. There are good programs in the GNWT to support the development of our staffing and the development of a representative workforce. This is a good program, and it is one that the Member has pointed out rightfully is perhaps being underutilized. There is more space to utilize it. So, as I have said earlier today, we are committing to improving our communications. We are improving getting the word out, and I can certainly ensure that I get back and respond more fulsomely to the House or to the Member with respect to what is being done at a management level to ensure that our managers are aware of these programs, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 37-19(2):
PROVISION OF RCMP HOUSING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Private business is very important to the North, and it is very important that we support this sector. The question I have for the Minister of housing is: why would your department not provide the private sector an opportunity to provide the units for use by the RCMP, and would you reconsider reviewing this decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your question. All new units required by the RCMP are to be constructed in accordance with the GNWT public recruitment policies that will ensure that the northern proponent will have the opportunity to express their interest in understanding the construction of these units. In terms of maintenance and administration of the units, the RCMP have chosen the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to carry that over. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: It is no secret that there exists a long waiting list with individuals and families waiting to access public housing. How, then, do you explain demolishing existing stock and using the land for units that are not for public-housing use? It will be lands that are lost for this use.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comment. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation capital planning process includes the disposal of NWT Housing Corporation-owned units that are beyond economic repair or to free up the land for future construction. The disposal of the surplus housing units supports community-based planning to help make the land available for construction of the housing units to support community governments in dealing with properties in the community. The Housing Corporation continues to explore opportunities to support projects that hire local people to gain employment and training while demolishing the public buildings.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I am not certain of the condition those units are in. I did drive by, and they appear pretty fine to me, probably better than what I am living in. Was there ever any consideration to make these existing units available to housing

clients who would be in a financial position to purchase them for a nominal fee?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. I want to answer this clearly. We do have units that we are demolishing. It frees up the land either for the community or for the members or for our clients, and just going forward, we do look at the surplus that we do have. If we do have some units that we are able to repair, then we do consult with the community members first and if communities have interest, if they would be interested in taking over the units. If the conditions are beyond repair, we end up demolishing the properties, and we do end up rebuilding either under the home-ownership program or else the public-housing units. Thank you, Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the construction of these units, as I said before, our northern local contractors need work, our residents need work, and our northern suppliers need work. Will the Minister of Housing assure us that these units will be built in the North by northern contractors with northern employees and not be supplied by southern contractors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your statement. Ninety-five percent of the northern contracts that are distributed through the Housing Corporation are northern contractors here in the Northwest Territories. I wanted to just express that we have six units that are going up in Fort Smith, RCMP units; three in Norman Wells; 17 in Inuvik; seven in Fort Simpson; and two in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 38-19(2):
CANTUNG AND MACTUNG

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today, I reviewed the history of our government's acquisition and management of the Mactung property. We accepted it as financial security against the shaky Cantung Mine and have spent money cleaning up the site and compiling reports in the hope of finally selling it. Can the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment tell us, after five years of owning the Mactung property, whether we have sold it, and if not, why? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mactung property has not been sold yet, as we are currently in the middle of a sales process. Our goal is to find a private-sector owner for both the Mactung property and the Cantung Mine as soon as possible. Our strategy is to market Cantung and Mactung together with the Government of Canada, and we believe this is the right approach. We will continue moving forward with this strategy during 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. It is not clear to me why these two properties are being marketed together. They are 140 kilometres apart; that is by air. If you try to drive from one site to the other, it is 700 kilometres. Can the Minister explain why we are marketing these properties together?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Selling the Mactung deposit together with the Cantung Mine allows prospective buyers to evaluate and propose a more comprehensive tungsten business plan that could possibly include economically feasible mining operations, remediation, as well as exploration. This approach is more attractive to responsible developers and increases the potential viability of renewed tungsten mining operations in the Northwest Territories. Our priority is to identify and establish an experienced proponent whose proposed business model will maximize benefits to Northwest Territories residents and businesses.

I am happy to update the Member that we have completed a request for qualifications process to shortlist suitable proponents, and we are now defining the terms for the request for proposals to send to the shortlisted candidates. We are actively engaging with Indigenous governments and organizations in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories throughout this process.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. This property has been on sale for at least six months and nothing has really happened. I want to ask the Minister about the terms of sale for it because they are certainly not very clear. Can the Minister tell us what, if any, liabilities does a purchaser assume and what liabilities, if any, stay with this government?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: One of the key goals when designing the request for proposals and negotiating with the preferred proponent will be minimizing the liabilities retained by the federal and territorial governments. The way that it is structured will be defined in the request for proposals. I will be happy, like I said, to update the Members when it is developed. I can only speak to Mactung as the Government of the Northwest Territories will be

seeking a proponent that will assume all the current authorizations and the Mactung site in its entirety.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that and her words about minimizing liabilities. In fact, that is what this government should be doing all along, but that doesn't seem to be the case. It remains to be seen whether we can actually ever sell the Mactung property and recover our costs. I would like the Minister, though, to explain what lessons, if any, this government has learned from the Mactung property acquisition and possible sale. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: I would agree with the Member that this government should be looking for efficiencies wherever possible. I would like to say that we have affirmed that there remains interest in our Northwest Territories tungsten resources in today's minerals industry. I would like to say that we have demonstrated that, through partnership, we can turn a tough situation around and set the stage for development with a responsible, collaborative, and local benefits-focused approach.

Mactung is a world-class tungsten deposit. Our involvement ensures that its development potential is recognized and remains secure. Our active involvement in the sales process helps to ensure that the right buyer will be found and that the potential of this property to create benefits for Northerners is realized. We also recognize that there is international attention on critical and strategic metals sourcing that strengthens the interests in our Northwest Territories tungsten assets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 39-19(2):
CHANGE IN AURORA COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There still seem to be many questions on the minds of Northerners, including my constituents and the students of Aurora College. Would the Premier please clarify how she was able to dismiss the president of Aurora College without having a statutory authority to do so laid out in the Aurora College Act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a difference between the

appointing of statutory appointments and employment contracts; totally different. There are actually a number of statutory appointments across the Government of the Northwest Territories. The appointment process appoints the individual to a position in the public service; statutory appointments are made by the Minister and assigns responsibility under the legislation. In some cases, a position may have more than one statutory appointment. For example, the territory executive director, who is not hired by the Minister, for Child and Family Services, in addition to their employment contract, is conferred through appointment by the Minister of Health and Social Services. The statutory appointment of director, Child and Family Services, is under the Child and Family Services Act and the director of adoptions under the Adoptions Act, so that Minister appoints the statutory positions but is not responsible for hiring.

While the associate deputy minister may be statutory-appointed to the position of a president under the Aurora College Act, the employment relationship of deputy ministers and associate deputy ministers is clearly with me as the Premier, and it remains in my sole purview to terminate the employment of an associate deputy minister across departments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Can the Premier clarify if proper written notice has been provided to the former ADM under the Aurora College Act?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I need clarification. Was the appropriate notice given to the associate deputy minister? Is that the question?

MS. CLEVELAND: Sorry, can the Premier please repeat her question?

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does that mean I am open to ask the MLA questions?

What I was asking for was clarification. My understanding, correct me if I am wrong, was that the question was: did the Premier give appropriate notice for termination to the associate deputy minister? If that is the question, then appropriate notice depends on situations, and that is in various acts. If somebody is giving you, for example, termination that I am going to leave my employment, it is customary to give two weeks' notice. If somebody is terminated from a position, the custom is you don't have to give notice within that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 40-19(2):
PROVISION OF RCMP HOUSING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the housing Minister today. The federal monies for those new units across the territory, for the 17 units in Inuvik, is that federal monies, or are they taken out of our housing authority funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your question. Yes, that will be federal money that will be spent on the RCMP units. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: The federal government, I guess they are really lucky to have that kind of funding to put 17 new units in one community. I support the RCMP 150 percent. I know that their units in Inuvik are in bad shape. For local businesses in Inuvik that are providing that service, for plumbing, all the necessities to fix the unit, now under the local housing authority are they going to be taking over their jobs and putting more out there to give them more units to watch over, those extra 17 units? Are they going to keep the local contractors, the plumbers, and everybody at work? Because if you are taking 17 units, that is a lot of money that could be in local businesses and not into the government coffers.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comment. The federal government was interested in working with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation in order to deliver their units. In looking at the maintenance, as well, we will be going forward and looking at the amount of workload that this is going to burden the local housing authorities and looking at opportunities going forward. Thank you, Member, for your question.

MR. JACOBSON: I guess that wouldn't affect our local housing stock in our communities? For Inuvik, are they going to be taking down 17 units in the community, or is that just federal monies and they will have new units?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your question. This will not burden our current budget that we are forecasting going forward. The units are federally funded units, and they are not funded by the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is not what I asked, but okay. Today, I would like to say in my riding I have 30-year-old Webber units. You see people taking pictures in their units of snow coming in in the doors and the windows and stuff like that and just outdated. We need new funding to repair those units, to local LHOs. I think that next time she is meeting with the housing Minister, I guess, Mr. Speaker, she needs to bring up local communities that are affected up North. If they are so quick to give money, the federal government, they should be giving us more money to fix our units in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. I am mindful that there are drastic housing scenarios within your region, and I am committed to going into your region in the summer. I do want to look at these units. However, going forward, there are housing programs that we have to offer to the clients who are living in these conditions. I am willing to work with them going forward and also contacting our local housing authorities, working with our district offices to make sure that they outreach to the clients who are in need of home repair. Thank you, Member, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 41-19(2):
CHANGE IN AURORA COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to follow up on the question from the Kam Lake Member. Mr. Speaker, it is troubling that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment played no role in the recent Aurora College president dismissal and that, in fact, he was not consulted. The Minister admitted publicly. There is a lot of confusion on this side of the House and from the public, and the public wants answers.

Mr. Speaker, this raises concerns regarding the legal propriety of the president's termination. I would like to refer back to the Aurora College Act, which has authority over the hiring and firing of the president exclusively with the Minister responsible for the college and not the Premier, section 19 of the act. Mr. Speaker, the first question I have is: we have so many acts here in the Northwest Territories passed in this House by Members of the Legislative Assembly. One of them happens to be the Aurora College Act. Mr. Speaker, once these acts are passed in the House, doesn't it become law that we follow as the Government of the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to offer to maybe sit with the Member after and look at the interpretation because my interpretation of the Aurora College Act does not say that the Minister is responsible for hiring and firing. My interpretation of the Aurora College Act says that the Minister is responsible for "appointing" a president, different terminology. It does not say "firing," at all, or "terminating."

As I stated earlier, there are many positions. The employment contract of an associate deputy minister or a deputy minister remain with the Premier. There are many departments across that actually will appoint statutory appointments that are not responsible for the employment contract. No Minister that I know of, except for hiring their secretaries or their special advisors, they do not hire employees into the public service. However, once people are hired into the public service, that Minister may appoint people that are in the public service to statutory positions. Again, that Minister is not responsible for the employment contract. The employment contract is under the department's perusal within that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LAFFERTY: In my eyes, this is a law that we follow in this House and also out of this House, as government. Section 19.1 of the Aurora College Act: "The Minister shall, in consultation with the board, appoint a president of Aurora College." So, when a former Minister appointed the president, there was no call to the board. Was that legit? But that is another discussion, another topic of the day because we are beyond that. With this act, it clearly states that the Minister responsible shall appoint with consultation for the board. I just want to make the process clear. Why did the Premier overstep her authority by dismissing the president of Aurora College when it is, in fact, the law it is Minister's job, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to do so?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, I think it might be a communications issue. At no time have I broken the law. In fact, we have had more legal opinions on this than not. The Premier is responsible for hiring and terminating associate deputy ministers and deputy ministers. Appointments to positions are not contingent on the Minister having to hire or terminate. There are many statutory positions that the Minister is not responsible for hiring. In fact, very few positions can a Minister hire for. We are blending in two things that should not be blended.

MR. LAFFERTY: Just going forward with the process itself, if the Premier of the day can overstep the decision of the education Minister,

what is stopping her from doing so with other departments, other statutes that are before us? Again, I have to remind this House that we are dealing with the law that we passed in this House with sitting Legislative Assembly Members. This is a very critical issue that we have to be clear for the public. I am still confused with the process because there is a Minister here, and the Premier makes a decision over top of the Minister responsible for Aurora College to deliver those under her act.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, I have not broken the law. There is a clear separation between employment contracts and statutory appointments. The Minister did say in this House and publicly, that there were discussions, and there were discussions. The decision of how that came about, the Minister was not part of; that was mine, but there were discussions. Nothing was done in isolation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. There might have been a discussion, but the decision to overrule the Minister's authority is in question in this House. Section 19.1, "Minister shall, in consultation with the board, appoint the president of Aurora College." Clearly, it lays out, Mr. Speaker, and here, we have a Premier that came down to say, "I don't like this. We are going to change this." There are other statutes, other committees, other organizations, departments that are in a similar boat. Are we going to go to allow the Premier to call the shots at the end of the day to say if she likes it or not? The Ministers are given authority to appoint or dismiss.

Mr. Speaker, I am still confused with the whole process, and I am not happy with what happened, the process itself, if I were given authority to the Ministers, six Ministers, to operate their department according to the act that we have in place. That doesn't seem to be the case. I am kind of worried and concerned in that area. With that, Mr. Speaker, I just want to lay it out because the public needs to know the process itself. Masi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, discussions were had. This wasn't made on my own. It was a decision that I made. I hire. I terminate. That is done on my authority, but there is consultation that happened within that. I must also point out when people are appointed into positions such as boards, presidents, et cetera, that the Minister doesn't hire for but appoints, the Minister also has a time after that. There is usually a 60-day period that you can actually revoke those board appointments or presidents, et cetera. The termination of an employee or board member, et cetera, does not necessarily mean that you have to

wait until they are revoked from their position as a board member. If that was the case, we would have board members throughout the Northwest Territories that would actually be having to get honorariums, paycheques, after their termination. The termination is separate than the appointment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 42-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION SUPPORT FOR SOARING
EAGLE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. Currently, the NWT Housing Corporation has \$43 million sitting in investment earning 1.5 to 2.5 percent. This is from their audit last year. They show a surplus of \$26 million. I am going to ask the Minister, and I know she will say "yes" to this. Will the Minister commit to providing the Soaring Eagles Friendship Centre with financial support to develop a comprehensive proposal to establish a men's shelter in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member for your question. The \$26 million that is in our Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is actually for the 47 units, RCMP units that we will be constructing this year. We will be putting those out for tender in the next couple of months. Looking at the Soaring Eagles Friendship Centre, I would like to see a business plan going forward and seeing how we can assist them, and what we can do to support them. Thank you, Member. Thank you, Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Is that a yes?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member. Please encourage them to submit their business plan, and we will work with them going forward. Thank you, Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South. Oral questions. A lot of interest here today. We have four more to go. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 43-19(2):
MODERNIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE
ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During our December sitting, I was pleased when the Minister of Finance affirmed her commitment to the modernization of a Public Service Act. I am wondering if the Minister could please provide us with an update. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, one of the most important parts for the Department of Finance in this regard is to ensure the relationship that we have with the unions, the UNW, and the NWT Teachers' Association. That, certainly, has been part and parcel of going forward with those plans to ensure that we are engaged with them, and that they are also aware of any steps that are being taken with respect to the Public Service Act.

In addition to which, this certainly is something that has been worked on extensively in the department over the last couple of months and is continuing through that process. It has already come through to Cabinet, and that is a decision now that Cabinet has an opportunity to look at. I am hopeful that it will continue through the various processes of this House and that the Member will get a more fulsome update in fairly short order but still in due course and keeping in mind the way that things have to make their way through this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: In appreciating the processes that have to happen, can the Minister provide us with an expected timeline of when we might see that?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I think the next step is that a matter will come to Cabinet, and after, it will, I am sure, receive a thorough review at this stage. Depending on what comes to Cabinet, then it goes forward into the process. As far as a timeline, I would think, at this point, we are expecting a next step over in Cabinet within the next month or two, keeping in mind that the Department of Finance also involves preparing the budget and that people are fairly flat-out in that regard. I am tempted to say the spring. We will know one way or the other where the winds will blow. That is probably the best I can give to the House at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 44-19(2):
PROVISION OF RCMP HOUSING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add a couple more questions onto what the

Member for Nunakput was asking the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Can the Minister let me know if these 17 units are going to be all put out for public tender? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your comments. Yes, they will be put out for public tender in the next two months. Thank you.

MS. SEMMLER: Knowing the people that work in my community, we have a mixture of stick-built, and we have modular builders in our community. Will that be part of the package being put out so it allows for them to also get work for both?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. The units that will be constructed, they will be stick-built, and I am looking at the education and training to go along with those units and the opportunity for the surrounding communities within the tax-base communities, as well, and looking at the education and training to be building the units and also the maintenance aspect of it, as well. It is going to increase our services that we are going to have to be offering at those community levels. Going forward, the opportunity will create employment, which is what we are working towards. Thank you, Member.

MS. SEMMLER: In the mandate, there are 25 units per year for the next four years. Would the Minister be able to let me know if any of those units would be considered to have modular build? Like I said, we do have that capacity in our community.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is encouraged to create employment within the communities. Looking at the design that we have created for the RCMP units and looking at the education and training for those units, I am looking at going forward to providing those services in the smaller communities. Elaborating on it a little bit more, I really want to emphasize that the opportunity that these units are going to be providing, looking at the modular units that are coming forward, they would be constructed very quickly, very fast. With the stick-built units, I know they are just a little bit more expensive than just putting the modular units on the ground. There is no plan to construct the modular units at this time.

We are forecasting looking at building the stick-built units with the design that was created between the federal government and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, looking at the environment and really mindful of the permafrost, at the environment that we will be constructing in, as well.

There has been put forward a lot of thought into this project. There are 47 units going across the Northwest Territories. Going forward, I would like to elaborate on it a little bit more and keep the Members updated on when these units will be constructed and when they would be put out for tender. Thank you, Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister commit to, maybe even when visiting my community, coming to meet with the company that does construct these units and maybe even come and see one when they are in my region? I think there is one in Tuktoyaktuk if I am not mistaken, and there are other ones in Norman Wells, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. Yes, I will commit to coming into your riding and taking a look at these units as I am very eager, very excited to see how these public tenders and these projects are going to pan out. I am very interested in looking at the local hired, how many people we have employed within that, within your riding. Thank you, Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Time for question period has expired. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am asking to go back to oral questions on the orders of the day. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to orders of the day number 7, oral questions.

---Unanimous consent denied

MR. SPEAKER: Number 8, written questions. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 7 of the orders of the day. Masi.

MR. SPEAKER: I was just made aware that the motion cannot be brought forward until another piece of business has been completed, so on to tabling of documents, and then we could go back. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Tabling of Documents

DOCUMENT 15-19(2):
LUTSEL K'E DENE FIRST NATION'S CARIBOU
STEWARDSHIP PLAN

MR. NORN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Further to my comments from my Member's statement on February 6, 2020, I wish to table the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation's caribou stewardship plan. It is titled "Yunethe Xa Etthen Hadi." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 7 on the orders of the day. Masi.

---Unanimous consent denied

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House is adjourned until Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. Thank you.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:12 p.m.