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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 4, 2020****Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, 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): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 29-19(2):
NORTHERN DISTANCE LEARNING

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to focus on one of the successes that has come from the education renewal and innovation framework. The Northern Distance Learning program, otherwise known as NDL, is a way to offer higher-level academic courses to high school students in small communities, to help prepare them for post-secondary. By the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, this program will be available to students in up to 20 small communities across the territory.

The Northern Distance Learning program began at East Three School in Inuvik, under the leadership of the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council. The program proved that, when students had opportunities to interact with each other, had access to in-class support staff, and had dedicated, knowledgeable teachers, they were able to be successful whether sitting beside each other in the same classroom or separated by hundreds of miles.

There are currently 75 high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12, from small communities enrolled in Northern Distance Learning, taking academic, "-1" courses in mathematics, science, English language arts, social studies, and art. Mr. Speaker, the course completion rate for traditional correspondence courses is just 30 percent. However, the completion rate for Northern Distance Learning courses is approximately 75 percent. This is a game changer, Mr. Speaker. Two years ago in Ulukhaktok, for the first time in the community's history, three students graduated in their community, with the courses they needed to

advance directly to university. This was a historic moment for the community.

---Applause

It was made possible by a combination of Northern Distance Learning and a lot of hard work by those dedicated graduates. The expansion of the program also into the South Slave allowed Laney Beaulieu, a student from Fort Resolution, to stay in her community and complete the courses she needed to get into Western University in Ontario, where she is currently studying medicine.

Marie Lennie, a current Northern Distance Learning student from Deline, voiced her support for the program in an online video made for one of her NDL classes, saying, "The experience so far is great," she said. "I'm learning new things every day and succeeding in getting quality education without the need to move somewhere else for schooling. I highly recommend NDL for other Indigenous students who want a better education."

In addition to creating new learning opportunities, Northern Distance Learning is now also being used to allow parents in small communities to attend parent-teacher conferences with teachers in Inuvik. The first conference was held this past December and connected parents, teachers, and in-class support staff spread across different communities.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to celebrate Northern Distance Learning's first ever Post-Secondary Bridging Experience that was held this past October with a group of 12 NDL students. The Northern Youth Abroad program organized and supervised a trip to Calgary, to help students get a better sense of what to expect in a post-secondary setting outside of the Northwest Territories. Students visited the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and Mount Royal University and took part in workshops and activities that will help prepare them for the transition to post-secondary life.

Akesha Hardisty-Norwegian from Fort Simpson commented, "I really liked the planning part because there is not much help in small communities. When they do help, they do not have as much info as what we got on the trip. Thank you for giving us this opportunity. It helped raise my awareness and confidence going into post-

secondary." Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to share that, on November 22, 2019, Akesha was accepted to the University of Alberta in the combined kinesiology/education program for September 2020. Others are looking at post-secondary options across Canada in psychology, architecture, justice studies, veterinary medicine, and recreation management.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that we have to do a better job delivering equitable education across the territory, and Northern Distance Learning is helping us level the playing field by giving students in small communities opportunities that did not exist only a few short years ago. The data and the individual experiences show us that this program is working. We still have a long way to go, and the achievements of Northern Distance Learning students are proof that we can and will continue to improve educational outcomes across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRADITIONAL COUNSELLING MODEL AT ARCTIC INDIGENOUS HEALING CAMP

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to talk about an experience I recently had. I left the Legislative building after a very busy week. I decided I would see if I could drop in at the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation healing camp located behind the Yellowknife field house. As I began the walk along the trail, I came to the bridge. There were the teepees and the canvas tent. As I walked up to the canvas tent, I heard some voices and knocked on the door. There, I was greeted by a familiar face, who is a counsellor, and other camp staff, who were all so welcoming. As I sat there, it brought me back to my childhood and to my happy place as a child where everyone gathered together and everyone was happy. As I sat and talked with the staff, they told me what they did. They had their roles as we did when we lived in our camp. The staff there are there because they care. Little did I know that was exactly what I needed that day. No one asked me about my feelings. No one talked to me about why I was there. We just talked and laughed and provided. Before I left, they provided smudging. Although this is not my culture, they were very respectful to me, that I could just watch.

Mr. Speaker, this made me think about a time I went to a counsellor in the hospital, in an office, that I had booked for myself. After I testified in the missing and murdered Indigenous women inquiry, I

thought, "This is what you need to do to debrief after an emotional, stressful situation," because this is what I learned in school for my career, and this is what I told people to do in my past career. I feel now I was doing them a disservice. Not all the people in the NWT may benefit from one way of counselling, Mr. Speaker. Let me tell you that I did not leave that counselling appointment feeling as good as the way I felt after I left the healing camp after just one visit. I actually left feeling worse that I opened up and I got nothing in return.

The Arctic Indigenous Wellness healing camp fulfills a broad focus of counselling needs: grief and loss, anger, depression, family, relationship, emotional, spiritual needs, and anything that a client comes to them with. They provide breakfast to the homeless but only until March 31st because that is what they are only funded until by the City of Yellowknife, which is great. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. SEMMLER: This shows that we need a variety of ways to heal or options like the Indigenous Wellness Foundation healing camp or similar options in all regions now. We need to work to have this type of model in all communities, the same as we do counsellors who work in the health system currently.

Mr. Speaker, it reminded me of what the residents were telling me when I was campaigning. They wanted a local healing and after-care support, not a building with western-trained professionals but our own traditional people who will support us and nothing more than a tent and a teepee and Mother Nature as their office. They were the ones who elected me, and I will not forget them and forget what they told me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FISHER SAFETY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 29, 2019, four experienced fishers lost their lives on Great Slave Lake while they were making a living. I mention the words "making a living" because it seems that the fishers who provide a necessary food supply for NWT and our country are the most vulnerable workers there are, and we are not recognizing this. No one should be at risk while engaged in their livelihood. Certainly, it is time to recognize this issue. The fishers have not been recovered, and families are left in grief. Extreme weather on the lake and seasonal changes prevented a recovery of those fishers and

the vessel. In addition to bad weather, there were equipment and safety failures that also prevented this from happening but also, more importantly, the lack of safety gear to help the fishers survive what we can only assume was the capsizing of the vessel.

Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard and Department of Fisheries and Oceans made their best efforts to try to recover the vessel, but it was impossible, considering the weather and depth of water the boat was found in. We acknowledge their effort to assist the fishing families and the South Slave communities who aided the grieving families.

Mr. Speaker, some of us watch the Discovery TV series, the Deadliest Catch, and are aware of the danger of fishing the waters of the Bering Strait. What we don't know is that this program illustrates that fishing is dangerous no matter where the fishing takes place. Great Slave Lake is a large, dangerous lake to the uninitiated. The fishermen take their lives in their hands daily when they work on the lake. There have been many tragedies and losses of life on Great Slave Lake over the years, and that is not changing. We need to ask why.

Mr. Speaker, the International Labour Congress recognizes that fishing is the most challenging, hazardous occupation and identifies that the failures to protect the fishing community through convention and regulations on work conditions are a violation of basic human rights. We need to improve the safety of this work, and we have an obligation to our fishers.

Mr. Speaker, the commercial fishing revitalization strategy which was produced by ITI in the past Assembly places heavy emphasis on the production and sales of fish but very little or no emphasis on fishing safety. Are we willing to trade more lives to meet the production targets set by this strategy in this government? We need to address that. I'll have questions for the Minister of ITI later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COST OF NOT HAVING PREVENTATIVE ORAL
HEALTH CARE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I identified an important change to the NWT Dental Auxiliaries Act that I would like to see the Minister of health make to improve access to and delivery of oral health services for residents of the NWT. As the Member for Kam Lake, I speak for my constituents. Every dollar spent by this government, whether in my constituency or across

the NWT, impacts the cost of living for the people of Kam Lake. However, I also feel a responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interests of all residents of the Northwest Territories.

In 2020, the Department of Health and Social Services will spend half a billion dollars on healthcare for NWT residents, and these costs continue to rise. One of the key factors driving the department's cost is that Health and Social Services is stuck in a reactive cycle of paying for emergency care rather than preventative care. Enabling dental hygienists to be self-initiated creates a more client-centred system. It allows dental hygiene services to make their way into less-served areas, addressing a need that has long been recognized by other jurisdictions in Canada and is desperately needed in our remote communities. With this amendment, new dental hygiene practices can emerge in the less-traditional settings. Dental hygienists could set up mobile practices to visit clients who are homebound or set up practices in community health centres.

Over the last five years, government spending on dental extractions has cost Northerners \$300,000 and over \$1.1 million on medical travel. Improving access to dental hygiene services will reduce the need to provide costly emergency health services, such as medical travel and day surgeries. With prevention, we can reduce the demands on our health system to treat diseases like diabetes, Alzheimer's, and cardiovascular disease caused by untreated oral health disease.

I have spoken to dental hygienists in the NWT who want the authority to be self-initiated. Mr. Speaker, repealing Section 6 of the Dental Auxiliaries Act would remove the requirement that dental hygienists operate under the direction and control of a dentist.

I am willing to consider bringing forward a private Member's bill to enact this change, but I am anticipating the Minister of health's full support of this change. It costs the government significantly less to make these small system changes to improve oral health outcomes throughout the territory than it does to continue to provide services using a model that is not responsive to the needs of the NWT residents. This is an example of good government that places the needs of the public first, and I look forward to making this change with the Minister's support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER
AWARENESS SUPPORTS
FOR PARENTS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of our conversations around Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, or FASD, are centred around making sure mothers stop drinking during pregnancy, but, in fact, there is much work to be done. The science has shown for years that there is a causal relationship between FASD prevalence and fathers drinking. Putting all of the responsibility on the mother means we are not fully addressing the problem. We need to build up support around our mothers, not isolate them.

The Foster Family Coalition of the NWT has done great work flipping the narrative around, and I will table a report by them later today, but it isn't the end of the conversation around FASD awareness. There is much work to be done to prevent FASD and to end the stigma for those living with it. National studies suggest that 4 percent of our population, or roughly 1,800 people, are living with FASD. These people need support and structure in childhood and throughout their entire lives. We need to ensure that our front-line workers are sympathetic to the complex needs of these individuals, not just our healthcare workers but our teachers, our Housing Corporation employees, and our general population. The most effective way to do this is through advocacy and continued conversations that break down stigma. I will stand in this House and continue to talk about FASD awareness for that reason, to break down stigma, Mr. Speaker.

Currently, the GNWT relies on data from the rest of Canada, but I wonder how that information holds up to northern realities. We don't have any data on prevalent rates in the NWT, and so we can't know if we are successfully addressing this issue. It is difficult to advocate for an issue when we are only guessing at its scope, Mr. Speaker. In 2018, the department released its Disability Action Plan, which indicated they would review existing data sources to validate the prevalence of risk factors in incidents of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Without northern data, I don't see how we could possibly achieve this. I believe it is important that our department implement, at the very least, some basic research on prevalence. We've come a long way in the last couple of years, developing an adult FASD diagnostic clinic, and there is even training going on in Yellowknife right now on FASD and neurodiversity for social workers and caregivers, aimed at improving client relationships.

It's good work, but we have to keep going, Mr. Speaker. I would love to see more screening for those in the justice system, reduced wait times for

youth diagnostic clinics, housing strategies, and stronger language in our departmental action plans around FASD. I hope we are on track to some of these things, but I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CAP ON ABSOLUTE LIABILITY FOR OIL AND
GAS OPERATIONS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Our government continues to promote hydrocarbon development through a May 2018 strategy document; in fact, Cabinet wants to spend \$1 million over three years to promote oil and gas development. One thing that has not changed in our post-devolution oil and gas regime is a cap on absolute liability for spills or accidents. This cap is found in the Oil and Gas Spills and Debris Liability Regulations that set absolute liability limits of between \$10 and \$40 million, depending on the location of the spill or debris caused by onshore oil and gas development. Mr. Speaker, that means that, if you can't prove fault or negligence, the public pays for whatever disaster may be created. Such liability caps are definitely not a good idea, given the recent disaster in the Cameron Hills, where our government failed to ensure adequate financial security.

In reviewing changes to the oil and gas legislation in August 2019, one of the recommendations from the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment was that there be "a comprehensive review of oil-and-gas-related regulation, with the express purpose to increase the cap for absolute liability." There was never a response to that recommendation. The same caps were in place in federal legislation for the offshore for over 30 years. The Auditor General of Canada recommended in 2012 that the caps on the Canadian offshore be reviewed and removed. This was done in 2015, through the Energy Safety and Security Act, where the "polluter pays" principle is expressly incorporated, and there is now unlimited liability for at-fault operators and an absolute liability limit without proof of fault or negligence that has been significantly increased to \$1 billion. Countries such as Norway and Greenland have no such liability caps. As a result of the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico that cost British Petroleum more than \$90 billion in fines and settlements, lost tourism revenues alone totalled more than \$23 billion.

Clearly, the liability caps set in GNWT regulations for oil and gas operations are not consistent with

the "polluter pays" principle, other jurisdictions, and international experience. Why has Cabinet not changed to remove the liability caps in more than five years since devolution? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DAY CARE AT J. H. SISSONS SCHOOL IN
YELLOWKNIFE

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obtaining licenced childcare is a significant problem in NWT communities, and in Yellowknife, as well. Parents face long waiting lists for space, and the cost is through the roof. In fact, I know of families who get themselves onto waiting lists as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed.

A large part of the problem is finding a building for childcare that meets building and fire code requirements. These are exacting standards to ensure our children are safe and, of course, I have no quarrel with putting safety first. The fact is, however, that it is next to impossible to find space for rent that meets these requirements. Renovating buildings to meet the code is expensive. There is often hazardous material abatement involved, as well as improved fire separation walls and floors.

Mr. Speaker, if there is no appropriate space for licenced childcare in Yellowknife available, what are the chances that there is appropriate space in regional centres, or even in the smaller communities? This is a significant problem, because 11 communities don't have established childcare spaces. One potential solution to this space crunch is to make childcare spaces available in schools when they are being renovated or rebuilt. I think this solution offers significant economies of scale, which will also reduce the costs of operating a childcare facility, and ultimately savings for parents. To be clear, I don't want teachers or government employees to staff these childcare centres. That challenge would be taken up by a non-profit or community group. My request is only for the space itself, and my specific request is that the government take an immediate and close look at providing childcare space at J.H. Sissons because it is due to be rebuilt in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, the waiting lists for childcare in Yellowknife are very substantial, and they represent a significant barrier to recruiting staff into jobs, not only into government jobs but private industry as well. People think long and hard about coming here because childcare is so unavailable and unaffordable. The bottom line here is that, in order

for NWT residents to access childcare, the government is going to have to lead in providing infrastructure. The cost of constructing or renovating buildings is beyond the reach of non-profit budgets. Investing in childcare spaces in schools may be the answer. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HIRING PRACTICES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is directed to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, specifically with their hiring practices. As Indigenous peoples in our communities, we want our people who go out to get educated to come back to our communities, simply because they know the people, they live in the community, and they have families within our communities. They also volunteer with sport programs and volunteer for other functions, such as carnivals and what have you, especially with the minor hockey programs. We've got some that volunteer to that, and that minor hockey is going by the wayside, so we're really lucky to have people in our community that will take it on and keep it going. From a recent hiring practice, it's just like a slap in the face to our community, when locals are not hired into prominent positions.

There's a former renewable resource officer that states that one does not need the level of experience for a "III" position, statement that they need at least five years' experience, as they advertise. It's also a known fact that there are many in management in the ENR who mostly likely don't qualify, but that hired through the process of it's-who-you-know. I'm astounded the Minister did not step up to the plate when called upon to keep the local hires in my community.

I've been made aware of the hiring of RRO3 position does not have to require five-year experience, as stated in the job ads, no experience running the snow machine and total lack of bush skills. The two locals that applied for advancements were not considered for the positions. Instead, the department looked for faults in them, in those employees, and thus were not hired. I'm appalled and disgusted with the Minister and the department, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to recognize Rassi Nashalik and Be'sha Blondin from the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation, they're directors and Elders there; Wilbert Cook, he's the executive director; and William Greenland, who is a traditional counsellor there; my husband, Jozef Carnogursky, who is here; and my daughter. I guess she's stepped out. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I'd like to recognize some friends from the National Advisory Council on Poverty, who we met with this morning, Scott MacAfee, Sylvie Veilleux, and Arlene Hache. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize our two pages visiting from Lutselk'e today, Isabella Nataway and Kelsey Lockhart, and their escort, also with us, is Rita Catholique. I'm not sure if she's in the gallery, but we say welcome, and you guys are doing a good job. Mahsi cho.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome my constituent, Be'sha Blondin. Thank you for all the very great, healing work she does in our community. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. RYLUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Diane stole my recognition, but I'd also like to recognize my constituent, Arlene Hache, and all the members of the advisory council on poverty. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber, and I hope you're enjoying our proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience with us here. Thank you. Item 6, replies to budget address, day 7 of 7. Member for Kam Lake.

Replies to Budget Address

MS. CLEVELAND'S REPLY

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the Northwest Territories, and we do things a little differently up here. The way we live, work, and govern together is different than Southern Canada. It is a product of a different history.

The fusion of traditional knowledge and innovative technologies means the history of our people and the sustainability of our land are at the forefront of our decisions and that each decision balances where we are going and how far we've come.

The Northwest Territories is a land of remarkable beauty, with strong and resilient people. More than half of us are Indigenous and exercise constitutionally protected rights to land and resources, through modern treaties that cover 70 percent of our territory.

Regardless of ancestry or place in origin, all Northerners access the same public services, such as healthcare, education, and transportation. We must all work together to ensure those services are sufficient and effective. We share a vision of a self-sufficient Northwest Territories, one that is a role model for Canada and the world, where all people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, live, work, and prosper together.

Without political parties, we put a high priority on collaboration, cooperation, and information-sharing to make decisions together, both in the Legislative Assembly and with other governments, including Indigenous governments at the regional and community level, municipal governments, and band councils providing municipal services. Our partnership approach to government is unique and evolving. It is far from perfect, and we have our growing pains, but we are a small enough population to know that respect and relationships are key to making it work.

I believe we have a collective will to grow and evolve and to fairly share the benefits and responsibilities of governance at the community, regional, and territorial level. We have a vision of our public and Indigenous governments working together to make decisions about the land and its resources. These decisions balance economic growth with environmental protection so that the land continues to sustain for future generations.

I believe that the GNWT has to show both leadership and humility and be willing to make the difficult concessions necessary to settle outstanding land claims, resource and self-government agreements in this generation, not the next. The settlement of land claims and a spirit of reconciliation will bring with it stability and an even more collaborative way of governing. The settlement of outstanding claims will also bring with it an influx of federal dollars and further

opportunities within communities as they draw down programs and services and we become role models in reconciliation and cultural resurgence.

I believe we can achieve the goal of settled land claims, but only if we make up our minds to do so and are willing to make the sacrifices we will each have to make to get it done. When we do reach that goal, we will have set a world class example of reconciliation that is a model for the rest of Canada and beyond. We are deciding our own future together, Mr. Speaker.

The North is a place of opportunity and a land of history, driven by people with passion. We want those of you out there beyond our borders, those who are community-minded and hardworking with an adventurous spirit and respect for the land, to be part of the future we are building.

Mr. Speaker, the North continues to be a place of unrivalled opportunity. We are open for business, adventure, and life. We want to grow our population and our economy. During the budget address, the Minister of Finance stated the primary economic driver for the NWT economy will be government investment. I would agree that this is the case, at least for the short term, until we further diversify our traditionally resource-based economy.

As long as government investment is driving the economy of the Northwest Territories, the GNWT has an obligation to ensure that we maximize the benefits of this investment for Northerners. This is what we meant when we agreed that adopting a benefit-retention approach to economic development would be a priority of this 19th Legislative Assembly. This means we cannot settle for 40 percent northern participation in the construction of major infrastructure projects such as the Tlicho All-Season Road. I think most Northerners would agree that they would rather see the road take a little longer to build with 100 percent of associated business contracts going to northern businesses than to see it pushed through quickly with southern firms reaping the profits.

These are the tough decisions that we as leaders and legislators need to make. We need to take any and all steps necessary to grow northern businesses and to ensure that Northerners are the primary beneficiaries of the investments we make. We need to ensure that, when we let contracts or enter into public/private partnerships, the terms and conditions of those agreements are predominantly favourable to northern businesses.

This means we have to scale down our expectations and timelines, recognizing that capacity is an issue for the Northwest Territories. We need to ensure that impact and benefit agreements are just and enforceable. We need to

make sure that construction projects include components of training and retention for northern workers, tradespersons, and businesses. We need to break down the tendering process, to provide additional opportunities for northern businesses. We need to ensure that our procurement policies do not unfairly and inadvertently place undue burdens on northern businesses, Mr. Speaker. We need to access federal funding in a way and in timing that facilitates our needs and is not, as my colleague from Yellowknife Centre has said, the "tail wagging the dog."

Most importantly, we set the parameters for the scale and timing of government projects such that they are realistic and northern-friendly. As politicians, this means we may not get everything done within the four-year window of our term. It means that we may not be there to reap the political credit of the projects we put into play, but we have a bigger responsibility to do what is right for the people of the Northwest Territories and for our children's children.

We need to do more to ensure our fiscal climate facilitates investments. Our current corporate tax rates are the antithesis of Robin Hood. Small- to medium-business tax rates are higher than the rest of Canada, and corporate tax rates for larger businesses are lower than the Canadian average. I am pleased to see that the Minister of Finance is committed to reducing tax rates for small and medium businesses to rates comparable to the rest of Canada. This will undoubtedly support small-business growth. At the same time, we want to continue to attract larger businesses to the North. Consistent corporate taxes for large resource sector businesses will provide sustainability and predictability for our people.

As I thought of the current fiscal situation of the GNWT, I couldn't help but remember 1986's *The Money Pit* starring Tom Hanks and Shelley Long. If you don't remember it, it's the story of a young couple who use their life savings to buy a dilapidated old house in need of major repair. This creates strain on their relationship that all homeowners, I'm sure, can relate to.

Well, Mr. Speaker, look at the fiscal situation we face together at the 19th Legislative Assembly. It does at times feel like we are in the daunting first phases of a house renovation that has the potential to become a major money pit. We have an underfunded health system that is overly dependent on supplementary appropriations and puts children at risk, an education department in need of a passing grade, and a Power Corporation dependent on government subsidies to keep the lights on and power rates affordable, and we're all running on a hope and a prayer that the Housing Corporation

can keep the roof over people's heads through the winter.

However, in this chaos, there is opportunity. We are in a fiscal situation that requires the government to dive deep into how it is doing business and to be brave enough to admit that we can do business better, stretch our dollars farther, and evolve our business practices.

We may find racoons in closets in the process, we may argue on paint colours, and we will most likely never agree on the style of the couch, but we are all here because we all agreed that we love the bones of this house, Mr. Speaker, and that is what connects us and makes building this dream home together worthwhile.

I have faith in this Cabinet to deliver, but you have to be in the driver's seat. If you sound identical to the Minister who held your seat 150 days ago, then the odds are that you are not following through on your end of the promise to deliver change. Take risks. Shake up the way things have always been done. Break the mold. Be bold.

Let's do things differently up here, and, even more importantly, let's get things done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Replies to budget address. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN'S REPLY

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off my budget address, my reply to it, by an experience I had this morning with my youngest daughter, Sine, who is eight years old. It was a pleasant surprise. I had my notes in hand. I was scrambling to get my address out and what I wanted to say today, and I was greeted with a "happy birthday." She helped make breakfast. It brought me right down. It humbled me. It brought me down a couple of notches, and that's what we all need, I think, once in a while, just to be humbled and realize what we're doing here.

She told me, "Daddy, I see some grey hair now, but I still love you. You should dye your hair. It looks like you're working on something." She looked at my notes. She said, "Don't worry about mistakes, Daddy. I still love you." I thought I should share that with you.

It really made me think when I was writing this, it made me question: what are we all doing here? What are we doing here? What are we really doing here? I looked at my daughter, and we're here for our children, for future generations, for the people that we serve. My great-grandparents who raised

me, they told me one key thing is to always leave a place or job in a better condition to when you left it, and that's what I want to do here. That's what I plan on doing in my job as an MLA. We have three and a half years left here in our term, and that's not a lot of time. We still have a lot of work ahead of us.

Mr. Speaker, my initial reaction to this budget address delivered by the Minister of Finance last week was one of dissatisfaction. On the face of it, this budget appears to be largely status quo and, as I've heard my other colleagues mention as well, with little or no extra money being invested in the smaller communities. I could also characterize this budget as a safe budget that stops short of any bold or interesting proposals. That, however, is not totally surprising given the current financial outlook for our government. One thing for sure, though, when I looked at the specifics of this budget, is that one question keeps popping in my mind: do we, as a government, have vision going forward?

A little bit of humour: this budget, when I first read it, made me think of a food analogy. There is a traditional German rabbit dish called Hasenpfeffer. It's a gourmet dish. You put some spices on it. It's a gourmet dish, and you serve it. After thinking about it, I'm a Dene man, looking at it, it's just simply rabbit soup. It is what this budget is. It's plain. In our language, we call it "gah chaze," in case you were wondering. Again, we should always take things with a grain of salt, and we should always look through the smoke and mirrors of any government proposal, and always think realistically.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with our Finance Minister, who said in her budget address last week that this is a land of opportunity. I would like to go a little further than that and state that we live in a G7 nation, in arguably one of the most resource-rich areas on the planet. What bothers me the most, Mr. Speaker, is, through all this, many of our residents are still living in poverty all over the territory. I am not good with that. We still see a disproportionate number of our Indigenous populations in jails, with high levels of unemployment, with little prospects for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I, for one, did not sign up for this. I did not sign up to see our neighbours to go without, with no reasonable end in sight. Again, I will say it again, we should feel humbled and privileged to sit in this House. I have said before that, for the remainder of this term, we have job security, and a lot of the people we serve do not. We need to create opportunity for our neighbours in our small communities and regional centres.

I did want to mention something, as well. I wanted to thank the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, I'm going to say it again, about showing some innovation in their policy changes, and namely for allowing small businesses

to run out of their public housing units. I think that's a great idea. To me, this is huge, because it gives hope to those living in the small communities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, through all of this, the best way to restart our economy is through business. As my colleague from Yellowknife North mentioned the other day, we have a very small tax base. Small businesses create jobs, and we need to assist those who have aspirations to create new businesses to help them thrive. Our government needs to be a catalyst in this endeavour.

I remain hopeful, though, Mr. Speaker, that our priorities in the small communities will improve. We still have resources in our territory. However, I want to make it clear I will not support any development unless we see more of our Indigenous and northern partners involved, in terms of business and jobs. I am also hoping that we see some resolution with our partners in the Akaitcho, Dehcho, and Metis very soon. We need to have them and our other Indigenous partners at the table with us for any new development. Along with any new business opportunities in the North, we also believe in responsible development, and we will make sure that we will take care of the land and move forward in an environmentally conscious way.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I do not and will not support any business endeavours that will see money or resources leave the territory. My belief is that every dollar in the NWT that is lost is harmful to our economy. No more. I am tired of seeing foreign entities taking jobs and contracts and seeing their monies leave the territory, leaving little for Northerners. Parasites act in such a manner. I know that may sound extreme, but I really believe that.

I also want to say something about networking, Mr. Speaker. I want to give kudos to our Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment for promoting our territory and trying to bring some investment dollars into our territory. I know that some of us around this room might receive some flak for taking the time to travel outside the territory for our jobs, but I think it's necessary. We need to engage with industry and business leaders. It's very important, because you never know, that one conversation we have could lead to an important business or job opportunity. If I travel to a conference, that's what I always set out to do; and, if a handshake turns into two or three jobs in a small community, that's huge, in my opinion.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say something about cost of living. Past Assemblies left some legacies, both good and bad, that we have inherited here in the 19th Assembly. Keep in mind the note I said earlier, about trying to leave a workplace or a job better than when he left it. One legacy I do not want

to leave future assemblies is leaving our NWT families with an exorbitant, high cost of living. This government needs to do whatever it can to keep our residents in our territory. People are moving away and, in turn, we are losing funds like territorial financing from the federal government; we need to be innovative in doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I am also not proud about this system we are creating. What I mean by that is that we have created a system where, right now, it is easier for people to quit a well-paying job, go on Income Assistance, and live in public housing, rather than live and work with little financial struggle as some people can in a wage economy. For example, you have a single parent with a very well-paying job trying to support a family in a smaller community, and they will just barely get by. I don't like that. I'm not good with that.

We have created a system where those on Income Assistance would be in a better financial situation than that of someone who is employed with a well-paying job. This has got to stop. I looked at the budget here the other day, as well, during Justice, and I'd like to see some more partnerships down the road. I'm not sure how this would look, but I'd like to see a line where, instead of funding the RCMP, I'd love to see a police service being funded in the Akaitcho region, or maybe in the Deh Cho region, or the Tlicho region, down the road, moving away from this RCMP model, this colonial model and moving forward in that fashion. That's just another side note; I'd love to see that somewhere down the road.

I would also love to see, eventually down the road, more freedoms, in terms of more control of our courts, our health, and our education systems. Before we even start talking about that, we will need to finalize our agreements with Akaitcho, the Dehcho, and the Metis.

I firmly believe our end goal in this Assembly is to see more successful businesses, which will, in turn, create more jobs; and hopefully, at the end of all of this, we will see more people get off Income Assistance.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to let everybody know that I do not support this budget in its current state. The small communities, again, have been left out, and that's my position. When I looked at this mandate, you see a picture of someone on the ice with their hands out like this, but, I hope, at the end of this Assembly, this person will not be left wondering; this will be a representative of our small communities saying, "Oh, my God, you've left me out in the cold." Again. So I'm hoping that's not the direction we're going. I do not want to see that. I want to see our people thrive, not just survive. Our ancestors in the past worked very hard for what

they had, and I believe that is what they would want for us, as well. Back in 1899, Treaty 8 was signed in Fort Resolution, in Deninu Kue, my home town. We need to honour agreements like this, and I'm hoping we can move forward to help people flourish, in the words of that agreement, as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Replies to budget address. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON'S REPLY

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of the Northwest Territories voted for change in our last election. People are struggling, especially in our small communities. They have no jobs, no hope, no future. They feel that their territorial government is not listening and not responding to their concerns.

Across the NWT, including my riding of Nunakput, we heard the status quo is not working. The government is not doing enough. Our people are counting on them to help. They told us, as MLAs, we should be starting to direct the government, and not a handful of bureaucrats in Yellowknife.

We have heard from Indigenous leaders that the relationship between the GNWT and Indigenous governments is at an all-time low. We have heard from current and former Indigenous leaders that the GNWT is the problem, not the federal government. We have heard that Indigenous governments are not going directly to the territorial government; they're going directly to the federal government in regard to the frustration and despair with the status quo. I heard these sentiments in my riding, when we were meeting with leadership, and when we're bumping into them in Yellowknife.

We are 20 years into the 21st century, but our approach to the negotiation and implementation of land, resources, and self-government agreements is still from the last century. It is the failed status quo exemplified. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement was signed in 1984 and, to this day, we are still trying to negotiate self-government, Mr. Speaker. That is outrageous. I was 11 years old when they signed that agreement in Tuktoyaktuk, and we're still waiting. The Indigenous governments are seen as adversaries, or, even worse, subordinates, instead of partners in our own land. The GNWT has tried to run things in the territorial level, leaving Indigenous governments, for the most part, as bystanders. We are here today, a cash-strapped government, Mr. Speaker. We have at most no ability to increase our revenues. We can't control our ballooning expenditures. We are out of borrowing room. We spend 64-cent dollars on

social programs, yet the social problems keep getting worse. We have growing environmental and climate problems. We have a flat-lined economy, Mr. Speaker. That is inherited status quo for another four more years. The same will put us in the poor house, Mr. Speaker.

The budget numbers and the social, economic, and environmental indicators are harshly clear. We have a mandate of 22 priorities and no real way to pay for those 22 priorities, Mr. Speaker. After 50 years of trying to go alone, our territory, we have shown the territorial government can't go alone. We have to have partnership with Indigenous governments and with our federal government, Mr. Speaker. No government can do that. For us, we think otherwise in self-disillusion if we think that way. Our goal is devolution. The agreement was signed in 2013 for the NWT to take the responsibility of our land, water, resource development, to allow Northerners to build and grow the North. We have not achieved that promise yet, but, Mr. Speaker, we can.

Last October, we met with northern leaders. We've had two breakfast meetings with the Dene Nation, the national chief. The goodwill is there, Mr. Speaker. The interest is working collaboratively together as governments to work together to get things done. The question we need to answer is: how are we going to move forward? Are we going to do a real partnership with them, with one another? At this time, it's time to come to the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Inuvialuit, the Dene, the Metis to set up collaborative leaders to the table to work together for the people, start dealing with the big issues in common interest, of which there are many, Mr. Speaker.

The Intergovernmental Council, the symbolic, non-inclusive, advisory body outlived its usefulness some time ago. The GNWT needs a vision for its future as a territorial government. The vision demands that GNWT give up some jurisdiction and control, Mr. Speaker. There are many compelling issues we can finally start to sort out together. For example, working together in collaboration, we can:

- get more housing units in our communities;
- ensure we never get another negative report on child welfare again from the Auditor General;
- ensure graduation rates are actually for real;
- renew our commitment to strong regions, communities, focus back on decentralization not centralization; and

- create regional energy plans to put micro-grid technology in all diesel communities, all the projects in regional bases to make them economically viable in a timely manner. This is how we will lower energy costs in the communities.

We also need to co-draft crucial legislation on bills like water, forestry, mineral resources, and development, just as we work together on the Wildlife Act and the Species at Risk Act. We can create an expedited process and negotiate land resources, self-government agreements, freeing up over 140,000 kms, resource-rich land possible for development. Working together, we can develop a plan to maximize the benefit of the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link to the communities to facilitate both government and private sector opportunities in Inuvik, to create equity in opportunities for the Indigenous governments.

We can work to identify both revenue expenditures efficiencies across our governments. We need to identify economic opportunities that may become evident once we start working together as governments in settling the land claims. Being an obvious one, a big one for me, Mr. Speaker, is opening up our Beaufort Sea, working with the federal government to get that opened up. That will create jobs. That will make money for our territory, and that's what is needed because we are broke.

Mr. Speaker, we need to have the courage to take this first step towards this real collaborative leadership approach at the territorial level with the Inuvialuit, the Dene, the Metis governments. I am convinced that, once we do this, we will realize the full potential of the 2013 Devolution Agreement, truly start building and growing the NWT, and our territorial budget will look much better than the way it looks now. We can make changes for the best, for the people of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. We have to work together to get it done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Replies to budget address. Colleagues, before we carry on, I would like to recognize Grace Barathol and Renata Bullock, who are with us in the gallery today, special request by Mr. Thompson. Also, today is a big day for one of our Members. Mr. Norn, I would like to wish you a very happy birthday.

---Singing

Thank you. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 145-19(2): TRADITIONAL COUNSELLING MODELS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Going back to my Member's statement, when I was talking about providing this type of traditional counselling in all of the regions, I understand that each Indigenous group may want something else. We have heard this, and we heard it again from the Premier when we were going through the mandate. This camp has Dene, Metis, Inuit, non-Indigenous counsellors and does not discriminate from who wants services. Can the Minister tell me if they are looking at this type of a model? If not, can they look into expanding or funding to expand this Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation, if they would like to, in other regions or to have them have funding to be able to go out and talk to other regions to work on a model like this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard a lot of questions in that one question. We are doing a lot of programming. The Member is referring to the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation. We have supported the foundation since it began. We also are supporting them and providing them funding for the traditional healing. Also, we are helping them with a proposal with the Indigenous Services Canada and also the development of community-based programming and working on a pilot project together. Mr. Speaker, we are working with the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation. Some of their programming that they provide is very unique. I think that, if the Member could give me her walking map, maybe I'll take a walk down there and have a look and meet William and Rassi and Be'sha. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: I'm glad that they are working with them. When I visited the centre, the first thing they wanted to do was do a picture. We had a picture taken, and then a lot of people from the community were telling me, "I want that. I want to go there." Can the Minister confirm to me when they have clients, within the hospital or within the Department of Health, being asked to attend counselling, in matters, for example, when clients are admitted for suicidal ideation, overdose attempts, child and family service plans of care, are given the option to see a traditional counsellor of their choosing, for example, and Elder or other counselling services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, we are working in a client-centred way, meaning working with individuals to determine their best avenue to access support. Mr. Speaker, we also have staff who work

to meet people where they are and help them to determine what is the best option for them. For some, it could be a form of counsellor, it could be also meeting with an Elder, so we do have options, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the clients and what's the best avenue for them to receive any of their counselling services.

MS. SEMMLER: In regard to the Minister's response, I would like to know if she would be committed to letting her staff know this, because it's not happening. With my experience, this has not been given as an option, maybe due to the high turnover of staff. Would the Minister consider going and letting her staff know that this is an option? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: Absolutely, and I'm sure all the staff in the Department of Health and Social Services are watching us today. The Member talks about this unique mental wellness facility, and I would like to go down there and have a visit and have a look at some of their options. It is something that we will look into. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that answer, as well. Will the Minister have her department work with the Indigenous groups in each of the regions so they can provide them a list of counsellors that they have? Because I do know that we do have counsellors, traditional counsellors, especially in my community of Inuvik. We have different counsellors with Inuvialuit, we have different options within the Inuvialuit, and so do the Gwich'in in my community, that will provide elders and other options. Would she commit to having her department get that list so, when people are needing counsellors, they can also contact them? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: There is another "yes." Yes, of course, our department can work with Indigenous groups to ensure that we have a clear picture of community-based options, so that they are assured that our staff are aware of these options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 146-19(2):
FISHER SAFETY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions were going to be for the Minister of ITI, but listening to the Minister of health say "yes" all the time, I might ask her instead.

---Laughter

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my statement, fishing is one of the most challenging and dangerous occupations. As such, we must ensure that our fishers are provided safe working conditions and the tools to make that happen here in the NWT. My first question for the Minister of ITI is: the NWT fishing revitalization strategy focuses mainly on production of fish and is silent on safety; can the Minister confirm if it includes the supports to improve fisher safety, and, if so, what are those safety supports? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Safety is something that we take very seriously and is a focus of the Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Strategy. A key component of the strategy is addressing equipment and standards, which will promote safer fishing practices throughout the NWT. As with most things, we have many partners in this effort, including the marine training centre in Hay River, the NWT's Fishermen's Federation, NWSCC as well.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I'll ask the Minister: are there any funds that will be put towards ensuring fishers have access to safety equipment, such as the emergency position indicating radio beacons, which can help locate fishermen or vessels if something happens?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do have funds available through existing programs, which can be accessed for this kind of equipment. They would include the SEED program, or Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development policy, and the Commercial Fisheries Industry Support Program. I can also confirm we have provided funding for GPS equipment in the past, and we're going to continue to make this part of our discussion as we go through the process of revitalization.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Does the Minister's department work with DFO and/or the WSCC to ensure vessels are inspected and are seaworthy and have the necessary safety equipment to meet safety standards?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Yes, we work with WSCC and Transport Canada, who is the regulator of fishing vessels, to promote safety for all of our fishers, and again, the revitalization strategy works to implement mandatory training and supports fishers to bring their equipment and their vessels up to standards, and we are going to continue to work going forward to ensure that the safety is improved for all fishers on the lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister be willing to throw another \$500,000 for grant money for the fishers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: While I can't say "yes" on this one, however, I would have to look to my colleagues to approve any supplementary asks that I may have going forward. If we determine that we do need more funding, we will be coming back to the Assembly to look for that funding, and I hope that the Member will say "yes" at that point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 147-19(2):
DAY CARE AT ECOLE J.H. SISSONS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I spoke today about the need to provide more accessible and affordable childcare by investing in spaces in which childcare can be offered. Has the Minister considered providing childcare space in new or renovated schools as a way to provide suitable space for childcare in communities across the NWT? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, part of our mandate is to better utilize GNWT infrastructure for early childhood programs, so that's a definite consideration. Right now, our capital standards don't say anything about childcare spaces in schools, so we're not mandated to build them, but that doesn't necessarily mean we're prohibited from building it, either, so it's a discussion that we're currently having. Thank you.

MS. GREEN: I'm jumping on this bandwagon. I'm particularly interested in the possibility of providing childcare space at J.H. Sissons school, which is in my riding, and which is going to be rebuilt, starting in the near future. Is it still possible to talk about providing childcare space in that school? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I hate to stop the fun, here, but the answer for that one is "no," unfortunately. The contract, or the engineering and design contract, was awarded in June 2019 and that work has already commenced. At this point, it's too late to include childcare space in that plan. However, in the future, if we have room available in the school,

that could be used for childcare space, but dedicated space is not in the plan right now and it's too late to add that.

MS. GREEN: Okay, let me be the first to call the Minister a party pooper. What I'm interested in knowing is: in the event that it is possible to build childcare spaces in schools, what would that look like? Would it be on a partnership model with respect to service delivery? Would the partners need to bring money to the table? What are the Minister's initial thoughts on how this would work?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Right now, we're open to anything. This is very early in this Assembly, and this mandate item, I think, spring 2021 is when we look to have a plan formed on what this would look like. Of course, we're open to partnerships. I mean, that's sort of been the mantra of this government. Every community is different, and so we have to look at the specific communities. Perhaps the GNWT is the only game in town and we could provide that service, but that is all yet to be determined. Right now, I won't say no to anything going forward in terms of what we're going to consider.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Yellowknife Centre

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Can the Minister tell us what kind of research is being done on this topic, whether there is a jurisdictional scan, for example, to see how childcare is provided in other remote and high-cost locations? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: As part of the mandate commitment, as well, we're working on the Early Learning and Childcare 2030 Strategy, and so there is some work that has been going into that. I don't have the specifics of that, but I can find out and share that with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 148-19(2):
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier today about breaking down the stigma around Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. I believe the first and most important step in doing that is to make sure we are working with the right information. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. How many people in the Northwest Territories have been diagnosed with FASD?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Stanton Territorial Youth FASD Family and Community Support Program has been in existence since 2010 and, as of January 2020, has provided assessments of 93 children. Of those 93 children, 63 have been diagnosed with a FASD diagnosis. The implementation of the adult FASD diagnostic and support program has occurred over the past year. The first diagnostic clinic took place in January 2020, and one adult has been diagnosed with FASD. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: That totals 64 people who have been diagnosed with FASD in our territory, despite federal numbers estimating there are 1,800 people living with FASD in our territory. We have a long way to go in getting these diagnoses. Having worked first-hand in the criminal justice system, I can tell you that diagnosis ultimately affects sentencing, it affects conditions, it affects housing. Given our unique situation in the North, does the Department of Health and Social Services have a plan to conduct its own research on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the Northwest Territories?

HON. DIANE THOM: The department does not conduct FASD research directly. The GNWT is a member of the Canadian Northwest FASD Partnership, which provides financial contribution and sets out priorities for the CanFASD Research Network. The research network conducts research on behalf of the Northwest Territories and other provinces and territories. CanFASD researchers are currently leading 25 major projects related to FASD prevention, intervention, and diagnosis. Being involved in a wider partnership such as these provides the Government of the Northwest Territories with reliable and valid information to improve outcomes for those who are affected with FASD.

MR. JOHNSON: I am aware, and I am thankful for all the work that CanFASD does, and I also know there is much work being done. I believe there are 150 people right now in Yellowknife receiving training regarding FASD. However, there is much work to do, especially in regard to diagnostics. My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is: what is the average wait time for a diagnosis for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in the Northwest Territories?

HON. DIANE THOM: There are presently 38 children on the wait list for the youth FASD program, and the wait time varies. As an example, nine of these children are waiting to be old enough to get into the clinic, and 11 do not have confirmation of any alcohol exposure, which is

required for them to go through the diagnostic process. As the adult FASD clinic has just started, a wait time has not been reported.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure I will have many more conversations on getting that information for the adult wait times and removing some of the barriers for children getting into those diagnostics. I recognize there needs to be a stigma broken down that allows both mothers and people with FASD to self-disclose, but I was hoping the Minister of Health and Social Services could speak to the current barriers, to make sure we can improve access and get those wait times down, and get more people into the diagnostic clinic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE THOM: The Member is correct. There is a stigma surrounding FASD, and it is a barrier for individuals and families accessing diagnostic services. The Member asked: what are the barriers? The Northwest Territories' geographic remoteness creates challenges in ensuring equitable access to diagnosis. Medical travel is also a barrier for accessing diagnostic services, and can be particularly challenging for families with children with complex needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 149-19(2):
CAP ON OIL AND GAS OPERATIONS LIABILITY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the very agreeable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, who sets regulations for onshore oil and gas resources and also promotes such development. The Oil and Gas Spills and Debris Liability Regulations set absolute liability limits of between \$10 and \$40 million, depending on the location of the spill or debris caused by oil and gas exploration and development. Can the Minister explain why there are these liability caps in place and what public purpose they serve? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member mentioned, there is only a cap on liability when the person or entity who holds the authorization is not proven to be at fault for the spill or discharge, or other similar event. The cap balances the right to swift compensation against the lack of proof of responsibility, and ensures that funds can be accessed promptly, without having to prove fault or negligence on the part of the

operator. If an operator or any person is proven to be at fault for a spill, there is no legislated limit on its financial liability and no cap on what they would need to pay to rectify the situation and compensate those affected, to the extent of the fault or negligence proved against them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that, but she didn't actually explain what public purpose they serve. Basically, they shield private companies from liability and, in this day and age, we need to be adopting a "polluter pays" approach. I'd like to know if the Minister can explain whether Cabinet intends to respond to the recommendations from the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment from the last Assembly. That committee recommended "a comprehensive review of oil and gas related regulation with the expressed purpose to increase the cap for absolute liability." Can the Minister explain: is she or the Cabinet actually going to respond to that recommendation?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: As the Member stated, in the 18th Legislative Assembly, ITI committed to such a comprehensive review of the PRA and the OGOA. I am pleased to confirm that the review has begun, and it is ongoing. The results of that review will inform our next steps regarding this suite of regulations. In addition, we are working with the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations on implementing the statutory measures that were passed by the 18th Assembly aimed at making the industry more transparent and responsive to the needs of our territory.

MR. O'REILLY: I think that was actually a yes. Just as we have millions of dollars of environmental liability from Cameron Hills hurtling towards us, because we failed to make sure that there was proper financial security in place, these regulations that the Minister is talking about are one page long. She doesn't have to do a big review. She can change them tomorrow if she wants, just gazette the new limits. Can the Minister tell us: is she clearly committed to increasing the absolute liability caps in the Oil and Gas Spills and Debris Liability Regulations?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: As mentioned, the cap in the regulations relates to the no-fault portion that an operator would be required to pay. Those regulation provisions will be part of the review that the department is undertaking. Without having had their input on that review, I do not want to make that commitment at this time to the Member.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I am not sure

what the problem is. This is a one-page regulation; one page. These limits are in there. Let's just fix it. The Minister can fix it tomorrow, if she wants. Can the Minister explain when and how long this review is that she is going to undertake? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: I do not have the authority to make that change on my own. It is a Cabinet decision to change regulations. I would need to bring that to my Cabinet colleagues. As the Member is aware, we have many things going on, but I will commit to the Member to do so in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 150-19(2):
ORAL HEALTH CARE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. We had a great conversation yesterday about the Dental Auxiliaries Act, and I just want to make sure that the wheels keep turning on that one. As part of the oral health strategy, has the department done any jurisdictional research or spoken with dentists and dental hygienists to determine the feasibility of allowing dental hygienists to be self-initiated? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A jurisdictional scan of dental hygienist regulation was completed in January 2018 by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association. This scan includes provinces, territories, and international jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we talked about oral health, and the Member and I continued this dialogue. I just looked up the Dental Auxiliaries Act, and I recognize the section where the Member talks about having the dental hygienists go off and do their own work in the communities. I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that this is important. Oral health in the Northwest Territories, not any specific region, is crucial. It's something that, although the scan has been looked at, I am reviewing the act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'm going to pretend she said "yes." I want to be part of the yes club today. I do have a yes question, though. Would the Minister be willing to commit to determining if we are willing to make this change as the Northwest Territories this year, so that we can potentially update the act in 2020?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes.

MS. CLEVELAND: Wednesday is my new favourite day of the week. I am wondering, Mr. Speaker: what legislative change has the department initiated under the Oral Health Action Plan to oral health professional role?

HON. DIANE THOM: Before I answer the question, I do want to go back. I was saying, "Yes, we will look into the feasibility study," just for clarification. Let me get back to the Member's question on what legislative changes the department has made. The Department of Health and Social Services has not initiated any changes in the Dental Auxiliaries Act. The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, however, has implemented a territorial specialist, an oral health position which is under the territorial manager, Allied Health. The dental therapist and the newly recruited dental hygienists all report to this position.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question for the Minister of health is: has recruitment begun for the chief oral health officer position that was identified as part of the oral health strategy? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: We have not begun the hiring process. I'm sorry; I can't go three yeses in a row. The department, however, is determining the scope of the work for what this role should be, and this should be done by the end of April. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 151-19(2):
HIRING OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCE OFFICER

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of ENR. I guess, I would like to firstly say that we are always friends, you know; just sometimes our jobs put us on different sides. Well, we're on different sides of the floor, anyways. We know that, for sure. This is regarding the hiring practice in my community. I know I've pleaded with the Minister; I've sent emails, you know, short of signing over my GST cheque, but it's about inexperience versus experience.

It's just come to my attention since I got back earlier today that there is a very inexperienced Renewable Resource Officer III, which is the lead in the community, or officers. From what I am hearing, this person didn't know how to use a firearm. He discharged a 12-gauge in Fort Simpson, and it

injured a person. He was sent out for further training on firearms, use of firearms and firearm safety, plus I am getting reports that former renewable resource officers even had to teach him how to operate a snow machine and teach him how to just live in the bush.

MR. SPEAKER: Just wait one second. It's pretty easy to identify the person you are speaking about, so just oral questions. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I guess it's experience versus inexperience that I am getting at. I'm really hoping, because we have been pleading to have our local people in the community hired into the positions. My question to the Minister is: will he revisit the hiring of the positions in Fort Providence? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Member for Deh Cho has been talking to me about this in December, January, and February. We have had good conversations. We have had communication. I have shared as much information as I can share without getting into privacy and about process. At no point in time as a Minister should you be directing staff who to hire. It is about following fair process. Sorry. I won't be jumping on the bandwagon yet, but no, I won't re-look at the process. We followed the process, and the best candidate was given the RRO III position. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi for that answer. I don't have any further questions in that regard since he is already taken a solid stance, but just to let him know that we will probably be seeking other actions to hopefully address this issue. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. I will take that as a comment. The Minister would like to respond.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is the appeal process, and it is all there. It is about trying to get the best person, the best candidate for the position. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho is an advocate for his community about people. I want people to understand he is doing his job. He is working hard to get his residents work and employment. Presently, right now, the RRO3 position went through an open competition, and the best candidate was given that position based on that. There is an appeal process through the mechanism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to

Commissioner's address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, reports of standing and special committees. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 48-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 71-
19(2): ORAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document. It is a follow-up letter for Oral Question 71-192: Oral Health Action Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 49-19(2):
ARCTIC INDIGENOUS WELLNESS FOUNDATION
2018 ANNUAL REPORT

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation 2018-2019 annual report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife North.

TABLED DOCUMENT 50-19(2):
FASD AND HOUSING IN YELLOWKNIFE, MARCH
2020

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document "FASD and housing in Yellowknife: a Mosaic of Options, Yellowknife," dated March 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, motions. Item 18, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, with Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs and Legislative Assembly; Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), 2020-2021 Main Estimates, Executive and Indigenous Affairs and Legislative Assembly. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Norn. Is committee in agreement?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021. We will begin with the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Does the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you. I am here to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$783,000 or 3.5 percent over the 2019-2020 main estimates. These estimates support our fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending while matching the modest expected revenue growth over the coming year.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- \$905,000 in forced growth related to salary increases resulting from the 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers;
- \$705,000 for the establishment of the Office of Devolution Initiatives responsible for leading the Government of the Northwest Territories through negotiations related to the management of offshore oil and gas resources. This office has also been assigned the lead of a review of the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement transitional provisions as they relate to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act;
- a sunset of \$82,000 for a project to deliver a communications campaign and strategic communications plan for campaign schools that would increase the engagement of women in politics in the Northwest Territories. This is offset by an investment received from the federal Department of Women and Gender Equality for \$525,000.

This money was made available to the Government of the Northwest Territories for two years, beginning August 2019, to expand pilot testing of the campaign school in five communities and to develop an online portal to support this initiative:

- a sunset of \$495,000 that was part of a project designed to access third-party negotiation and facilitation services to assist in the finalization of self-government agreements;
- a sunset of \$80,000 that is being provided as a grant to the Northwest Territories/Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres to assist with building capacity and strengthening partnerships of the centres;
- a sunset of \$170,000 in grant funding made available to individual Northwest Territories friendship centres to match contributions received from other entities; and
- the department will see an increase in three positions in 2020/2021. These three positions are located in Yellowknife and are the result of the creation of the Office of Devolution Initiatives.

These estimates continue to provide funding for various priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly by:

- funding the operation of single window service centres that provide residents in 22 small NWT communities with access to basic Government of the Northwest Territories and Government of Canada services;
- the delivery of campaign schools twice yearly in order to increase the engagement of women in all levels of politics within the territory. This will also include, as I mentioned earlier, piloting of the campaign school in an additional five communities, which has been made possible through a partnership with the federal government; and
- the negotiation and implementation of self-government and land claims agreements throughout the territory.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness into

the Chamber. Madam Premier, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. On my right is Mr. Martin Goldney, who is the Cabinet secretariat and the deputy minister for Executive and Indigenous Affairs. On my left is Amy Kennedy, who is the director of Shared Corporate Services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with Cabinet support, starting on page 108, with the information item on page 110. Are there any questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of my concerns is that we have no specific Minister appointed for public engagement and transparency in the 19th Assembly. I know the Premier has provided some previous comments on this. We're working to be open across all departments. One of my concerns is that we're all busy and that, without assigning a responsibility, we run into that accountability piece as our job as Regular Members. I guess I'll begin with having policies. Has the open government policy been fully implemented, and, if not, what remains to be done?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will allow Martin Goldney to answer that question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The policy is in the process of being implemented. There is still work to be done to review some of our documents to make sure that they are made publicly available, so, categorizing what can be made more accessible and put online, that's work that is still underway. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to seeing that policy, and I hope it is

implemented sooner rather than later. Jumping to the larger questions, we have UNDRIP implementation in our mandate. I've asked a number of questions on this. I guess I see that there is the intention to form a working group to implement UNDRIP, but perhaps I could ask the Premier to provide an update of how we are making sure that all departments are involved in this and that all government policies and legislation will be updated as a result of the wide breadth of coverage that is UNDRIP?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first thing that I did when I took the position of Premier is I contacted all of our Indigenous governments that are involved in devolution. I spoke to them all about the priority of UNDRIP within this Legislative Assembly. I committed to each of them that we would work together to define what UNDRIP looked like to the Indigenous governments.

At each bilateral meeting, and I think that we have done three or four or five -- I'm not sure; life is moving pretty fast -- at each bilateral meeting that we have had with Cabinet, where all Ministers are in attendance, I have also reinforced that this government will be implementing UNDRIP and, again, reinforcing that we will be doing that in partnership. As we move forward and we define what that looks like, Ministers will be given solid direction to make sure that they implement that throughout their departments. That is my commitment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that the Premier is committed to do this and has brought it to multiple Indigenous governments at the bilaterals. I heard there that we are going to go out, we're going to receive the information, and then provide departments direction. Can I just clarify if, at the present moment, Ministers have been directed to, within their own departments, review the UNDRIP sections that apply to them, and then bring that to EIA?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is a discussion we haven't yet had as a Cabinet. We will be having it, though; I will commit to that, as well. However, I need to reinforce that the implementation of UNDRIP, if we do this right, is not done by departments of the

Government of the Northwest Territories; it is done in consultation -- not even consultation. It is done in partnership with the Indigenous governments. Until the Indigenous governments tell us what they want, what that looks like, I feel, Madam Chair, respectfully, that it would be inappropriate for myself to give direction to departments to start reviewing it, because that does give the perception that we are defining what it will look like beforehand. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further comments? No further questions? Member for Yellowknife -- Frame Lake, sorry.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. After a while, we all look the same. Thanks, Madam Chair. I think that this is the part of Executive and Indigenous Affairs where board appointments are, sort of, tracked and so on. I do want to commend even the previous government did a better job at making sure that there was gender balance in our appointments to GNWT committees, boards, and councils, but what we saw in the last Assembly was a trend towards appointment of deputy ministers -- I guess, sometimes they're government employees, and sometimes they're not -- to boards. What is the plan for this Cabinet, moving forward? Are we going to see those Cabinet Ministers phased out of board appointments and public governance restored? What is the general approach, moving forward? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our department has just compiled a recent list of all of the board vacancies, throughout not only the Northwest Territories but federal departments, as well. We will be sharing that with Ministers. We will be giving direction that a gender-plus analysis be looked at within those board appointments. In the last Assembly, I must say that, when I was the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I was adamant on every single appointment. When they were being appointed, I was asking, "Is it a woman, and if it's not a woman, why is it not a woman?" Those are conversations we are still bringing up. Is it a woman? Is it Indigenous? Is it a stakeholder? Is it the right person for the position? We will continue to do that.

I am more than willing to review all board appointments, because that is something that we need to do. Not only are we looking at a gender-plus analysis, but we are also looking at terms to make sure that the rotation is correct. There is quite a bit of work that we are doing with our board appointments, and we will continue to do that

throughout our term of this government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to thank the Minister for that response. She dealt with everything except the issue of deputy ministers being appointed to serve on boards. We saw, I think, a troubling trend of that in the last Assembly, the public board for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation was replaced by deputy ministers. Aurora College, that board was removed. What are the Premier's plans, moving forward, with restoring public governance to some of these key corporations and boards, moving forward? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sometimes I do speak a bit fast. I had sandwiched it in there, but I'll be a little bit more concise. We are committed to reviewing all boards, and that would include the boards that deputy ministers do sit on. As for the other board that was brought up by the Member, that would be the Aurora College board; there is a framework, a timeline, that the applicable Minister is looking at within that. Those are questions, if you wanted more detail, that would be appropriate for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to thank the Premier for that response. It's good to hear that board governance is something that is under review. I'm just curious; the deputy ministers who are sitting on boards, do they receive any instructions from Ministers in terms of what they are to do on those boards, or are they at least at arm's length? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. My own Deputy Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs does sit on that board, and I just asked him, "Have you ever received instructions?" and he said, "Never," so they are unfettered in direction from any Cabinet Ministers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, great to get that firsthand experience right at the table. I am still a little bit skeptical. Look, I appreciate that, but I just think that those deputy ministers are put into a very difficult situation, where they have full-time employment and then they're doing this on the side. I just don't think it's fair to our deputy ministers, either. I take the Minister's commitment to review this, moving forward, and I am sure that Members of this House will continue to remind her of that commitment and look to see progress on it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Did you have anything further? All right. Any other questions? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about those board appointments as well. I do have a problem with them. I guess it's hard for me to understand that the DMs -- I suspect they have a lot of work; probably a full-time job. To sit on the board and, I guess, kind of, give direction to, say, it's the Power Corporation or whoever; I don't believe that's working. I don't think that they can give good advice.

I know that they all have experience in certain areas. Some of them probably have no idea about utilities, for instance. They probably try and do their best. I'll give them that. I think that it's important that we actually look at putting people on there who do have the experience. If we want to move forward with trying to lower rates and do a better job in education with our power rates, we need people on there who know what they're doing. I guess that's more of a comment that I wanted to make, as well.

I do have a question on page 109. Public utility boards; I see that our actual was \$332,000, and in the main estimates, it's \$452,000, so it's a little better than \$100,000. I know that it's not a lot of money, so what was the purpose for that little increase?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The revised estimates from 2019-2020 was for \$448,000. The main estimates this year is \$452,000, a difference of \$4,000. That is the forced growth, regarding the union negotiations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. I guess I'd just clarify that. I was just looking at actuals for 2018-2019, and we jumped up to \$448,000 and then the main estimates show \$452,000. I'm just wondering

what is the difference between the \$332,000 and where that comes in. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize for not listening as well as I should have. Ms. Amy Kennedy would take the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Okay, sorry. Ms. Kennedy.

MS. KENNEDY: Madam Chair, the difference between the 2018-2019 actuals and the 2020-2021 Main Estimates is a result of lower contract costs, legal services, and consultation costs required by the Public Utilities Board in 2018-2019, so they actually underspent the budget, and that's what is reflected there.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Kennedy. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Basically, I guess what happened, there weren't any hearings, or kind of, in that year, I suspect. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is correct. There were fewer applications in that year.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the Public Utilities Board, what are they responsible for? I know they're responsible for the utilities, so I suspect the Power Corporation, NUL; how about say, for instance, Superior Propane, with respect to delivering gas within the communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Public Utilities Board is responsible for regulating utilities that, because of an absence of competition, really have a monopoly position, so it's the Public Utilities Board's job to make sure that the rates that they're charging are carefully considered and fair and provide a fair return on investment. I mean their job is really to play the role of a market, to make sure that the rates are fair and well considered. They don't regulate Superior Propane or Bluewave, where there is that competition and that free market available to set prices. It's really just where there

isn't the free market available to set prices, because these utilities have to operate at such a scale that they're essentially monopolies. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a couple of questions. One of them is: a couple of weeks ago I did a Member's statement on deputy ministers on boards. I, too, feel very strongly that, if you're going to be accountable and transparent and arm's-length, the board has to be neutral. It's the only way to go. There has to be input from various regions of the public to sit on these boards, and we have a lot of external people who are not in government, who will sit and give the perspective of the people of the Northwest Territories, and that's extremely important. For me, I would ask the Premier to consider that and give us a date as to when, actually, this will start happening.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've heard many times in this House, and this Assembly, about the need to review that board in particular. I have committed to that. We will be reviewing all board appointments, not only for the membership, for the length of term, the composition of the board, as well. Those are commitments we are going to take. As for the timeline, as this point, Madam Chair, I cannot say, but I can commit that within a year that work will be done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: My second question is on some of the comments that were made in the statement by the Premier, a sunset of \$170,000 to the grant funding, available to individual Northwest Territories friendship centres. Could the Premier please tell us the disbursements and who they go to, the \$170,000?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We'll go back to it. I think it's on page 123. We're just going item by item.

MS. MARTSELOS: She didn't ask for any comments when she made the statement, so I thought I was able to do that. I'm sorry if I'm out of

[microphone turned off]... The third question that I had was with the department, for three new positions, and the creation of office of devolution initiatives. I just want to know the makeup of that department.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Is that in this section, 115? I think that is in this next section, so, if you want to wait until we can get to that, that's fine, thanks. Are there any further questions, then? Okay. Are there any further questions on page 108-110? No. All right, seeing no further questions, please turn to page 109, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Cabinet support, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, for \$2,632,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Corporate communications, beginning on page 111, and items on page 113. Any questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see there is not much of a change in the budget for corporate communications, but I have some questions, if we are changing the way corporate communications is done at all. I think one of the biggest criticisms of the last government, and the reason many of us are here, is that there was a communication breakdown, both between Members and with the public. I would say, to date, that we've been losing the communication battle in the media and with the public, and some of the great work we're doing here is not necessarily being conveyed. My question to the Premier is: how are we doing our Cabinet communications differently?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. That was a huge issue. I don't think it was only in the last Assembly. I think it's been in every Assembly. I think that, the Government of the Northwest Territories, we're great at a lot of things, Madam Chair. One of the things we're not so good at is our communications to the public. We do find that often we're more reactive than proactive. We find that often, sometimes, our communications are at a high technical level, that often people don't relate to. We have been looking at it right across the board. I have met with my Cabinet communications person. We have been trying to work with departments and be proactive in what we do. We are just at the beginning. It's a new Assembly. We are looking at a new way of communicating. Madam Chair, we will make mistakes. We cannot be proactive on everything. There will be some things that we will be reactive to, but we are, right across the board, every single

department is trying to be more proactive, getting out not only the good word, but also, if there are things that are sometimes not so good, we need to also get those out in the news, as well, to provide our side of the story. Otherwise, we pay the price for it. It is something that we are totally engaged in at this time. Again, we will make some flaws. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions on this section? If there are no further questions, please turn to page 112, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, corporate communications, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 main estimates, \$1,473,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Moving to directorate, beginning on page 114, with information items on page 117. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is where the department will see an increase of three positions in the 2020-2021 budget, these three positions are located in Yellowknife. It's the creation of the Office of Devolution Initiatives. Could you please explain to me exactly what that is?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Office of Devolution Initiatives is responsible for leading the Government of the Northwest Territories through negotiations related to the management of offshore oil and gas resources, and we have also assigned them to be the lead on the review of the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement transitional provisions as they relate to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't have any other questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I noticed, in the segment "women's advisory," that the amount of money granted to the Native Women's Association and the Status of Women Council, and, in fact, the Women's Initiative Grants, have been static for the last two budgets. My question for the

Minister is: how is this funding level determined for these non-profits? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. In all honesty, I believe that these funding levels have been in place for many years. I can't say exactly how many years, but I do know that it's more than the last Assembly. They're on the last year of a three-year term agreement, and I think that it is time that we look at them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that answer from the Premier. It's time to take a look at these levels and to make them reflect the work that is being done, that there be some specific methodology to how these numbers are determined, and that they are reviewed annually to ensure that the money granted keeps up with the cost of inflation. My fear is that, while GNWT employees have received increases because of their collective agreement, the non-profits are being left behind, and I am calling on the Premier to do something about that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member knows that I also come from the non-profit world. I have always advocated that the non-profit world is underfunded and overproducing, in my opinion. I am committed to reviewing these. However, Madam Chair, I am also conscious of the limitations of us financially. I do have to take into consideration that this is something that I think we need to look at, but we also have 22 huge priorities that we also need to have at the table. We will look at it. It may not be what the Member would like or that I would like, but we have to be fair in making sure that we address as many concerns as possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. I do appreciate that the Minister is familiar with this background. The thing is, though, that, when non-profits fall too far out of sync, which is a variation of more than about 40 percent with the government, they can't keep staff, and then productivity goes down because they're in a constant turnover of staff. This is not big grant money compared to the totality of the budget, so I am calling on the Premier to review these. I don't expect them to be brought to government levels,

but I do expect a gap to be closed between what the funding levels are historically and what they should be going forward so that non-profits can maintain their staff, keep their staff, and keep their productivity going. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hear the Member. I empathize with the Member. I agree with the Member. However, these are two NGOs, non-governmental organizations. There are many other non-governmental organizations that are funded by other departments. We have to be fair, Madam Chair, and make sure that, if we're doing this, that it would be across the board so that we don't let other ones fall through the gaps. I am committed to reviewing them; however, again, as stated, it might not be the amount that I would like to see. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to the Premier for that. When these non-profit contribution agreements are reviewed, is there methodology to working out how much money is going to be in the contribution agreement? Is there some rationale for that? How is that money determined, that number determined? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding, at this point, is that there is no methodology. It's meeting between officials and, I'm guessing, executive directors. However, Madam Chair, I want to again extend this to all NGOs. When I say NGOs, it means non-governmental organizations. When we give NGOs money, and we don't have any kind of requirements or measurable outcomes, in my opinion, it sets them up to fail. For example, the homeless shelter that I managed for many years never got an increase, ever. It makes me wonder why. I think that we do need to review all of the agreements, and I think that we need to start moving into a place of quality assurance and that we actually have measurable outcomes. Then the NGOs can come back to us and say, "We're meeting these outcomes, but we don't have enough money to do it." Give us a tool to be accountable to the public, because it is the public purse, but also give the NGOs a tool that they can say, "This is what you asked; this is what we're delivering, and we need an increase." It goes both ways. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree; it goes both ways. What I am suggesting here is that there be a methodology based on deliverables and that we are assured that we are getting value for money from the NGOs as much as we are from any other government spending. I think that you can find an example of how this could work with the shelter standards. It was a long piece of work, but finally, there are standards for the family violence shelters so that the contribution of money to those shelters for their operations relates to something tangible. I think that that's a methodology that could be applicable to the organizations that we are talking about in this area. My only concern is that, knowing that the shelter standards work took years and years, we need to find a way to do this work, if we're going to do it for all NGO contribution agreements, that we do this work more efficiently. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do remember the shelter standards, don't remember where they are right now. I didn't realize that it took many years. This agreement is coming up in the next year. It might have to be signed. My commitment, though, is that we would sit down with the executive, with the board of directors, actually, and do that process in a mutually agreeable manner. Hearing the Member's concerns, maybe we will start with these ones. Hopefully, we will move that work out throughout because all NGOs have to not only be accountable for their funds but to also have a tool that says, "We need to have more." Like you said, without that, just giving out money, is not giving them that tool, and it is not giving us the accountability. We will work towards that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that the Minister and I are on the same page with this. I think you could do a pilot project with native women and status of women. I think those organizations do a strategic plan and a budget. I think there are some materials to begin with to come up with some mutually agreed goals for the services that they are providing through their contribution agreement and that that could be a constructive process across the board. I don't have any further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will take it for a comment, but I do want to state that one of the other priorities or mandates within this government is to try to look at multi-year funding. For example if we don't have time, I am conscious of the time it took for the shelter standards. Perhaps, we could move into a multi-year funding formula, and that would give us the time, hopefully, that we could use for the next funding cycle, that we could actually have measurable outcomes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at 2018-2019, when we provided \$25,000 to the Northwest Territories SPCA. I believe this was under the Extraordinary Funding Policy, essentially, because right now the NWT SPCA doesn't fit into any pool of money. I brought this up with Municipal and Community Affairs previously. There is this argument that this becomes municipal jurisdiction. However, I really do think that the NWT SPCA does great work across the territory. My question is: is the Premier willing to assign a department, I think probably MACA in this case, to take some responsibility and make sure that some department's mandate covers the NWT SPCA so that we are not just one-off funding every once in a while through the extraordinary policy? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, I am not willing to commit that we would actually fund SPCA directly. That would be inappropriate, to go there. Again, not known for being too politically correct, I am going to try to be respectful, though. Municipalities, the term is often used, "dogs, ditches, and dumps," which implies that SPCA care of animals is under the responsibility of municipalities. By-laws would give tickets for homeowners who don't take care; by-law will pick up your animals. They picked up my animal quite a few times. I was starting to fund them independently. What I can commit to is that we agreed that we would do a policy related to the extraordinary funds because, Madam Chair, it should not be that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. That is what I found in this government. When people come crying or they reach out to their MLAs, we tend to be reactive and provide it to them. I also know there are a lot of good causes out there that don't have the capacity to send somebody here. They don't have the capacity to reach out to their MLAs. We can't leave them behind. My commitment is to do enough of policy in

regard to all extraordinary funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the commitment to update the Extraordinary Funding Policy, but I don't think this is the place for the NWT SPCA to ever fit. I recognize that the heart of what the SPCA in Yellowknife is doing is municipal, but there is this issue: the SPCA also travels to communities and provides vaccines; they do spay and neuter clinics. This idea that they are not doing territorial work is a misunderstanding of the importance of animal health. A single dog attack in a community, when we throw in the medical travel, costs us more than the SPCA would need to go and do the preventative work to make sure we are not having rabies outbreaks. Right now, we don't have a single department in the GNWT responsible for animal health. I recognize that the Premier cannot make a commitment to provide core funding at this time, but to assign the responsibility for animal health and the work that happens on a territorial level to some department so that they don't keep running into this block of finding absolutely no one to go talk to about larger territorial animal health concerns.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make a commitment that I will get the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to start the discussions with municipalities and hamlets throughout the Northwest Territories because, even though it is a territorial issue, we are not talking wolves or caribou, that is ENR, we are talking domesticated animals that have been not cared for properly, is usually what happens with that or, in my case, not keeping them inside enough and being let go. That is an issue, a discussion that should be happening between the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and municipal governments. I will make a commitment that those discussions will be taking place in this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just while we are on this Extraordinary Funding Policy, part of the problem is there is no policy. This was raised in the last Assembly. We had some one-offs that made their way mysteriously into the Executive and Indigenous Affairs budget. When is this policy going to be finished? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that people are trying to nail down timelines. I would like to give timelines. However, I am also conscious of the amount of workload that we have to take on. What I commit to is that it will be done within two years, but, in the meantime, any extraordinary funding that comes across my desk as the Premier will be scrutinized. Perhaps I will even extend it to offering standing committee an explanation of the requests so that we can do this together as a team, which we should be doing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I recall seeing in the last Assembly a policy that was virtually finished. I think all it needed was somebody to sign it. I am going to leave that with the Minister. I don't think it needs two years. It was already finished. She just has to probably pick up the old document, reprint it, and sign it. I want to move on to the single-window service centres. I think the last one that was established was in Jean Marie in 2018-2019. It doesn't look like there is anything in this budget for another community. Is that the case? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have money internally. We are looking at the twenty-third one. The region that we are looking at is the Deh Cho. That is still in negotiations though. We are planning on implementing a twenty-third single-service window. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister point me to what line item on page 115, where I would find that increase of one PY? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. You won't see it in these mains because it is not an increase. It has actually been there on the books for a number of years. It is just a matter of implementing that program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to thank the Minister for that. I want to move on to the Office of Devolution Initiatives. In her opening remarks, she mentioned that one of the purposes of this office is that they are assigned the lead of a review of the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement transitional provisions as they relate to the MVRMA. I think that I understand what that is about, but what is our objective in that review? What are we trying to accomplish? Thanks, Madam Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Martin Goldney.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Those discussions are intended to review the transitional provisions of the devolution agreement, with the expectation that we can come to an agreement with the federal governments and our Indigenous government partners on the best place to have the legislative authority for the MVRMA, or further consideration of whether more authority should be delegated to the Government of the Northwest Territories, recognizing that responsibility for lands and resources, for the vast majority of those lands and resources, has transferred. The intent of those discussions is really to determine: are we best set up to reflect that reality? Do we have the authorities in the right place, recognizing that the goal of devolution was to have the people of the Northwest Territories better positioned to make the decisions? It's important, though, to add that the MVRMA is unique in that it also governs decisions of the federal government as they relate to lands and resources, as well. We are just looking at a conversation with our Indigenous government partners and the federal governments; do we have the right balance and the right governance for lands and resources under that piece of legislation? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I figured that that was the kind of response I was going to get. We have some delegated authority under the MVRMA. Presumably, the objective here is to increase the delegated authority and/or give us some ability to change parts, perhaps, of the MVRMA ourselves. I'm not opposed to that in principle, but I think that it has to be approached very carefully, and it is going to require the support of the Indigenous governments.

I think that there is the mistaken belief that, if and when GNWT gets control, we could just higgledy-

piggledy start changing things. That's not the case at all. These are constitutionally entrenched provisions. They cannot be changed unilaterally, and Mr. Harper's government got themselves in very hot water over this. In fact, it ended in litigation with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated; they took the federal government to court and stopped some changes to the MVRMA.

I think this has to be approached very, very carefully, and I have every confidence that the deputy minister is well aware of this and understands this, but that is not very well-communicated to our public, who think that, for whatever reason, or some segments of the business community think, that things take too long to happen and so on. You can't just start going in and changing things. How are we going to communicate that to the public and the business community, and build confidence in our environmental management and resource management system? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. This work is not being done alone. The Member is right; we need to do this with our Indigenous governments. This work has been at the intergovernmental council table that all Indigenous governments who have signed on to devolution are part of, and it's still open to other Indigenous governments who wish to sign on. This will not be a unilateral decision based on the GNWT.

I heard the Member's concerns about making sure that it is communicated properly. Out of respect for the Indigenous governments that sit at the intergovernmental council, Madam Chair, I will bring the Member's concerns to the table. I have stated at that table that the Government of the Northwest Territories is one seat at that table. We are no longer the controller; we are one seat, one member. Because I have made that commitment to the intergovernmental council, it would be inappropriate for me to sit here, Madam Chair, and make commitments on behalf of them without their permission. It would be totally hypocritical of me. What I can commit to, though, is to bring the concerns about the need for communications, because I agree that we should be communicating better, to the intergovernmental council and take their feedback on how we should be communicating. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I don't want to go off on a long tirade here, but

if we want to convince the federal government that we can actually do a good job managing our resources, we have to do a lot better. We've had devolution in place for five years. There were some legislative changes made in the last Assembly, and we improved a lot of that legislation as it went through the Regular MLAs, but there is a number of things that have happened: Cantung went into receivership; we were on the hook; we were able to offload that back to the federal government; Cameron Hills; the Tlicho All-Season Road, the review board gave a scathing indictment of our participation as a government in that proceeding. We had a manager in charge of that project write to a Minister while it was in a consult to modify a process; totally inappropriate.

The only work that we have achieved in the last Assembly on financial security was rolling back mandatory requirement for financial security. We're going to have a very tough time demonstrating that we can responsibly manage resources in this jurisdiction with that kind of stuff happening. We've got to fix this. That's what I have been harping on for the last four years, and I am going to keep doing it in this Assembly. We've got to fix that, if we want to convince others, the federal government, the Indigenous governments, that we can actually responsibly manage resource development.

I see that my time is up, Madam Chair. That's my rant for the day, but it'll keep happening day after day until we fix this system. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't hear a question in that; I'll take it as a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. Just going through, I have a quick question about the expansion of our Single Window Service Centres. It looks like it's going to be coming out in three phases. It affects two communities in my riding: Deninu Kue and Lutselk'e. It looks like it's going to be rolled out in three phases. Can the Minister just explain to me what phase 1, phase 2, and phase 3 are, just to give us a little bit of understanding of what that is? Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Myself and my department are a bit confused. If we're talking about the Single Window Service Centres, it isn't a phased approach, Madam Chair. We are just waiting to open the doors to

negotiate with the Indigenous governments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: No, my mistake. I guess, what I was referring to there is that it looks like there is going to be some work with the federal government. I just wanted to actually maybe ask the Minister how this is progressing along and what our end goal is here, working with the federal government for our Single Window Service Centres. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Single Window Service Centres used to be just services that were provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories. In recent years, I think it was just in the last year, if I'm correct, or the last two years, the federal government has asked us if they could be a part of that picture, as well, because not only do our small communities not know what services the GNWT provides, they don't know what the federal government provides, as well. They are actually a partner in the services that are available that the service centre windows have access to. The federal government right now, currently, is not at every one of the 22 service windows. They don't all, actually, have the federal component in that, but I am more than willing to have negotiations with the federal government, if they're listening, to broaden that, because I do think it makes sense. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to get some clarity on that, and I think I got my answer. Mahsi cho. Mahsi cho, nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions on the directorate? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 115, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$6,588,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, we will move on to the executive council offices on pages 118-120. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The first line item on this page is Cabinet communications and protocol, and we fielded questions earlier from the Member for Yellowknife North in regard to communication. On a previous

page, there was a line item for corporate communications, which outlined about \$1,500,000, and then the section we were just in, under regional operations, it stated that one of the responsibilities of regional operations was also to provide an open line of communication between the regions. I'm just wondering: within these three different line items, how do they work together, and how do they support communications for the Government of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I did have to get clarifications. I was just aware that there are only two. There's the Cabinet communications and corporate communications. I was wondering where the regional was coming from, but I think I understand. The difference is that the corporate communications is really departmental-focused, and working with the regions to actually, hopefully, get good news out there to deal with things, advisories to the public, that kind of stuff. Cabinet communications, Madam Chair, is more focused on Ministers and Cabinet. To be blunt, trying to get us out of trouble, a lot of times, trying to be proactive in some of the initiatives that Ministers are doing, proactive in some of the priorities, the mandates, et cetera. They work together because, if you don't, if Cabinet is on its own without working with the corporate communications, then you have Cabinet in their communications saying one thing, "We're going to paint the sky blue," and, if we don't get that down into the level of corporate, then they'll be saying that we're going to paint the sky red. It's necessary. They're two separate. One is for Cabinet, one is for departments, but we are trying to work together. In fairness, again, I'll go back to our communications. It's something that's been identified as an issue. We're just at a new government. We're just realigning on how best services will be provided in our communications as we go forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I really appreciate the Premier's response. The last line item there is travel. Travel in 2018-2019 was at \$82,000, and then, for main estimates this year, it's at \$420,000. Is that because it was leading into an election year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Ms. Kennedy.

MS. KENNEDY: Madam Chair, in 2019-2020, a change was made. Previous to 2019-2020, departments were responsible for Ministerial travel

budgets. In 2019-2020, we established a budget in the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs to pay for Ministerial travel, so that's the difference.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Kennedy. Are there any further questions for executive council offices? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 119, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, executive council offices, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$4,466,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Moving on to Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs, pages 124-127. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I had a question for funding with regard to funding the Northwest Territories friendship centres. First of all, I want to ask the first question, I guess. I always thought friendship centres came under federal jurisdiction. This is just extra to that?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Historically, friendship centres have been supported by the federal government. That's correct. I think what we saw in the previous years was a request from the NWT/Nunavut Association of Friendship Centres, recognizing that they were experiencing less funding from the federal government and still identified needs, so, this item really reflects an effort from the GNWT to support them on a short-term basis, to try to encourage them to find extra sources of funding by offering some time-limited matching funds, and, at that same time, offering a little bit of support for that association, to have capacity within it, to also look for resources. It wasn't intended as ongoing funding to replace federal government funding. It was meant to support the association's own efforts to find new sources of ongoing funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$170,000 in grant funding to individual Northwest Territories friendship centres, could you give me the breakdown of the disbursements, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have the list of all of the friendship centres with us right now. We can get it to committee, I believe there are five, but we will

provide that to the Members. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Just further to that, I am in favour of making sure that friendship centres are funded properly, Madam Chair. It is really important because I know federal funding is not enough and friendship centres do a great job within the communities. They do a wide variety of programs that benefit a community. Some of them do soup kitchens, some of them do lunches for impoverished children, and there are so many other functions that they take care of that a lot of other organizations don't. I just want to make sure that the funding is disbursed evenly. The \$170,000, I don't think it's enough, but anyways, that's another thing that we should have a look and reconsider in the future, that we upgrade that a bit. I know there's never ever enough when it comes to looking after friendship centres. I just want to make that point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I'll take that as a comment. I didn't hear a question, but I did hear the lobbying of the Member, stating that we need to care for the friendship centres. They do provide valuable services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So, this, I think, is part of Executive and Indigenous affairs, where federal engagement is found. I'm just wondering, do we still retain a lobbyist firm in Ottawa? That was something that was done in the last Assembly, and I just want to know if that's the case. We have some kind of retainer with some firm, and what it's costing us. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. If Members could, speak up a little louder. It's hard to hear you. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was trying to figure out what we were paying for it. We do still have a director of public affairs, I believe is the position, a deputy secretary for public affairs. Madam Chair, I do want to say that, when I first became the Premier of this government, I questioned and said, "Why do we have a person in Ottawa? We don't need a person in Ottawa. We need jobs in the North." I'm a huge advocate of jobs in the North. However, in this

case, I have learned the vital necessity of having somebody in Ottawa. It's one position. In fact, it might be going down to a part-time position now. That person is on the ground. They are working with the federal departments. They are getting the information that isn't in the news. It's invaluable, that position. They not only provide the services what's up, what might be coming down the windpipe. If I give direction, they are in those departments. They are looking to lobby for us. They also have a space for us. Oftentimes, when we go to the federal government, we need to have office space. That space is open to all of my Cabinet Ministers. Other organizations have used it. It's a great place that represents the Northwest Territories, has a footprint there. I believe it was costing about \$120,000 a year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I think the Premier misunderstood my question. Maybe that's because I was speaking too quietly. I'm asking if we have a federal lobbyist firm, a company that does a registered federal lobbyist in Ottawa. Do we still retain those services? Thanks Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have been corrected, and I take the numbers. That would be the global affairs, the organization called. That is where the \$120,000 goes. They are not lobbyists, Madam Chair. They are to give us strategic advice. They've helped in other ways, as well. I do know that they actually provided some communication support to me, as well, but they are actually to tell us what's happening and they help our lobbying efforts. They are not our lobbyists. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, I'm sure they are registered on the federal lobbyists registry, but I don't want to continue this. We're still paying \$120,000 to some folks in Ottawa.

I want to ask the Minister, in the last government, the Regular MLAs, we never got to meet ever with federal Ministers when they came here for visits. I don't think there have been a lot of visits so far, but there were NWT days in the past where a whole bunch of MLAs went to Ottawa and did lobbying. Would this Minister look at the idea or the issue of Regular MLAs actually getting to meet with federal Ministers when they come here? We're not a party system, but sometimes it's important that we have

an opportunity or that they have an opportunity to hear what other elected officials say beyond just the Ministers themselves. It's something I want to plant that seed with the Premier and get her to think about that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was trying to think. I do believe that in the last Assembly, actually, I did bring down Members with me. I'm trying to think. The Status of Women, I'm pretty sure, but maybe I can be corrected, but I'm pretty sure that Regular Member actually did meet and take part in meetings, as well. I'm not averse to it. However, I do need to say that, when federal Ministers come to the Northwest Territories, I wish it was on our agenda. It is not on our agenda. It is on their agenda. Oftentimes, I've had trouble getting my own Cabinet Ministers into those meetings. Oftentimes, I have trouble getting myself into those meetings, as the Premier of the Northwest Territories. I will carry those words forward. I am sure the federal government is hearing. They tend to listen when their name is called, but, again, I can't commit because they are not my planned trips. They are the federal government's planned trips. If we have a planned trip and we invite them and they come and then we set the agenda, then, Madam Chair, I would be more open to that because it would be our agenda. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just trying to plant the seed now because, certainly, I never got to meet a federal Minister in the last Assembly. I had a strong interest in a number of issues but was never invited to meet with federal Ministers. As an example, the leader of the Green Party, and I'm not a member of the Green Party, she came to Yellowknife. I got her in to speak to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment. That's the kind of doors that I think we should look at be opening for each other. I don't want you to just work with the governing party. There are other parties. It's a minority government. It's really important that we're going to work with all the parties that are in Ottawa

I want to move on, though, to a different topic if I can, Madam Chair, and it's about the negotiations with Indigenous governments. I see from the Minister's opening remarks that \$495,000 is being sunset, and that was money that was used to access third-party negotiation facilitation services to assist in finalization of self-government agreements. In the last Assembly, there was one initialling of a self-government agreement. That's

the only progress that was made in the last Assembly. Were these services actually accessed? Were they used? What was actually accomplished? We only had one agreement in principle in the last Assembly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was a commitment in the last government, I believe, by the Premier. What I heard, I'm going off of Member's words, is that the Premier had committed to resolving all the self-government agreements and the land claim agreements. Again, that's hearsay. I think, in the last Assembly, a push to try to accommodate that is that we did bring in a whole bunch of facilitators to do that. It wasn't proven to be as effective, Madam Chair, so this money is sunsetting off of it. Sometimes, facilitation is important so, Madam Chair, right now, I've met with one Indigenous government that is wanting to have a facilitator, an expert facilitator. It's in our priorities, as well. We are committed to providing that internally at this point, until we look at our priorities. I'm not averse to it, but I'm also not willing to throw money out the window. If it's desired by the Indigenous governments, if it's close and it will provide success, then we should be open to looking at it, but we shouldn't be just throwing money out the window if there's no success. It's about measurable outcomes, again. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I agree it's about outcomes, and there really weren't a lot from the last Assembly, just in terms of negotiations. I guess what I'm hearing now is that there are negotiations that are continuing, but people come to the table and they say, "I don't have a new mandate. I'm still operating under the old mandate that was given in the last Assembly." I don't know what's happened at the tables, but it doesn't sound like there's very much. When are our negotiators going to get new mandates, a different approach, more willingness to work together in implementing the existing agreements and finalizing the ones that are out there? When are these new mandates going to come to the negotiators? If we need new negotiators, are those changes going to be made, as well? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have made a commitment in this government to look at the mandates and negotiations. How we move forward to that, I think

we've put it out there that that would be within a joint committee, to do that work. I'm open to that, as well. However, I do want to say that I think there's a misperception. Negotiations are still going on. They've been going on. It's not that they have zero mandate, Madam Chair. It's that they have a mandate that says, for example, it might say, you can go into, there are three categories: land, royalties, and money. Often, Indigenous governments pick and choose amongst that, and so, when they come and if we say, as Cabinet, that we will give this much land, and the negotiators have broached that, and then the Indigenous government says, "But we want more, of everything," then it has to come back through Cabinet. When we're talking money, nothing can be done at that level without coming through FMB, Financial Management Board. That is good practice. We're not just throwing money out and saying, "Go ahead; spend millions," and if they ask for \$50 billion, go ahead. There has to be some accountability, Madam Chair. They already do have mandates to move forward in the negotiations; it's only if they exceed that, then they bring it forward, but we are willing to look at our mandate negotiations in that joint committee as we move forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Do we presently have a federal engagement strategy?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. As we stated, we do have the position in Ottawa. That is what we are working on right at this moment. As soon as the mandate came out for the federal government and we finalized our mandate, that was our priority. We're doing that work right now, and it's not only having an engagement strategy; it's actually getting the work done. I am antsy, Madam Chair. Every moment that I sit here is time that I am kept away from lobbying for the needs of the North. We need to get the work done. We need to get into Ottawa. We need to express our needs, and we need to get their support. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am happy to hear all of that, and I agree. I actually support us hiring a federal lobbying firm. The reality is that Ottawa is a completely different world and is an extremely complex world to navigate. If we want our Ministers getting time with federal Ministers, we have to go through lobbyists. I wish that we lived in

a different world, but that's it. I am happy to have a position in Ottawa that is constantly working those hallways. That's how we get money from Ottawa. I am supportive of this, but I would like to see what our strategy is, how we're approaching different Ministers. All of us are busy, so would the Minister commit to sharing the federal lobbying strategy with the Standing Committee on Oversight and Accountability?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I am going to try to be politically correct. I will commit to sharing our federal engagement strategy with the appropriate standing committee and receiving their feedback. I will not commit to waiting until I get their feedback before I'm down there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I appreciate that, and it's the same thing. I don't expect negotiating tables to stop because we're updating policies, and I don't expect federal engagement to stop because we want to put it in writing.

I guess my other concern is that, I think, in past Assemblies, this has all fallen on the Premier and Executive and Indigenous Affairs, but the reality is that we have to be making as much noise as we can in Ottawa. Would the Premier direct each of the departments to also come up with a federal engagement strategy? I know that some of our departments -- I've spoken to the Minister of ECE -- have as much as six corresponding federal Ministers. It can become very difficult to even try to meet with that many over the course of four years. I would like to see, kind of, all systems go in all departments in this. Is the Premier willing to direct the Ministers in each department to also come up with a federal engagement strategy?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will commit that the federal engagement strategy will have consistent messaging for all departments and all Ministers. It would not be a good thing if I was going to Ottawa and said, "Paint our sky blue," and Ministers were saying, "Paint it red," or "Paint it orange," or "Paint it green." We all need to be on the same message carrying forward.

I also want to expand that and say that we're working on a federal engagement strategy for our own government, but at the same time, and it might

not be a strategy that I'm willing to share as much, because we're also talking to our Indigenous governments and having the strategy for how we all move forward. That might not be something that I am willing to share at this time, because it is something between the Indigenous governments and our government, but the engagement that we move forward is critical, and we commit to trying to carry as many common messages as possible when we approach the federal government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that, and I look forward to continuing the lobbying efforts. I, myself, have been reaching out to Indigenous governments, and I hope that we can see things like NWT Days get going again. I think that there has been challenge over the years to, "Why are we sending all these politicians to Ottawa?" The reality is that those meetings result in more funding for our people.

I would like to switch gears here. The GNWT under this department has a 2012 Respect, Recognition, and Responsibility policy. It's a great policy that commits our government to the inherent right of Indigenous people to self-govern. What I think has kind of happened is that there is a disconnect between our policies, what we are saying, and what is actually happening at the table. I don't know whether to call you the Premier or the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, but Madam Chair, would the Premier commit to bringing forward our Respect, Recognition, and Responsibility policy to the Cabinet table and getting it out there that this government is committed to the inherent right of Indigenous people to self-govern?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have no problem bringing forward the policy on Respect, Recognition, and Responsibility to Cabinet to share with them. I will give direction to Cabinet to read that, to the deputy ministers, as well, to read that. However, I want to qualify that that will actually be reviewed as we begin the UNDRIP work, as well. That is not something that is off the table, and it is not something that is written in stone at this time. It will be part of the process as we look at UNDRIP. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Premier had mentioned just previously that she wanted to make sure that she painted the sky the right colour. Well, I want to see it green: money. Over the last few days, we have been talking about co-investment dollars. There is a pot of money out there, and we seem to be having trouble getting hold of it. I guess what I would like to ask the Premier is, with our person in Ottawa, if that person could work on that issue for us, as well? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had to get clarification with my department to make sure that the co-investment fund is only when we speak about the housing. My understanding is that it is. That is a policy that will have to be defined within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. However, once that is defined, all needs, including that, will be brought forward to the federal government. It is important that we keep reinstating our needs, reinstating how we are working better with Indigenous and community governments and the NGO sector, as we move forward. In my first engagements with all federal Ministers and our Prime Minister, they were totally ecstatic that this government is changing the way that we are doing business, that we are actually looking at partnerships, and that is something that I will carry forward for the whole of my term. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I hope that all that excitement turns into dollars for us, so that we can get some programs and help the people of the NWT. I just want to turn to the friendship centres, I guess, and NGOs. The Premier talked previously about how we need to make sure that the dollars we are spending are providing a quality service and that there is accountability there. Well, I think we have to balance that, as well, with what we are requiring for accountability, because we don't want these NGOs to get bogged down in red tape.

To me, I would look at it and I think, "Well, if we got their financial statements at the end of the year and see, kind of, what they spend their money," that would, in most instances, suffice. For instance, in Hay River, I think that friendship centre brings in, maybe, \$130,000 from the feds for maintenance of the building, operations, and for one staff person. That is \$130,000 for about a 4,000-square-foot building. Then they have another five staff, which is basically paid for by programs. Really, when you look at it, we have six, seven jobs there, and then

there are some part-time jobs there for very little money. They are working within tight budgets and delivering some fantastic programs for the community. The question I have is: when we are talking about the NWT friendship centres, I am wondering, this goes for all the NGOs we are talking about that have "NWT" in front of them, are we talking NWT friendship centres, or are we talking Yellowknife friendship centres? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are talking NWT-wide friendship centres. Yellowknife, I didn't even think we had one, but we do have one, the Tree of Peace here. We are talking right across the board. When we talk about measurable outcomes, I will expand on that, as well. I am not okay with just giving even \$100,000 to people and saying, "There you go. Give me your financial statement," but I also think that measurable outcomes don't have to be a 50-page document. It can be as simple as you keep your door open from 9:00 to 5:00, Monday to Friday, and you provide services to the public. There has to be something. I have heard stories where organizations take money and then they close their doors or they open when they want. That is not what we want to see. We are committed to breaking down our red tape. It doesn't have to be a 50-page document when we're talking about measurable outcomes. It can be very simple. This is public money, so there should be some qualifiers when we give money out the door. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you for that answer. I agree. There always has to be some accountability, I think just the degree of it and what our expectations are. Because we can send a message at this level, but the bureaucracy then takes it and sometimes it gets skewed. I have a problem with the accountability part. As long as we don't get carried away and we are taking away from the people who are the end users at the end of the day.

I just have a comment with respect to negotiations in the claims process. People, two elections ago, they voted for change. They got it, and they weren't too happy. This year, again, they voted for change. We know negotiations are ongoing. We know things are slowly moving ahead. People want to see something different. They want some fresh ideas. How can we speed this up, or can we even speed it up, or is it just going to continue to stay bogged down with respect to bureaucracy and indecision? I

have hope and belief that this government will find a way to make change and to work with Indigenous governments in a positive manner to move ahead. If we don't, this territory is in trouble. Looking back, it is a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair. That is all I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. I will take that as a comment. Are there any further questions for Indigenous and intergovernmental affairs? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 122. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Indigenous and intergovernmental affairs, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$7,727,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Members. Please return now to the departmental summary on page 105. Executive and Indigenous Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$22,886,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is complete?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister, and thank you to your witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Committee, we will take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will call this meeting back to order. We will now consider the Legislative Assembly. Does the Speaker have any opening remarks?

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Yes, I do, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly is seeking an operations expenditures appropriation of \$22,720,000 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. This is an increase of \$277,000, or a 1.23 percent increase, in funding from the 2019-2020 Main Estimates.

This budget represents the important work we will undertake during the upcoming fiscal year. The proposed funding will be used to advance strategic initiatives and address forced-growth matters. These are:

- additional staff resources for our statutory offices to meet increasing demands;
- additional funding for the Office of the Clerk for staff resources and communication initiatives; and
- to address Members' compensation and allowances based on the consumer price index.

The Legislative Assembly remains committed to supporting the good work of our statutory offices. With new legislation coming into force and better public awareness, our statutory offices are experiencing increasing and more complex caseloads. The Legislative Assembly is keenly aware of the importance of these offices having the resources needed to meet these demands.

Due to recent amendments to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner will be required to take on additional responsibilities and oversight obligation. It will change from a body with recommendation-making power only to an adjudicative role with authority to issue binding orders where the act applies. The increase in compensation to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner reflects these increased responsibilities.

The Ombud Act was passed during the 18th Assembly after more than two decades of calls by Northerners for the creation of a parliamentary Ombud office. On November 18, 2019, the NWT Office of the Ombud officially opened in Hay River. Setting up this office outside of Yellowknife sends a strong signal that this office is for the whole territory and further helps and promotes decentralization. The office consists of a team of three: the Ombud, an intake officer, and an early resolution officer.

Madam Chair, the Special Committee on Transition Matters in the 18th Assembly recommended that additional resources be provided to support the important work of our committees, specifically noting the need for an additional committee clerk, legislative research advisor, and communication support. The Office of the Clerk operations expenditures has been increased to account for these three new positions.

In closing, I want to thank all Members, my colleagues from the Board of Management, and the Assembly staff for their contributions and efforts in working towards these main estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair. This concludes my opening remarks, and I look forward to answering any questions that Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Speaker wish to bring any witnesses into the House?

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Yes, I do. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness in. Mr. Speaker, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today, we have Ms. Kim Wickens, deputy clerk of Members and Precinct Services, and also, my right-hand man, Mr. Tim Mercer, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Legislative Assembly. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary. We are going to begin on page 8, expenditures on behalf of Members. Questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just curious, comparing Members' pension expenses from 2019-2020, why we actually appear to be spending less on our pensions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. I will hand it over to Mr. Mercer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Mercer.

MR. MERCER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The pension contribution for Members is actually divided into two segments. The Members' pension expense is actually an accounting adjustment that is done to the pension plan every year. It reflects, basically, the change in assets and liabilities on the balance sheet of the consolidated revenue fund. That accounting adjustment has gone down. However, within the Members' operating expenses, there is a segment of the annual cash contribution to the pension plan which has actually increased by \$500,000. They don't fully offset each other. The accounting adjustment is largely just a bookkeeping entry, but, in fact, under the Members' operating expenses, there has been an increase in the cash contribution this year of \$500,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Mercer. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see here that the Members' compensation and allowances has increased based on the consumer price index. Can I just get a sense of how that policy works, and is that happening year over year?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Yes, every year, it goes up by 2 percent, roughly.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to confirm that that is as set out in the Legislative and Executive Council Act?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions on expenditures on behalf of Members? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know that one of the recommendations from the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits -- I may not get the name of it right -- was to look at the issue of benefits for constituency assistants and to actually include that as a program that we would offer constituency assistants. Is this where I would find that, and can someone point me to the line item where that might show an increase? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Yes, thank you. That falls under Members' operating expenses. The total amount is actually \$67,000 for CA benefits, and that's through NEBS, which comes out of the budget, your constituency budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. No, that's good to know. Thanks, I don't have any further question. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Any further questions on expenditures on behalf of Members? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 9, Legislative Assembly, expenditures on behalf of Members, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$9,530,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Turning to Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, beginning on page 10. Questions? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. There are some fairly significant changes here. I know that last year, 2019-2020, of course was an election year, so I would expect to see a big increase in expenditures for the year. It has dropped down to \$439,000 for 2020-2021, which is lower than the actuals for 2018-2019. Can I get an explanation as to what is happening here? Thanks, Madam Chair. Then I flip the page. I see that there were three full-time staff last year, and now there are no staff. What's happening here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. As most of the contracts expire at the end of March, due to our post-election year, a lot of the contracts are until a few months after the election or the following year, but we will have one staff, a returning deputy officer on staff, and a part-time position, as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know that the bulk of the workload happens during an election year. We also made some changes to the Elections Act in the last Assembly to better define the role of the Chief Electoral Officer and give them a bit more of a mandate in terms of public education and promotion and so on. I'm just a bit surprised to see that we're not budgeting for anybody in the office as of, starting, April 1st. What is the \$439,000 for? Are we going to have some kind of contract to have somebody to serve in that capacity? I'm just trying to understand what's happening here, Madam Chair. It's just coming as a bit of a surprise. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you, great question. Actually, we will still have on staff our Chief Electoral Officer, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, and also a part-time position. Leading up to

the next election, we'll see all these positions put out again and fully staffed. With the positions that we will have on staff, that will conclude the post-election work that is required, so we'll have, actually, three staff on, well, two and a half, actually.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I don't want to prolong this, but as chair of rules and procedures, I know that the report from the last election is due very soon. It has to come before rules and procedures, and that's usually presented by the Chief Electoral Officer. We have a public hearing, we seek input, and so on. If that position is not staffed, I just want to make sure that we're going to be able to continue to do that work. I understand that there will be a contract put in place. Should we be expecting, then, a supplemental appropriation partway through the year, to properly staff up this office, given that the contracts are ending, and so on? Is that what we should expect to see moving forward? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. No, there will be no further funding requested. The Chief Electoral Officer position will still be staffed. It's just the extra staff that was needed during the election period, so we'll have the Electoral Officer, the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer position, and a part-time position, as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I'm just trying to reconcile the figure for 2018-2019. The actual is \$754,000, and then, for 2020-2021, it's \$439,000. Were there some pre-election expenditures then, back in 2018-2019, that we start to see a ramping up? Maybe I'm just trying to understand that, the cycle here, and it's off-sheet. Is that what happened? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Yes, because this was leading up to the previous election, there was a lot of training, as well, that the Chief Electoral Officer put forward, especially in the communities, with the returning officers. That had a lot to do with it, plus bringing on staff, as I mentioned. That took a lot of it. The changes that were being proposed, the Chief Electoral Officer, are consistent with what she requested. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess why I'm asking these questions, as I said earlier, I'm using my lens as the chair of rules and procedures. I just want to make sure that, this function, that we're giving the right amount of resources to carry out this function. I guess I'm just going to have to watch this moving forward. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: I'll take it as a comment. As I mentioned, it's fully consistent with what the Chief Electoral Officer has requested. As I mentioned in my opening statement, we're always trying to work closely with the independent commissioners and continue that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are there any further questions to Office of the Chief Electoral Officer? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Over the years, I think, there has been some discussion with kind of expanding the role of the Chief Electoral Officer to also include municipal elections. I know there are a number of different ways that local authorities run their own elections. I think what we kind of see is that the Chief Electoral Officer gets really busy when there's an election, obviously, and when there is an Electoral Boundaries Commission. Then we see these fluctuations in the budget. I guess my question to the Speaker is: is there any desire or current conversations happening about expanding local authorities' elections under the parameters of the Chief Electoral Officer?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. That's something that was recommended, and I believe MACA is working on that at the moment. Maybe we'll get a briefing note on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. I look forward to however this works, the Speaker working with the Chief Electoral Officer and MACA to provide the appropriate standing committee an update on how that is working. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. I'll take that as a comment. Was that a comment? I didn't hear a

question in there. Are there any further questions to Office of the Chief Electoral Officer? If there are no further questions, turn to page 11, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 main estimates, \$439,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Moving on to the office of the clerk, beginning on page 13. Questions? If there are no further questions, please turn to page 14. Legislative Assembly, office of the clerk, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$8,650,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Office of the speaker, and that is on page 17 to 19. Questions? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 18. Legislative Assembly, office of the speaker, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$507,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Statutory offices, beginning on page 20 to 24. Questions? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. I note that the Human Rights Adjudication Panel amount has gone up over last year and the year before. Can the Speaker say why that is? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Due to increased workload, we've increased the Human Rights Adjudication Panel from a part-time position to a full-time position.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. My next question has to do with the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I note, in the Speaker's opening remarks, he talked about a greater workload. Is this funding for just one position, or what exactly in terms of staffing does it cover? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. It's adding one position to a full-time position, and also an investigator which the Information and Privacy Commissioner felt that they needed in order,

instead of things going to litigation, to try to resolve them, I do believe. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. My final question has to do with the languages commissioner. It's my understanding that this position has been vacant for some time, so can the Speaker tell us what the spending in this fiscal year is for? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife Centre. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. The position isn't vacant at the moment. We still have a languages commissioner. The increases were due to the plans that were in place because we did put it out to competition, and someone was selected, and we budgeted to have the office moved to Deline. Since everything was planned here and also moving that position to a full-time, because the person declined on the position, the board decided to re-advertise. Because we made those changes to make it a full-time position and have the option to relocate to a different community throughout the Northwest Territories, the board felt it was only fair to put it out, the competition, once again. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are there any further questions? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have one quick question regarding the Ombud. Just looking at page 23, it says there are two full-time positions in the South Slave. I am just reading through. Earlier, my understanding, there were three positions in the Ombud office. Could that have been a typo, or did I miss something? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Mr. Speaker.

HON. FREDERICK BLAKE JR: Thank you. Including the Ombud, there are three positions. We have the Ombud plus two staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. No? No further questions. Are there any further questions on statutory offices? Seeing no further questions, please turn to 21. Legislative Assembly, statutory offices, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$3,594,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Now, we'll return to the departmental summary on page 5. Legislative Assembly, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$22,720,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does the committee agree that consideration of the Legislative Assembly is complete?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses out. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

Report of Committee of the Whole

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, and Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021. I would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Member for Yellowknife Centre. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you. Item 23, 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 Thursday, March 5, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
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
 - Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021
 - Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021
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 stands adjourned until Thursday, March 5, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:40 p.m.