



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 111

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, March 31, 2022

Pages 4205 - 4270

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Minister responsible for Homelessness
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Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson

(Hay River South)

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Minister of Justice

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Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
Minister of Lands
Minister responsible for Youth

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Finance
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
Minister responsible for the Status of Women

Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong

(Monfwi)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 31, 2022****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge (remote), Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler (remote), Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek (remote), Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong (remote).

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statement

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 240-19(2):
ENDING COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH
EMERGENCY

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Happy New Year. This is the end of the fiscal year and the end of the public health emergency.

Mr. Speaker, as you know it's been two years since we declared a public health emergency in the Northwest Territories and doing so disrupted the lives of NWT residents, along with people around the world, and they have been disrupted again and again by public health orders restricting travel and gatherings, closing schools to in-person learning, sending workers home, and preventing non-residents free movement across our borders - all to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Mr. Speaker.

Some residents have suffered serious illness and have been hospitalized. Sadly, 21 NWT residents have died, including elders and knowledge-keepers. I grieve with those who have lost loved ones.

The pandemic has taken a toll on the physical and mental health of many NWT residents. At the same time, it has also shown how resilient and kind Northerners are. During community outbreaks, neighbors, friends, and strangers stepped up to help one another by bringing food to those in isolation and offering other kinds of support where it was needed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely thank all healthcare workers across the NWT. We are

so grateful for their ongoing efforts over the course of this pandemic. Their work to manage every outbreak, deliver vaccines to every community, offer testing services to those who needed it, provide care for residents with more serious infections, and step up to be redeployed and offer their expertise when and where it was needed, they did all of this and I thank them.

When this pandemic began, we had a limited understanding of this virus, and with no vaccine or treatment available we had to take urgent action to manage the spread and prevent the health system from being overwhelmed. Once declared, the public health emergency enabled us to make decisions quickly about public health measures that would help keep us safe. It enabled the chief public health officer to issue orders to protect residents and minimize risk to the public. These orders included

- travel restrictions;
- mandated isolation for those infected or at risk of being infected;
- limiting the size of public gatherings;
- implemented infection control with physical distancing protocols; and,
- minimized the potential for outbreaks within high-risk populations such as long-term care facilities.

We also established a compliance, education and enforcement task force to respond to complaints, and investigate when orders weren't followed or when the public was at risk.

As part of our early warning surveillance strategy, we were one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to implement a wastewater surveillance program that later garnered international recognition. We have used wastewater signals to inform public health actions such as targeted testing of travellers. We also added the COVID-19 school screening program and the DetectNWT

program for businesses to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in both schools and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT launched the largest and most comprehensive vaccine program in the territory's history at the end of 2020, targeting high-risk populations before expanding to everyone else. By April 2021, vaccine teams had visited all NWT communities at least twice. We were also one of the first to roll out third doses and to vaccinate 12 to 17 year-olds. I am very proud of our efforts.

Today, four out of five eligible NWT residents are vaccinated and half over the age of 18 have had a booster shot.

Mr. Speaker, the public health measures taken by the GNWT have been guided by the most current scientific evidence, intended to save lives, and implemented to ensure that our health system could continue to function and respond. Now the data is showing us that the time is right to end the public health emergency.

With most of the population vaccinated and treatments available to lessen the severity of COVID infections, we are transitioning from a broad territory-wide emergency response to a continuous readiness approach that ensures our health system remains ready to respond to outbreaks, protect high-risk populations, and support communities with readiness planning. With a better understanding of COVID-19 and more tools in our toolbox, the public health emergency will end tomorrow.

To maintain readiness, we have transferred some resources from the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat to other GNWT departments. These resources include 8-1-1, wastewater testing, and communications, education and enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, the end of public health emergency means that we are moving away from public health orders and encouraging residents, businesses, and organizations to manage their own risk and make their own choices. Effective tomorrow, there will no longer be a requirement for masking, testing, or to report positive COVID cases. In addition, all travel restrictions will be removed and self-isolation plans will no longer be required. Isolation will no longer be mandatory but recommended.

We expect to see an increase in COVID cases because the pandemic is not over. It is simply entering a new phase.

I will conclude by asking all NWT residents to be considerate of each other's choices when it comes to COVID and to be patient and compassionate as we all adjust to another round of changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Best Minister statement ever.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 241-19(2):
APPRENTICESHIP – NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, education is very valuable and important in creating long-term successes for our residents. To address ongoing shortages of qualified trade workers in Northwest Territories communities, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is committed to supporting training for apprentices. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation continues to work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to promote and coordinate the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's apprenticeship program in order to secure additional candidates throughout the Northwest Territories. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation aims to hire up to 12 local housing organization apprenticeship positions in total this year.

The local housing organizations currently employ over 40 journey-certified staff in various trades that will support apprenticeship assignment opportunities in the future. The demand of apprenticeships at local housing authorities and organizations will be reviewed as a part of the LHO engagement aspect of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's renewal strategy.

Mr. Speaker, currently the Housing Corporation has eight apprenticeships with LHO staff in Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Sachs Harbour and Lutselk'e set up to write the trade entrance exam for the housing maintain serviceperson.

Through our contracts, we have 25 apprentices currently working on the Housing Corporation projects. By 2024 the Housing Corporation is committed to increasing the number of journey-certified apprenticeships by ten by requiring at least one apprenticeship for all housing projects.

In addition, through our contracts there have been 33 work placements for apprentices as a part of the Northwest Territories new

construction contract work since April 1st, 2020.

Being an apprentice is often one of the first steps in a lifetime of work in the trades. Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation aims to support apprenticeship through opportunities across all regions of the Northwest Territories despite challenges due to shortages of apprenticeship applications and certified skilled workers available to serve as their mentors and supervisors. The Housing Corporation is committed to this program.

The Corporation is happy to announce that two apprentices have been journey-certified since April of 2021. The first was a housing maintenance serviceperson in Norman Wells who gained their journey person certificate on April 1, 2021. The second gained their journey person certificate as an oil burner mechanic in Yellowknife at the end of October 2021.

Since this program started in 2007, the Housing Corporation has seen a total of 21 people receive their journeyman certificates.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the role of the Corporation that plays in the training and education of new apprentices across the Northwest Territories. We will continue to work with our colleagues at Education, Culture and Employment on the apprenticeship program as we work towards increasing the number of certified apprentices and celebrate the skilled trades across the Northwest Territories.

Being from a small community myself, I have seen firsthand the importance that skilled trades play in our communities. The apprenticeship program not only helps improve housing in the short term but provides apprentices with the skills and education to continue improving housing in the future as well. I look forward to seeing the good work these apprentices will be doing across the NWT. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 242-19(2):
GENERAL RATE APPLICATION

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: General rate application. Mr. Speaker, the past two years have been a difficult time for us all as we endured the challenges associated with a worldwide pandemic. We now face a period of economic uncertainty due in part of the war in Ukraine and its global implications on the availability of, and cost of, goods and services.

Mr. Speaker, this government is aware that residents of the Northwest Territories are concerned about cost of living, including the cost of electricity. We recognize that inflation is putting pressures on household budgets and rising costs make living in the North ever more expensive.

Electricity rates across the territory are set by the Public Utilities Board, an independent quasi-judicial body. Electricity rates are influenced by a number of factors including, but not limited to, revenues from sales, fluctuation in fuel prices, inflation, as well as fixed costs borne by utilities to operate and maintain their assets.

While our government is working hard to protect ratepayers from costs associated with the necessary investments in Northwest Territories Power Corporation's aging infrastructure during a period of unpredictable costs, there remains a need to revise rates across the territory. To this end, Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation filed a general rate application, or GRA, with the NWT Public Utilities Board yesterday afternoon, seeking a change to electricity rates in the communities the Power Corporation serves.

Unfortunately, despite significant federal and territorial government investments, current rates are not producing sufficient revenues to cover costs of producing and delivering electricity to customers. Northwest Territories Power Corporation requires an overall revenue increase of approximately 7 percent to address this situation, which will be phased in over two years. This is the first increase to base rates the Power Corporation has proposed since 2019.

The Northwest Territories Power Corporation has worked very hard to keep rates as low as possible while providing reliable services and investing into new and refurbished assets such as hydro units, local power plants, transmission lines, and power poles. Many of its assets are beyond their serviceable life and require investment now to avoid risks associated with catastrophic failure. We simply cannot risk waiting any longer.

Fortunately, in collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure, the Power Corporation has been able to secure federal funding from Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program towards several of its capital projects. To date, a total of \$89.4 million for six projects has been secured which would otherwise have been fully paid through rates.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT will also continue to help offset higher residential electricity rates across the NWT through the Territorial Power Support Program, or TPSP. This program ensures that all NWT households can, with modest energy saving efforts, pay the same power rates as Yellowknife. The GNWT subsidize the difference between local rates and Yellowknife rates up to 1000 kilowatt hours in the winter and up to 600 kilowatt hours the rest of the year. This program represents a cost to the GNWT of several million dollars annually.

The rate increases being proposed in most communities are in line with, or below, annual inflation since the last rate increase. The rate increases are also consistent with electricity rate increases in other parts of the country. In fact, after two years most residential customers will have experienced a bill increase equal to an average 1 percent per year since 2019 after TPSP is applied.

In the Snare and Thermal zones, the GRA proposes that rates increase by 2.5 percent in each of the next two years. A portion of this will be covered by the TPSP.

If the Power Corporation's proposal is accepted by the Public Utilities Board, it is estimated that an average residential customer in the Snare and Thermal zones will see an increase in their monthly bill of approximately 3.5 percent or \$11.50 after two years.

While the Taltson and Norman Wells rate zones have also not seen a rate increase since 2019, the need to adjust for historical issues and to meet Public Utility Board guidelines that rates in a given zone cover between 90 to 110 percent of cost to deliver electricity in that zone has resulted in a higher rate increase proposal.

Rates in Norman Wells and the Taltson zone do not currently meet the 90 percent threshold and must be increased by 10 percent in each of the two years to be able to close the gaps between what it costs to deliver power and revenues collected from customers.

To reduce the burden on the customers, the Power Corporation is asking that the proposed rate increases be implemented over the next two years rather than all at once.

The proposed rate increases in Norman Wells will also be offset by TPSP so the actual impact of the proposed rate increase on the residential customer will be the same \$11.50 per month as in Snare and Thermal, or a 3.5 percent increase over the next two years.

Customers in Northwest Territories Power Corporation communities in the Taltson zone have had the lowest rates in the NWT for a number of years and do not qualify for the TPSP. Even after the increase proposed in this GRA, rates in Fort Smith and Fort Resolution will remain lower than any other community in the Northwest Territories and lower than the TPSP rate.

Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that the timing for these proposed rate increases is less than ideal, Northwest Territories Power Corporation is required to file an application with the Public Utilities Board to address its current and fiscal realities.

Despite fiscal financial contributions from the government to fund necessary work on the Power Corporation's aging infrastructure, as well as government support programs designed to offset higher rates in communities there, unfortunately, remains a need to adjust rates at this time.

The Northwest Territories Power Corporation will continue to work with the GNWT and the private sector to increase its customer base as well as identifying operating efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities within the Corporation to help stabilize the cost of electricity moving forward while ensuring our grid remains reliable. Quyananni, mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1067-19(2): INUVIK MIKE ZUBKO AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier this week, the Inuvik Airport runway extension is a very important project, not only for my riding but for the North, for Canada, and it is a strategic location project for all North America. I also mentioned earlier this week the project is delayed and stalled even though there is a time-sensitive part of the construction that needs to occur this year or it will face a delay of another year.

Mr. Speaker, the estimated cost of this time sensitive work is estimated \$ 8 million and this money can save the project timeline and keep it on track.

Mr. Speaker, while I recognize there is costing estimates and other details that need to be

worked out, I argue to the government that this money needs to be allocated now so the project can continue and discussions on other financial aspects of the design of the project can occur at the same time. This will ensure that we safe is the project timeline while providing security and desperately needed jobs to the Inuvik and surrounding communities.

The overbudget costing of the project is not from what I understand due to the contractors but due to the specs that have been designed and given to the contractors, which was done after money was announced by the federal government. These specs were designed by the GNWT and are what is driving up the costs.

I am aware of there being discussions between the parties, and I am hoping that this time-sensitive phase has been resolved and that our local contractors can get to work and keep this project moving along. I will have questions for the Minister responsible later today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1068-19(2):
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS
SUPPORT

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you have heard me speak many times about alcohol and substance abuse, not only in the Tlicho region but in all of the regions throughout the Northwest Territories. Remember, there was a time when there was no alcohol or drugs in our communities. Now they are everywhere and many people feel powerless to control that.

The impact of alcohol and drugs have been devastating on our people. A person is affected mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Relationships are broken. Parents become unavailable and homes become unsafe. The families and the children are the ones who pay for this.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying this in a simple way here but as I speak, there are so many people in the midst of their addictions.

Mr. Speaker, there are also many peoples who want to be free of their addictions and are frighting to stay sober. We need community-led solutions for addictions and substance abuse recovery programs and aftercare. This is often overlooked. We must be able to continue to support people once

they have completed an addiction recovery program.

Currently, there are not enough community-led and on-the-land addictions recovery programs or aftercare programs available in the NWT.

In 2020, Minister Green of the Department of Health and Social Services was quoted by CBC that she was not aware of differential access to the kind of care people receive in Yellowknife compared to the rest of the territory.

Has Minister Green been to the community of Behchoko? To Gameti? To Wekweeti? To Whati? I can tell you there is a major difference in access to care for those in need of addictions and substance abuse support in the Tlicho region compared to Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Thank you. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1069-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MINING
ROYALTY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. By the time this House reconvenes in May, the opportunity for public comments on the review of NWT mining royalties will have closed without much public debate or media coverage. Why is this important?

There has never been a comprehensive and independent review of mining royalties and the present process is fundamentally flawed, with literally billions of dollars of potential government revenues at stake.

I submitted eight pages of comments on a previous version of a research paper. It took two attempts to even get an acknowledgement and there has never been a detailed response. Very few of my comments and suggestions were incorporated or implemented.

The only information to guide the review to date are the faulty PriceWaterhouseCoopers competitiveness study - a high-level discussion paper with vague next steps and no timelines, and a research paper that perpetuates the extractivism paradigm. The discussion and research paper contains no actual analysis of past performance of our mining royalty system let alone any evaluation of its fairness or ability to maximize revenues or benefits.

The secrecy surrounding mining royalties and the lack of any financial analysis continues to cripple this review and these papers barely acknowledge this problem let alone propose any solutions. Clearly this review is heading towards the status quo.

That should surprise no one given the rampant regulatory capture within the department as a result of its conflicting mandate of promoting and regulating mining. This review needs to be done independently just as was done with the procurement review, with an independent panel and a report.

These papers don't even make any substantive use of previous work done by world-class experts like the ITI commissioned Natural Resources Governance Institute Report, Northwest Territories Mining Sector Review and Benchmarking Study, or the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment's Report on "An Economic Analysis of the GNWT's Approach to the Mining Regime Fiscal Review". These experts have concluded that "the NWT has one of the world's most charitable fiscal regimes for the mining sector" and "the NWT sells its nonrenewable resources more cheaply than most of the other jurisdictions in the world." I'll have questions for the Minister of ITI on how to fix the fundamentally flawed review of our mining royalty that's currently underway. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1070-19(2):
RISING COST OF LIVING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, you caught me off guard. Mr. Speaker, in Hay River, and throughout the NWT, residents have been shocked by the high utility costs. Yes, utility costs. And food costs to date. This, along with other rising costs, is having a significant negative impact on one's financial ability to meet everyday living expenses.

Mr. Speaker, residents of the Northwest Territories are deeply concerned as they see the cost of living rise and their spending power shrink. I am hearing it, and I am sure you are hearing it as well.

We all know of residents moving or considering moving out of the Northwest Territories due to the inflated cost of living.

With the loss of each resident, we are not only losing a per capita federal allocation of \$34,716 annually, but considering problems of recruitment and retention we will also lose qualified individuals with skills and experience which will be difficult to replace.

Mr. Speaker, as with any decline in the economy, shock waves are felt long after the initial jolt, and what is being experienced post-COVID is further fueled by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. All is having a devastating affect on NWT residents' ability to meet their financial obligations while trying to save for the future.

For some, it may result in the loss of a business, loss of a home, loss of one's life savings, or not being able to place food on the table. If you are not living it, it is difficult to understand.

Mr. Speaker, we constantly hear government say there is limited resources available to financially assist residents beyond supports currently provided. This government and local governments are only adding fuel to the fire through increased taxes, increased business licence fees, increased utility costs, and increased service fees; All the while residents are hearing that other jurisdictions are finding ways to lessen the burden such as pausing collection of the fuel tax, offering rebates on electricity and fuel bills, suspending or lowering vehicle registration renewal and service fees, reduction of business licence fees, and other innovative solutions. It is solutions that residents are looking for from this government.

Mr. Speaker, residents need to know that we are here for them and that we are prepared to move forward with solutions that will lessen the impact of the rise in living costs.

When it comes to reducing the cost of living the question is - what is this government prepared to do to keep residents in the Northwest Territories? Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1071-19(2):
INUVIK AIRPORT RUNWAY EXPANSION
PROJECT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to provide some clarity around the issues at the Inuvik Airport. Media has reported that the need to dig a trench is the issue; however, it appears upon further

investigation this is not correct. The real issue with the airport project and why a delay now could cost this construction year has to do with the permafrost - our cold-hearted friend that causes so many headaches for engineers and contractors in the North.

Due to ground conditions, construction of the runway expansion in Inuvik requires that the design and construction factor in the protection of the permafrost. Similarly to how the ITH was constructed, the design calls for layers, or lifts, of granular material to be directly placed on top of the frozen ground. The layer then acts as a buffer, keeping the ground under the construction permanently frozen. This eliminates drainage issues and the ground heave that normally occurs with the freeze-thaw cycle of the active layer and provides a stable, frozen platform on which to execute new construction. If material is not placed this winter, under frozen conditions, the project will be delayed a year.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the execution of this project has been backwards. Rather than starting with a functioning design and developing a subsequent realistic budget, the GNWT has instead taken the \$150 million offered by the federal government and are now trying to force the design to meet the budget. The \$40 million "overrun" described in the press is in fact the additional amount of money required to meet the material specifications that the GNWT is asking for - specifications that may not align with conventional construction methods on permafrost.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about how decisions made by this department during the construction of the ITH have led to its degradation in only a few short years. Cuts and changes were made to material and design specifications based solely on budgetary considerations and now we have a road that doesn't function as designed.

Are these same senior bureaucrats now making engineering decisions, outside their capacity, which may result in our first major project with the DND going sideways?

I've often spoke about the need for 100 percent federal dollars and that the DND investment in infrastructure is a way for us to achieve this. Now I worry that, given how the project is shaping up, that the federal eye will wander to the east and west of us and, yet again, the NWT will be the losing territory while the other two benefit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Colleagues, before we continue, I'd just like to recognize former Member, former Minister, and former Speaker, Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty. Welcome.

Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1072-19(2):
THANK-YOU MESSAGE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as today is our last sitting day of this session, I want to use my statement to wish my constituents a good spring break. This weekend, Fort Smith will be hosting its annual Wood Buffalo Frolics winter carnival for the first time in three years. The pandemic shut out this festival for two years, and this year the event will be organized by a new set of individuals from years past.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish all my colleagues a good and restful break from this House until the May sitting. I know that as Members we will not always agree on all things that come before us, but that does not mean we become enemies and work against one another. As Members of this House, we must always strive to put differences aside and work together in the best interests of our constituents and all the people of the NWT. That is how a healthy and functioning democracy works.

Also, to any of my colleagues who wish to visit Fort Smith at any time, I want to assure you that you will be treated like royalty. That is the courtesy which I extend to all holders of any public office or any dignitaries visiting Fort Smith. My family and my community and I always welcome all visitors to our community with open arms.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish all the amazing constituents of Thebacha a happy and healthy spring break. I know the effects of the pandemic are still present in our lives in various ways. But I hope we can begin to put all that behind us and move forward in a new and positive direction as a community.

Also, as always, I would like to wish my community team a special thank you. They know who they are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1073-19(2):
VACCINE EQUITY

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow the public health emergency ends but the fight against COVID-19 does not end, and we must not stop talking about vaccination, Mr. Speaker. We are in a privileged position, having 82 percent of our population vaccinated and that remaining percentage is not due to a lack of vaccines. And it is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that those people who have refused to be vaccinated, some of whom have convinced themselves they are in an ideological battle for freedom, will see that tomorrow we have zero restrictions left and maybe they will go quietly, get vaccinated, and protect themselves and those who are most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are lucky that we got early access to vaccines. Canada is lucky that it secured access to vaccines yet, Mr. Speaker, in low income nations around the world, only one in ten people are vaccinated and this is due to a shortage of vaccines.

Canada has not lived up to its international co-vax commitments. We have not lived up to global vaccine equity. And we may be a small jurisdiction but I believe we need to be adding our voice to the fight for vaccine equity and making sure that we, and the Government of Canada, are a leader in this area.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just about vaccine equity. It is about the fight against COVID. This is a global battle and if we do not help the global self and low income nations get vaccine in their arms, we will see new variants emerge. We will not win the battle against COVID.

Mr. Speaker, during our vaccine implementation, we were leaders. We were one of the lowest waste jurisdictions. We did everything we could to make sure we did not waste vials of that vaccine, and I am proud of that work. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that we continue that work. We continue to advocate for vaccine equity and we make sure that we do not let a single dose expire in our hands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1074-19(2):
PANDEMIC SUPPORTS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be able to say that after two long years of living through a global pandemic, we are close to moving to an

endemic stage. April 1st marks the end of a two-year long public health emergency.

As we emerge into the endemic phase of COVID-19, we are picking up the pieces, trying to figure out what moving forward looks like individually and collectively.

We all appreciate and acknowledge the importance of cultural, sport, and recreation events as gatherings begin again. Some are already planning big events while others aren't yet comfortable. And that's okay. The shift to endemic is going to be a unique transition for each of us.

But gathering once played a huge role in our territory both for our quality of life and the economic stability of our communities. Gathering restrictions meant lost revenue sources for municipalities and as a result they are emerging with empty pockets yet expected to play a vital role again in our quality of life.

Further to lost revenue, Mr. Speaker, many communities incurred significant unforeseen costs to respond COVID-19 safety and community outbreaks. Costs, we can all agree, are not found in the municipal funding formula.

The federal government's CanNor's Canada Community Revitalization Fund recently announced \$3.1 million over two years to nine different NWT communities. These funds are to make public spaces more accessible and attractive as the territory opens up after the pandemic.

While these funds are much needed across the territory, 24 communities did not receive funds from this federal funding pot; notably are most remote communities in the Mackenzie and Beaufort Deltas. In addition, these funds do not kickstart the ability of municipalities to provide community activities.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the government is still managing the costs of COVID-19 and there will be many more costs to incur as we continue throughout the endemic. But for communities who were issued public health orders by the GNWT and implemented those orders from their own internal resources is a cost those communities cannot incur in the face of an existing municipal funding gap. We are all coming out of this pandemic on uneven ground but our communities that provide central social gatherings and programs for children, youth, adults and elders need the supports in place to help their communities emerge healthy and with hope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1075-19(2):
HOUSING EXPENDITURES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The communities of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding have seen significant decrease in housing infrastructure dollars for the 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 budget. As a matter of fact, thank you Nedhe-Wiilideh's receiving only 1 percent of the overall capital budget.

Mr. Speaker, how can we be effective with 1 percent of the capital budget for all four communities in my riding?

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, overall one-third homes in Dettah, N'dilo, Fort Resolution, Lutsel'e are in core need. How can I represent my constituents if the NWT Housing Corporation consistently ignores homeownership and home repair programs in their budgets? It is imperative that a portion of the homeownership and home repair program presented in this main estimate budget specifically address the core need of homes in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding.

I will have questions for the Minister of Housing or Minister of Finance later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1076-19(2):
MUSKRAT JAMBOREE IN THE BEAUFORT
DELTA

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As restrictions are being lifted, it's time to say good-bye to long cold winter and welcome the bright sunny days of spring.

The people of Inuvik are looking forward to celebrating the 64th annual Muskrat Jamboree on April the 8th to the 11th. We will gather safely in front of Inuvik of the east branch of the Mackenzie River to visit and spend time with our family and friends.

The festivities start with the crowning of our 2022 Muskrat Jamboree king and queen, and we will all enjoy our first traditional community feast since the start of this pandemic.

We will practice traditional skills like nature calls, harpoon throwing, log sawing, muskrat skinning, tea boiling, just to name a few. We will also enjoy an all cultures traditional dress

parade, drum dancing, talent show, jigging, also an old time dance. And let's not forget about the food tents and the exciting dog teams and skidoo races.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the many volunteers and sponsors that work hard for -- hardworking committee members that make Muskrat Jamboree happen for everyone in Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1077-19(2):
FILMING OF "COLD ROAD" IN SOUTH
SLAVE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of success stories here in the Northwest Territories, and it's important that we highlight those stories to show our residents, and especially our youth, what's possible.

Mr. Speaker, if you travelled to Hay River, or Kat'l'odeeche, or Enterprise lately, you may have been wondering whether you took a wrong turn somewhere and accidentally wound up in Hollywood. That's because for the past few weeks, Hay River has been serving as a filming location for the upcoming full-length film Cold Road. The man behind this project is Hay River's own Kelvin Redvers.

Filmmaking has always been Kelvin's passion and, beginning as a student at Diamond Jenness Secondary School, he spent countless hours writing, directing, producing, acting, and all the other things you need to do to make it in the TV and film industries. He's paid his dues, built a career, and has a number of successful projects under his belt. Now he's returned to Hay River to direct his first ever feature-length film and we're happy to have him back.

It's fitting that Cold Road is being filmed in the South Slave, as it was the long quiet highways of the region that inspired the film's story.

The original plan was to film the scenes in northern Alberta but it became clear, and only a couple months ago actually, that there were no suitable locations in Alberta and it just wouldn't work. With the end of winter approaching, the crew began to grapple with the reality that delaying the filming until next winter meant it was likely that funding would dry up, and the movie would never be made.

With only a few days before the fate of the film would be sealed, Kelvin began reaching out to

the NWT Film Commission, the Department of Infrastructure, the Town of Hay River, and others, in the hopes of saving the production. Mr. Speaker, despite government's well-earned reputation of taking its sweet time, things moved quickly and within a matter of days the necessary elements were put in place to make filming in the NWT a reality.

I have to thank the film commission, the Minister of ITI, and the Town of Hay River for their support and their determination that was instrumental in bringing the production to the NWT.

Over the course of filming, roughly half a million dollars will be spent in the NWT. On and off, about 50 people will be brought up to work on the film – all staying in hotels, eating in restaurants, and contributing to the economy. The production is using local caterers, contractors, and other service providers, and is renting vehicles, facilities, and equipment to assist with the production. Dozens of local businesses have benefited, and four local businesses have been used as shooting locations. The crew has said that residents have made it easy for them to film in the NWT, and they would have no problem coming back to do it again. And Mr. Speaker, we'd love to have them back because they've proven to be a great group of people. I know the crew is grateful to many Hay River residents and businesses for the support and responsiveness, including Rick and Jane Groenewegen, Brent and Jackie Kruger, Ernie Pokiak, Shawn Buckley, Anne Peters, and the staff at the Ptarmigan. And Mr. Speaker, I have quite a list here but I see that my time has run out so I can't list everyone, they know who they are, and Mr. Speaker, I'll see you on the red carpet at the premiere of Cold Road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River north. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1078-19(2):
FORT SIMPSON SPEED SKATING CLUB

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the Fort Simpson Speed Skating Club.

Mr. Speaker, the Fort Simpson Speed Skating Club is a strong-minded youth who have been working hard over the last two years to keep attending practices and competitions despite all the COVID-19 related closures.

This year the team traveled to Yellowknife for the NWT championships in February, and the

whole team's mental and physical strength was tested. Every individual brought home huge personal best times and increased self-confidence. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to watch these young athletes from Fort Simpson perform and give their all, including my oldest granddaughter Paige.

This season, six skaters were able to travel outside the NWT. That's right, travel outside the NWT, and down to Calgary to compete at the Olympic Oval. The sheer size of the rink and the competition gave each of these young women invaluable race experience.

In speaking with one of the coaches, the athletes had personal best times and had a couple of medal winners. Tamara Tanche-Hannah, the most senior member of the team, went on to represent Team NWT at the Canadian Youth Championship West in Selkirk, Manitoba. She initially qualified in 2019 and was suddenly able to attend this year. The entire speed skating team has struggled through the challenge of sports during the pandemic and they have all come out stronger mentally and physically.

The coaching staff and the community are extremely proud of the team of young athletes that have managed to keep training and compete throughout the unprecedented global lockdown.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parents and coaches for taking these young athletes to these events. It involves a lot of driving from them to Yellowknife and then flying from there. But, what I have heard from my granddaughter and my personal experience as a coach, this is one of the most exciting times for the young athletes. That is right, a six-hour drive to Yellowknife is about bonding time and sharing it with your fellow teammates.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see our young athletes given this opportunity to travel to other sporting events and I am looking forward to other success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Range Lake.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a number of people I want to recognize today.

I am going to start with the Tlicho Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty. Welcome, glad to see you back in the House again.

Ms. Kate Reid. Kate Reid I knew from the work of my colleague Julie Green when we were trying to do the campaign for women in leadership and look what happened. I'm hoping to see your name on the ballot this coming election, Kate, so welcome.

The northern Indigenous counselling graduates. Everyone knows that we need more people for counsellors. We know that we need more Indigenous people, people that can relate, so I'm truly honoured to see you all here.

And the babies in the House. It reminds me, in all honesty, of the time when I went and got my own social work degree as a single mom, with two young children and one still nursing and I noticed you were nursing, so congratulations. I was the first person to go to university in my whole family and both of my children are in post-secondary. So congratulations for what you're doing and congratulations for breaking the cycle. Education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Welcome everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and thank the people who are the northern Indigenous Wellness Warrior graduates. I'm pleased to see Johnny Ongahak here and the rest of this group.

We created, at the Department of Health and Social Services, an addictions recovery and aftercare fund in order to assist communities to hire these graduates and help with addictions aftercare at the community level. I am happy to say that we've got nine agreements in place. They are in communities from Fort Smith to the Beaufort Delta. And we are very pleased that you are willing to take on this work that's so needed in the NWT. Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also congratulate the students of the northern Indigenous counselling program. I've got two students here from Inuvik. I'd like to recognize Louisa

Elanik and Melissa Lennie. Thank you. And I see Melissa's sister Jen Lennie's also here to support her as well. Thank you for being here with us today.

I'd also like to congratulate my brother Billy Archie, who was part of this program, who could not be here today. So with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I myself want to acknowledge also Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty and also the graduates as well too.

Mental health is such an important issue in the Northwest Territories and being Indigenous graduates as well too, I take really strongly to my heart as well too because there's a different perspective that needs to be understood when we're dealing with our own people here in the Northwest Territories, and there's a different kind of approach. Really appreciate the work of Jean and Roy Erasmus as well too, and the collaboration, working together as well too, and establishing this program. And I hope that it actually continues.

I see in my own riding that, you know, we need school counsellors, we need mental health workers, we have issues with addiction and also not only that, just limited resources in smaller isolated communities. So I congratulate you all.

And I also wanted to just specifically I wanted to acknowledge Louise Nason. I don't think she's here today. But she's in my riding as well too and she's got her family that are located there as well too. So I just wanted to express my appreciation. And also I wanted to acknowledge Melissa Lennie and Louisa Elanik that I've known from Inuvik as well too. Mahsi for your time commitment. Amazing. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I'll try to keep mine a little bit shorter.

I'd like to also say thank you and congratulations to everybody that has graduated. I think that's awesome. And the Grand Chief as well, welcome. But I'd also like to acknowledge my constituent Kate Reid, who works for ENR and is here because one of her projects is being tabled today and she wanted

to see it in action. So thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, I would like to do this in Tlicho. [Translation Unavailable].

Mahsi and congratulations, and welcome Jackson Lafferty. Our Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty who is in the gallery, and the students, Tiffany Wedawin and all her classmates. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. As you could tell, we're having a little difficulties with our broadcasting. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also recognize the Grand Chief, a mentor of mine and former colleague, Jackson Lafferty. But as well, Mary Jane Cazon, one of our interpreters, doing a great job and I'd like to recognize her and thank her for being here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to have an audience with us.

Oh sorry, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was waving at you; you didn't see me so.

First of all, I just want to say, recognize in the gallery there to my left here is my beautiful wife Alita Rose Edjericon. Also a good friend, Grand Chief Jackson Lafferty. I also want to recognize him as well, in the back. Mahsi.

Also from the northern Indigenous counselling students; I think most of the names were mentioned. I just wanted to mention Jean Erasmus. I think she's here. Also that's taking part in this program is, but not here, is Bernice Mandeville, Lorena Pierrot, Vanessa Sangris. I just want to recognize them as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Actually, I got this note here. I'll just read it out. Actually I know most of them are recognized, but we have a group from the Northern Indigenous Counselling Initiative here today.

19 Indigenous counselling students began their educational journey in September 2020. 16 of these students graduated from the

program and are beginning their practicums. Congratulations.

The Northern Indigenous Counselling Program is co-sponsored and run by Rhodes Wellness College, a counselling college with over 25 years of experience in Canada, and by Dene Wellness Warriors.

Dene Wellness Warriors is a professional counselling organization based in Yellowknife that focuses on helping Indigenous people throughout the NWT. It is 100 percent Indigenous owned and operated by Jean and Roy Erasmus.

The owner with us today is Jean Erasmus, here with the students. Cody Erasmus is also here.

Leanne Joss. Melissa Lennie. Louisa Elanik. Louise Lennie. Johnny Ongahak -- I hope I pronounced that right.

With us, we also have students that are not here with us and one was mentioned by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Billy Archie from Aklavik. Lena Koe Peterson, also from my riding. Rita Green. Bernice Mandeville. Lorena Pierrot. Vanessa Sangris. Michelle Bourke. Lindsay Auger. Tiffany Wedawin. Lenny Fabian. And Shawn Marshall. Congratulations, everyone, and I wish you all the best in your future. Mahsi.

If we have missed anyone else in the gallery, welcome to the Chamber and I hope that you're enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to have an audience with us. Mahsi.

Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1068-19(2):
INUVIK MIKE ZUBKO AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As one of the MLAs from the Beaufort Delta that is present here today on our last sitting day and is able to ask questions to the Minister in this House, I will continue my questions to the Minister of Infrastructure as this project is one of the most important infrastructure projects that's happening in our regions.

Can the Minister update this House on the decision her department has with regard to the Inuvik Airport Runway Extension Project and if the time sensitive part of the project will occur this year as this employs a local contractor and this Cabinet has said that it supports

economic recovery for our northern contractors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was a trilateral meeting that was held yesterday with department and National Defence, the GNWT, as well as representatives from the joint venture that will be doing work on the Inuvik runway extension.

The meeting confirmed several things for us and also highlighted the need for the GNWT and the joint venture to be able to work collaboratively and come up with a path forward. That's where we're at with the project right now, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my question is this time-sensitive work that needs to be done this spring, will the Minister provide me with an answer that this work will be issued, like approved, so that we can get the lift done?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the meeting, the meeting confirmed that the Department of Defence expects there to be due diligence applied to the project, and that's important for the bid and scope of the work to match available funding. So we know that it is time sensitive but it is a five-year project, Mr. Speaker, so there are four phases, and we are -- four work packages. So we are currently on schedule with some of the work that's proceeding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that this is a five-year project, but this is a time-sensitive section that needs to be done so that other layers can be put on later on. What is holding up this section of the project to put the lift down so that we're protecting the permafrost? Why can't we go ahead with this?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's funding that's holding this project down. You've seen in Cabin Radio that, you know, they had an article on the over-costs of this project. The department -- the GNWT is working closely with Canada to be able to secure that funding. So that's what's slowing the process down. We are continuously having conversations, almost on a daily basis, with Canada and the joint venture to be able to look at ways to proceed with this project on budget on time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister is will she direct her department to complete this vital part of the project? This is going to provide local contractors with work. Right now, the only work that's in the region has been given to Alberta residents. So I'm just wondering if this Minister is going to support our local contractors as the Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make it clear: This Minister wants the project to go forward. It is a benefit to the community that I represent. I also said that the project needs to be done right, on time and on budget. Rushing major work without appropriate site preparation or plans or due diligence being applied is a recipe for disaster. I also want to make it clear that the GNWT does not have the funding to pay for any cost overruns. So we need to make sure that we do this right first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1069-19(2):
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS
SUPPORT

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you. Minister Green, I would like to invite you to the Tlicho region to visit the communities and see firsthand what services and programs are available. Would the Minister commit to doing that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken previously to the Member and assured her I would be delighted. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. More funding is needed to provide community-led and on-the-land addiction recovery program. Can the Minister commit to increasing the amount of funding available through the on-the-land healing fund. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we -- we raised the value of the on-the-land healing program in the fiscal year before this one. It's now worth \$1.825 million. And so I feel that the money is adequate.

I note, and I have done this before, that the Tlicho are not taking advantage of all the different funds that are available to them for community-based mental health and addictions support. So we've talked about the northern Indigenous wellness counsellors, who are here today. There was an open call to Indigenous governments to use our money, a million-dollar pot, to hire these counsellors. We do not have any proposals from the Tlicho region that are funded at this point. So there is money. There is a disconnect somewhere here, which I hope the Member will be able to sort out. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. That is a subject for another matter so I will be speaking on that as well.

But can the Minister commit to allocating additional staff hours. This is reference to what she just said. Hours for proposal writing aimed at securing additional departmental funding for community led and on-the-land addiction recovery programs? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do not write proposals for Indigenous organizations. However, we are willing to work with them on proposals to ensure that the finishing the application and getting it in is not a barrier to accessing the money. So we're here to help, but the initiative needs to come from the Indigenous government organization. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. How does the Department of Health and Social Services currently support people once they have completed an addictions recovery program? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when a resident of the Northwest Territories, who has been to a southern-based addiction treatment centre is ready to be discharged, the centre creates a discharge plan which puts the resident in touch with local resources such as the community counselling program. That would be the primary method.

The resident would then go on to attend counselling appointments; AA, if it's available in the community where the person is. We have a peer support fund which would enable people to create groups like AA in their communities if they thought that would be useful. We have the online app called Wagon, which was developed by the Edgewood

facility, which you and I visited in 2017, which is programmatic with study groups and group therapy and individual therapy available. We also have the addictions aftercare program, which I have just referenced, which employs the people who have just finished their training at Rhodes College. So they are to be community-based resources who will help people who are in addictions and recovery aftercare. The on-the-land healing program can be used for addictions aftercare if that's the choice of the Indigenous government.

So I feel that we offer a full range of services to people who are finished their addictions treatment. Could we do more? We could. We could absolutely do more. If you give me another \$500 million, I will make sure that there is a treatment centre in every region fully staffed and ready to take everyone who wants to have healing and recovery. Failing that, I encourage them to use the resources that are available now. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1070-19(2):
INUVIK MIKE ZUBKO AIRPORT EXPANSION
PROJECT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure regarding the Inuvik Airport.

When I hear the Minister say that the delay at this point is around funding, I find myself quite confused considering the announcement of \$150 million was made in 2019. Can the Minister speak to why the conversation about funding, particularly when we would be breaking this project up into phases and different work packages, would be waiting as of now two years -- three years later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of factors in the cost overruns. I mean, you know, we have looked at this project and negotiated with the contractor, and we need to do a little more work on some of the costing and some of the difference phases. So that's probably all I can say about this project at this time in terms of some of the cost overruns. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarification, you can't have an overrun if you haven't started the project yet. So I think

calling it an "overrun" is not a legit way to phrase it.

So now I hear that the Minister needs to meet with the contractor, or the JV, to get these answers, yet it's my understanding that their proposal was submitted to the department on February 7th. It's now March 31st. So I'm kind of confused if this is a time-sensitive winter work that needs to be done, why the Minister hasn't directed her department to meet with the JV and the contractors sooner than now. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department and the JV have been meeting. They started the work in January. So some of the packages on number 1 has started. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the department met with the JV since February 7th when their proposal was submitted? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. And actually there's another meeting today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral -- final supplementary, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm now super confused because I have people from the JV telling me that they have not met with the Minister and her department and that, in fact, the Minister is not allowing there to be a trilateral meeting between the DND, the contractor, and the GNWT.

Can the Minister explain why her department thinks it's necessary to keep the contractors away from the Department of National Defence? To me, I talk often about the game of telephone where messages get mixed and scrambled. Perhaps that's the problem that's going on here. Can the Minister speak to when that three-way party will -- meeting will happen? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been meeting. There's been discussions happening at different phases since February, since before then when the executive council approved the joint venture contract. So we are still having ongoing discussions and, you know, we will continue to proceed. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1071-19(2):
VACCINE SUPPLY

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I know that our -- now that we have the majority of people vaccinated, the vaccine uptake is -- is not what it used to be. And so my question for the Minister of Health is when the current stock of vaccines expires in the NWT and what we are doing to ensure we don't have any wastage? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my thanks to the Member for the question. The current stock of vaccine that we have expires at the end of May, and specifically that's Pediatric Pfizer and Moderna. So we continue to offer clinics, and we hope to use up much of that inventory by the end of May. We can provide either appointments or walk-in vaccinations, whichever is most convenient for people.

We, as the Member may know, switched from a no-wasted dose to no-missed-opportunity to vaccinate people some time ago. So our vanishingly small wastage rate has increased a little so that we can vaccinate someone when they appear instead of telling them to come back at another time. So our wastage rate is 6 percent. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. With those vaccines expiring in May, I'm hoping the Minister can speak to -- you know, I understand the principle of no-missed opportunity but I think we have somewhat of a predictable rate of how much we anticipate to use, whether it's possible to coordinate the logistics to make sure that we can get those into the arms of people who need them, whether that be in other places in Canada or other countries in the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the vaccines that come to the Northwest Territories come from the federal stockpile. You need a specific licence, I've learned, in order to reallocate unused vaccine outside of the Northwest Territories. So we try to order only as much vaccine as we need so that the federal government has a grip on how much surplus they have to devote to other parts of the country or to other parts of the world as the Member referenced. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. And I know the Canadian supply, Canada is working to improve its contribution to global vaccine equity. We probably have not lived up to the co-vax commitments as we should. But I know we're a small jurisdiction and I'm just hoping the Minister of Health can add her voice and make sure when she speaks with her federal colleagues that we are adding our support to meet the co-vax requirements and to make sure that vaccine equity is a priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member and I are entirely on the same page. We will not be able to substantially reduce the COVID infection rates if we are not all globally vaccinated.

I have certainly advocated for greater vaccination allocations to the global south, as the Member called it, and I know that my colleague, the Premier, has also done that. We understand the vulnerability of some of those populations. They're very much like the vulnerability of our own Indigenous population in terms of poor underlying health conditions and poor health outcomes. And so obviously getting vaccine to those people is extremely important, and we support all efforts to do that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1072-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MINING
ROYALTY REGIME

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

My statement outlined the fundamental flaws with the current review of the NWT mining royalties. The first one is the total secrecy surrounding disclosure or of even financial analysis of mining royalties. The discussion research papers barely acknowledge the problem and propose no solutions.

Can the Minister explain the absence of any meaningful discussion of transparency and disclosure of mining royalties in the discussion research papers? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a topic of conversation that I suspect will

continue between myself and the Member for a long time. We simply aren't going to fly eye to eye on this one.

The current paper that is out for discussion purposes, Mr. Speaker, went to the SCEDI, to one of the committees of MLAs. It also went through the Indigenous governments -- or the Intergovernmental Council, IGC, the body -- the important body to work with composed of Indigenous governments. And when we initially got responses back on the paper, we took it back. We delayed it. Took that paper back. Took the responses in. Revised the paper. And now the paper that's gone out is one that has gone through that process and has been put out publicly with the support of IGC. So what it includes and what it focuses on was done collaboratively.

It does mention the reality and the fact that figuring out transparency within a royalty regime is one of the things that will have to be looked at in the course of this process that we're in right now in the development of the mineral resource regulations.

And I can assure the Member that I have confirmed with the department that when they're in the course of their engagements that they are, indeed, making sure to ask the question of how to increase and change transparency and what way in which we can continue to do that going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course, the only engagement that's happening is a web page where you can submit comments to an email address but, you know, the other fundamental flaw with the current review of mining royalties is the conflicting roles of her department in promoting and regulating mining at the same time.

Can the Minister explain why this review of mining royalties is being led by her department rather than an independent panel as was the case for the procurement review? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this too is not a new -- not a new topic of discussion for me in the House with the Member and I acknowledge that this is a longstanding concern that's been raised on his behalf at least with respect to whether ITI should, in fact, be the department leading this.

Mr. Speaker, royalty regime, royalty review is highly technical. When we're doing the procurement review, this is procurement for

every department, for the whole of government, and certainly it involved all different types of industries in terms of all procurement that's happening in all industries across government. So it's a very different type of topic.

Royalties, and specifically royalties for the mineral resource sector and petroleum, as I said, highly technical and the expertise relies and lies within the Department of ITI.

The way we structured it is in fact not that different from some of the other jurisdictions in Canada that are similarly sized to ourselves here in the Northwest Territories in terms of our capacity and resources within government departments. And along the way, we certainly have made efforts to do some independent checks through the process.

Having PricewaterhouseCoopers which is an independent entity, having -- you know, engaging other scholars and academic experts to weigh in, providing the draft reports as I had mentioned earlier to committee and to IGCs and -- you know, and now going through the IGC protocol that we have around legislation development. So I'm confident at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to strike that balance, having our technical experts but also having opportunity for external experts to weigh in and give us their opinions and views. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that of course. Well let's talk about experts because certainly in Alberta and BC, the best practice is to actually hire independent experts and set up a panel and let them go to it. But, you know, I've looked at the discussion research papers on the engagement web page. The background information there doesn't even include the ITI commissioned report NWT Mineral Sector Review and Benchmarking Study, or even the SCEDI report on Economic Analysis of the GNWT's Approach to the Mining Fiscal Review.

So can the Minister explain why these two key references were not used in the papers that are now been released by ITI, and can these two relevant reports that I mentioned by independent experts, can they be added as resources to the engagement web page? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, folks at home will sometimes hear us saying that we had questions in advance. I do want to acknowledge that the Member does give a bit of a head's up, and that's helpful for the more

technical questions like this. It's not that we necessarily know the flavour that we're going to hear in the House but, Mr. Speaker, I have been doing some work to try to figure out exactly what has -- what more we could do to provide more and further information.

It's certainly my preference to be able to provide more and further information to members of the public or members of industry or other interested parties as they're reviewing this. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, my understanding at this point, with only, you know, a bit of -- a bit of notice today, the standing committee's report was tabled before the holiday, so in the last session, and we are working quite actively to see that that is reviewed or responded to and once that happens, I believe it would be made available and the response will be tabled so that that can be included in people's consideration after the May/June session.

And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the Resource Governance Institutes Northwest Territories Mineral Sector Review and Benchmarking Study is on Engage ITI's website and available in the newsroom. So if I have missed one there that's not been included that the Member would like to see, I -- again I know the Member's taken the time, and I appreciate it, to sit down with the department on more than one occasion to talk about the royalties paper, to provide in-depth comments on the paper, which is one of the times when it went back for review, and if there's something else we're missing, Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly speak to him further about that again. It's better to have more information out there than less. Thank you.

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. And I guess what I'm asking is that those two papers actually be added to the current engagement page, not buried somewhere else on the departmental website. But, you know, the engagement web page the way it has been set up is really biased in terms of extractivism. There's nothing on maximizing revenues to government, ensuring future generations benefit, or a consideration of environmental or socio-economic trade offs. The next steps and guidelines are also vague, at best.

So can the Minister explain what the actual next steps are going to be in the royalty review, a timeline, and whether this work is going to be completed before the end of this Assembly? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to thank the Member. "Extractivism" is a word that I have not come across before.

But with respect to maximizing profit, Mr. Speaker, that is the whole point of designing a royalty regime and really the entire mineral resources regulatory regime that is made in the North and for the North. That's why we are really proud of the work being done at the IGC, with the legislative protocol that's there, so that when we have completed this process we can say that what we have in the North is made in the North, for the North, that we are, you know, walking the talk of being ESG advanced, so having environmental social governance advanced projects because we've done that work ourselves.

And as far as maximizing profit, Mr. Speaker, if we are in a position where we only maximize the taxation of royalties, then we run a very serious risk of having very few projects from which to take royalties. The balance that we're trying to strike, Mr. Speaker, is one where we are finding a regime that maximizes the royalties from the projects we have, encourages a development of more projects so that we're finding that sweet spot of having lots of projects out there to employ lots of Northerners, have lots of procurement opportunities, and bring in royalties in addition. So it's not all at the expense of one or the other; it's a matter of trying to figure out what that perfect balance will be.

The next step, Mr. Speaker, actually it happens to be a public briefing on April the 11th hosted, thank you very much, by one of the MLA committees. Looking forward to being there at that point then, and we'll be going over the timeline in further detail. That's one of the stops on the engagement process. I know there's active meetings happening with some of the chambers with projects that are here in the North, projects that are looking to explore the North, public engagement website that is available. I'm happy to take other meetings if there's organizations and entities that want to have those meetings directly and not participate on the website. And then I know there's a process that we've lined up after that for developing regulations, taking those to the consultation process with Indigenous governments and bringing them back before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1073-19(2):
CANADA COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION
FUND

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister's advocating for an increase to the federal CanNor funding to try to ensure that all 33 communities receive an investment from CanNor's Canada Community Revitalization Fund. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the revitalization fund is a direct application program with the federal government. Municipal and Community Affairs is available to assist communities with their applications and help identify their priorities through the capital budgeting process. It is my understanding is that any community government can apply for this funding.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is always advocating for more funding for municipal governments from the federal with the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So has the Minister received any requests from communities for influxes of funding for the end of the public health emergency to bring communities together through cultural, sport, or any kind of recreation events? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To date, we have not received any requests for additional funding for cultural, sport, or recreational events above and beyond the existing funding pots that we provide right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister have an estimate of how much additional expense in responding to COVID-19 has fallen on the shoulders of municipalities? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT and the federal government have provided NWT communities over \$9 million in funding to help community governments with their pandemic-related costs.

As I said previously in this House, Municipal and Community Affairs will be reviewing the

financial impact on community governments of COVID-19 response as part of the 2021-2022 year end fiscal process. So in other words, when they get their audited statements and that, we will be looking at that to see if there hasn't been an impact on communities, and then we will move forward on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I guess that's a question that I'll have to come back around to once MACA has had these audited statements and are able to take a look at them after the end of the fiscal year. But we're two years in now, and so I guess a better question is given the results of the 2020 year end statements MACA would have already seen some changes to that. And so is the GNWT working to address these additional expenses, then, that would not have been part of the original municipal funding formula? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said previously, we've given \$9 million to communities with some real good flexibility to it. They have the ability to use that money as they see fit where they need to address their pandemic issues.

Moving forward, we understand that, you know, COVID's going to be a part of the process and we are encouraging municipal governments to start budgeting accordingly. But we're more than willing to sit down and work with them with their budgeting process as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1074-19(2):
HOUSING EXPENDITURES IN TU NEDHE-
WIILIDEH

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be to the Minister of Housing.

Can the Minister commit to allocating in the budget for home assessments in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding for this fiscal year? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To date, we have in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding, we have 1100 in

population. Out of those 1100 in population, we have an average household -- here I have recorded of 372. And our public housing units in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding is 189. 36 of them are market units. Eight of them are HAP units. And over the past ten years, we've invested \$22 million into the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to increasing the homeownership and home repair programs in the 2022-2023 budget for our riding? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that information on hand to see what is going to be allocated for each of the ridings but 80 percent of our budget is allocated to the smaller communities functioning with our district offices, our local housing authorities, and also our programming.

Over the last ten years, the Housing Corporation has put in \$13.6 million to construct 50 housing units and major repairs to 118 units in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding, \$3.9 million for homeownership or repair programs, and \$4.7 million for minor housing repairs on our public housing units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to enter into a contribution agreement with Indigenous governments in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding to carry out homeownership assistance -- or sorry, assessments and home repair programs? This'll also help if we -- with the targets that they laid out in terms of apprenticeship training. Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did follow up with the Member as well too. We did have a brief conversation about our community initiative programs that we do have. And he was interested in looking at what significant repairs are required in his riding.

One of the things that the Housing Corporation is in the process right now is that we do have community housing plans. We have met with his communities - Dettah, N'dilo, Lutselk'e, and Fort Resolution. Those would be identified in those community housing plans. So I will follow up with the Member and if this is something that he would like to be highlighted in those community housing plans, I would like to have the opportunity to speak to those Indigenous groups in those specific communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the budgeted for -- or allocation for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding is \$3.4 million for public housing repairs. Can the Minister commit to working with Indigenous governments to talk about and negotiate contracts to promote apprenticeship training? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I would like to speak with the leadership of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Apprenticeship is something that we highlight very strongly within the corporation. I am interested to see what our numbers would be like for the local housing authorities in each of those communities as well. And look at plans going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1075-19(2):
KNOWLEDGE OF JOINT VENTURE AND
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. Does the Minister understand the difference between a joint venture and an Indigenous government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take that on notice.

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

QUESTION 1076-19(2):
INUVIK WIND PROJECT

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure and also the Minister of Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

Can the Minister explain to me what policy process was used to negotiate the five-kilometre access road to the wind project, which was awarded to a consortium led by an Alberta company? Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation follows a different procurement services than the GNWT. So, I mean, we brought that to Cabinet and Cabinet approved the work going forward with the business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this money was approved in the House by the Members and by processes, loopholes, it gets moved around, it gets moved to the Crown corporation led by our deputy ministers. So can the Minister explain the process in the negotiation to select -- that they used to select the contractors? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member was cutting in and out there so I think I kind of understand what she's asking.

So the Power Corporation reached out to the Gwich'in and requested their business list and they provided that to the corporation, and that's where the bids went out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if this is a new policy or process that we are going to be moving money around to Crown corporations so we don't have to follow government procurement, can you provide me or this House with the copy of how that's done so that maybe all the other aboriginal groups can negotiate in the same way? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have done that in the past; we have worked with Tlicho government and some negotiated contracts for some of the work, which included some P3 projects and, you know, right now the Department of Finance is going through the procurement process so hopefully that would guide some directions on how this government goes forward on some contracts. Thanks.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I understand that there's big projects, or P3 projects. This is a five-kilometre road, an access road. It's not even a road; it's an access road. So if this is the new process, it's the first time that I have heard of it. If we are negotiating with Alberta companies, then I think that it's time that we reviewed that process because I am sure that there are at least four other aboriginal road building companies in Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Tuk, that could have been negotiated with.

Not being led by an Alberta company where the money's going to leave the North in the time of economic recovery that is needed for our region. Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government, and this Assembly, had said we would work with Indigenous groups to look at ways of doing things differently. So the Inuvik Wind Project, we reached out to the Gwich'in businesses. The Gwich'in, and they provided us with their list, and that's how we were able to say do some of that work going forward. Yes, it is a five-kilometre work and you look at the total Inuvik Wind Project and that's probably just going to be one piece of the bigger work that needs to be done to complete the wind project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1077-19(2):
COST OF LIVING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions are for the Minister of Finance or ITI.

Is the department monitoring the increased cost of living in the NWT and if so, have there been any specific areas identified as worrisome? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are constantly revising both the fiscal framework for the GNWT and revising the general outlook for the economy. We are doing that work, both the Department of Finance's responsible in terms of understanding our revenue forecast, you know, understanding our growth and our expenditures, the impacts of, you know, fuel costs, inflation, interest costs on us. I know that that work also happens at ITI in terms of understanding costs to business, understanding impacts, again for instance freight costs, transportation costs. And similarly, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Department of ECE is also continuously doing work, looking at the space in terms of the employment market and what might be happening. So there is always examinations happening.

Cost of living involves all of those things. Cost of living involves fuel costs, heating costs, transportation, the impacts on, you know, the market basket measures so it's a difficult one for me then to sort of turn around and say are we going to have measures to respond to it. Reducing the cost of living is already a mandate item.

We have done a mandate review just this week, updating the public on some of the work that is happening to try to achieve that goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess what I am trying to get at is, you know, people are struggling in the communities. And so what can this community do to lower the cost of living for residents considering other jurisdictions are taking actions to offset some of the costs? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And without knowing exactly what measures are being referred to, I am assuming that this is in reference to the fact that Alberta is offering some money to folks to offset the fuel, as is the Yukon. And again, I have said this earlier in the House, Alberta stands to benefit from the rising fuel costs so it is not really the kind of comparison that is fair to be made here in terms of, you know, considering that we have to ensure that we are able to provide programs and services across departments to every community, to every resident in the Northwest Territories. And the need to continuing to do that responsibly throughout the entire year, not only as, you know, a handout for everybody.

So, yeah, are we going to be looking at initiatives over the course of the year? Well, Mr. Speaker, I will look at the last two years where we were struck rather significantly by the impacts of COVID-19. And the approach of this government was always that we would not -- look to see what the federal government is doing. I am not going to take -- you know, avoid any opportunity to have funding come from a much larger source but they were going to be there to fill gaps and were going to be there to identify areas of particular need. There will be no change in that approach here. If in fact rising inflation does not slow down, if in fact the costs of fuel does not come down, then we will be doing what we have done in the last two years over the last crisis which is looking for the gaps and being there to make sure that we provide those safety nets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the government working with

private sector businesses or considering to assist with lowering their cost of doing business so that that can be passed on to residents? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll sort of reference again a bit of what happened more under COVID-19 not as a full response. I realize that what's happening now is different but I want to give the example so that folks know exactly the approach that this government plans to take and that I would it be taking with the departments for which I am responsible.

When we came back in January and omicron was still rearing its head, no one quite knew how that would unfold, I asked that we make a point to check in with the chambers of commerce so that we could better understand directly from them what impacts were being -- what the impacts were on the private sector from what was now clearly a bit of different type of COVID situation. So I had the opportunity to sit down with the chambers then, and now it's quite clear that we are looking at a whole another type of financial situation whether it be from inflation, from fuel costs, or both. So I will certainly commit that we can have that check in again with the chambers, with other organizations in the community, and hear firsthand from the business community where their pinch points are, what their challenge points are, and where they need government support, if they need government support. There is already quite a lot in the budget that we are hoping to see passed that is meant to ensure that there is stability, that there is stability in procurement, that there is stability in our programs. And if there is some that they see as being better tuned, then that's the end, that's the kind of approach we like to take. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we hear that, you know, people are considering leaving the NWT and we, and I know of some people that have left because of the cost of living.

Is the department tracking the number of residents living the NWT due to the cost of living? And can the Minister commit to providing those numbers as well? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't -- to the best of my knowledge, we don't do exit interviews with residents as to reasons for their departure. I can say that the mining sector,

who are also quite keen to keep their residents or keep their employees here in the North, they do do some work in this space. So what I will do, Mr. Speaker, is just check back with the statistics bureau, see if there are -- what data we do have around departures.

I know that questions earlier this week looked at our immigration and were looking at the growth of population. And it really has been sort of stagnant and just no matter efforts that have been made through past Assemblies, the population seems to be continually quite stable. As for the reasons to that, again, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that we are going to have that. I will do my best efforts. As I say, I think that the mineral resource sector actually might be the best source. And if I recall correctly, it was a combination of factors, everything from, you know, concerns around costs to not having family to, you know, a number of different reasons that may arise from wanting to move somewhere; you know, other opportunities, etcetera. What we do want to do though, Mr. Speaker, this is always going to be a jurisdiction that likely has some higher costs. It also has much higher wages. And it has a way of living that we think hopefully will bring people to the North so I will also be following up with my colleague at ECE around our efforts on immigration, to see if there is things there that we can do to make -- to continue to bring people to the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1078-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUSINESS
PROTECTION WITH INFLATION

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I guess further to the conversations that I'm hearing today between colleagues on this side of the House, the Minister of Infrastructure, the Minister of Finance or ITI here today, one of the things that has struck me is this idea of getting projects done on time and on budget right now. And one of the things that we have just heard as well acknowledged by Minister Wawzonek on screen was, you know, the rising costs of living in the Northwest Territories and inflation as well.

So if, you know, costs of wood, steel, all have gone up over the last period of time, how really are we completing projects or expecting businesses to complete projects on behalf of the GNWT on time and on budget? Especially if projects still have the same scope, Mr. Speaker.

And so I am wondering, are conversations between the Department of Infrastructure happening with the federal government about existing projects to ensure that projects aren't being completed on the backs of northern businesses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. I mean, you look at some of the infrastructure projects and the costs overruns and this government, going through our budget stuff and in a current deficit, it is difficult to look at some of the infrastructure projects, especially if it is our mandate item. You know, we have a mandate to be able to -- 22 mandate items is a lot to, a lot to go through. We have heard it all week here, so I mean, we are looking at specific projects, going to the federal government, seeking additional money to be able to at least advance some of these projects. And it is a challenge, like I mean within each of our different departments and trying to push some of our projects forward. So it is a challenge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this one here I was looking for kind of commitments around what conversations are happening at federal tables in order to protect NWT businesses in contracts that they have entered into before COVID, before inflation, and that they are now bound to in this new market. And especially where we heard today a contract was signed in 2019, it is now 2022, and the work is still being expected to be on time -- well, it's not on time, on budget, under the same scope. And so you how is the GNWT working with the federal government to protect northern businesses in these existing contracts? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel like it's not just Minister of Infrastructure but it's Minister of Finance, the Premier, all having discussions at the federal level to be able to advance and seek additional funding for these projects. You know, some of the contracts that we have are -- that's the private contractor's role, to be able to -- to do the work within the contract scope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess what I am going to do is kind of shift here to just a GNWT focus and take the feds out of the equation.

So even within the GNWT, there are existing contracts. We have hundreds of millions of

dollars of carryovers from Infrastructure every year and some of those are contracts that have already been set before COVID, before the inflation. Like even a contract that was set at this time last year would have been incurring additional -- substantial additional costs this year. And some of those might have people in certain business situations where really they are almost expected to now pay out of pocket to be able to work for the GNWT, depending on the sector, depending on the project.

And so what is the GNWT then on its own, its own contracts, what kind of conversations are they having with northern businesses about those existing contracts to make sure the work gets done without costing northern businesses money to work for the government? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. I mean, you know, we look at some of our contracts and staying within scope is difficult. And, you know, we do experience costs overruns in some of these projects but we do as a department, Infrastructure anyways, work with the contractors to make sure that we stay within targets and within milestone and budget as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I know colleagues have questions so I will sit down, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay, taken as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 1079-19(2):

INUVIK MIKE ZUBKO AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try again with the Minister of Infrastructure.

In all of these supposed meetings that they've been having with the joint venture, were there any participation by project officers, engineers, technical staff, directors, or have they all been high level with Indigenous governments? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. This line of questions is taken on notice earlier. It has to be on a different question, sorry.

MS. NOKLEBY: (Audio)

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of meetings at all levels. I mean, I've reached out to some of the contacts within the JV. My deputy minister had meetings with National Defence. We've had several different meetings that have occurred. As for who is involved and what's their credentials, I don't know that at this time. Perhaps maybe they are engineers. I know one of our ADMs is, and he's been at the meetings, so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pretty surprised that given this is a massive project in the Minister's backyard that she doesn't even know who is showing up to the meetings or the technical qualifications of her department.

Could the Minister commit to please providing me with minutes of those meetings as well as the attendance lists? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the project staff are meeting biweekly with the joint venture on some of the work package -- on the work project number 1 and the project stakeholder meetings. So these meetings are happening.

In terms of getting Ministers to sit down at these meetings biweekly is probably not, you know, the best use of my time. But I do follow up. I do get updates from my deputy minister, from ADMs, and follow -- especially on this project. I mean, the Member's calling it on my backyard and I mentioned earlier I want this to happen. You know, this is a five-year project and I think that's important that we push this project through within budget, within timelines. It is five-year. I mean, I've been talking about this all week. It's just -- thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister misunderstood me. I actually don't want her at the meetings. I was asking about the technical staff, the lower level. It is my understanding that only high level meetings are occurring at this point. And as we need to have this lift of material go down this year, does the Minister commit to directing her department to find the money to start the lift this year? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned this week, and I've -- you know, I have to be involved as Minister for this project. I mean, you know, I feel like it's -- it's important to our region and it's an important project.

You know, in terms of, you know, getting this work done now, we've been saying we need to sit down, review the technical level of this project and work with project staff at all different levels. So this work is advancing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'm still confused at all of the delays and discussion around what essentially is putting down dirt onto the ground; something that we do very well as a territory, something the contractor does very well and has done for several years in that area.

So can the Minister please commit to whether or not she is going to have that lift done this year so we are not delayed by one year? It doesn't matter that there's five years on this project. It is -- it is a stage. There are phases that need to be completed for anything else to run. People are counting on this money. And the Minister is not holding her department to task. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Until I know what this means, I'm not going to commit to doing this. We still have work to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Returns to -- sorry, returns to written question.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 36-19(2):
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR
RESIDENTS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Great Slave to the Minister of Health and Social Services on March 8th, 2022, regarding mental health supports for residents.

1. Staff Turnover Rates

Within the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, there are health care professionals who provide a holistic array of mental health, addictions, and wellness support services across the Health and Social Services System. Therefore, positions cannot be easily or accurately categorized into just the three positions of mental health counsellors, child protection workers, and family support workers.

For the purposes of our response, we have included all frontline professionals providing

some degree of mental health, addictions, and/or wellness support to NWT residents. This includes Case Managers and Aides; Community Health Representatives; Community Health Workers; Community Wellness Workers; Counsellors; Family Preservation Workers; Healthy Family Workers; Social Workers, including those with Child Protection Worker designation; Wellness and Recovery Workers; and other Mental Health Support positions.

As of December 31st, 2021, there were 242 budgeted positions in the Northwest.

Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the Tlicho Community Services Agency, Health and Social Services that provide mental health, addictions, and wellness support to residents of the Northwest Territories. Of those positions, 240 are indeterminate, and two are term.

Of the 242 budgeted positions, there are 25 that are currently administratively vacant. These are positions that are not being actively recruited for within the next three months. Positions can be left administratively vacant for several reasons, including, but not limited to:

- A position is identified as being funded, but has not yet been established;
- A position is being re-evaluated by Job Evaluation;
- Funding for a position is being used to double fill another position; or
- The vacancy will be of too short a duration to fill through the regular recruitment process. A short-term vacancy are usually filled with casuals.

As of December 31st, 2021, 45 of the 242 positions were vacant and being actively recruited for within the next three months. This translates into an actively recruiting vacancy rate of 18.6 percent.

In terms of staff turnover rates, unfortunately these rates cannot be provided by individual positions. Turnover rate is determined by the number of exits divided by the number of positions. For the 2021 calendar year the turnover rate for the 242 budgeted positions was 20.5 percent whereas the accession rate was 19.4 percent.

Later today at the appropriate time I will table a document that will give a breakdown of budgeted positions that provide mental health,

addictions, and wellness support, by community and by occupation, including the actively recruiting vacant and administratively vacant positions. The document will also break down employee accession and turnover by occupation.

2. Mental Health Vacancy Coverage Planning.

Coverage approaches to staff vacancies are determined by several important operational factors. For example, coverage may be determined by:

- The number of available staff to provide coverage in a particular community or region;
- The needs of the community;
- The preferred modality of coverage, such as virtual vs. in-person or a hybrid approach; and,
- The length of time coverage is required, such as short-term vs long-term.

Regional Leadership have several short-term and long-term coverage options available depending on the circumstance. Options range from:

- Temporary short-term coverage from existing team Members, if operationally possible;
- Temporary short-term coverage from other regions, such as by distance or planned travel;
- Casual term hiring for temporary coverage ranging from six months up, with an option to extend if required;
- Specific to the Community Counselling program, use of contracted counselling services is available for short- and longer-term coverage when active recruitment efforts are impacted by low applicant rates and/or unsuccessful screening;
- Crisis support: When there are vacancies and a community crisis occurs, regional and territorial resources are scanned and made available to provide immediate support where possible. Crisis response plans can include a number of intentional and sequenced responses including virtual care, simultaneous in-person support, extended hours of service and other organizational supports such as

EFAP services, depending on the circumstance; and.

- Community and regional level communications are crafted to ensure relevant stakeholders are aware and updated to any temporary service impact or how to reach service providers.

If there are questions regarding region or community specific timelines and current coverage plans, this can be provided.

3. Rates pertaining to Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm.

The collection of data related to suicide attempts is complex and is currently recorded in a combination of paper-based and electronic medical records. There is currently no single, reliable and accurate data system that enables us to track people across multiple sites in different systems. With that said, hospital discharge data and data collected by the Community Counselling Program are of assistance. Hospital discharge data is collected by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Canadian Institute for Health Information, and contains four potential combinations of self-harm, including suicide attempts, with or without suicidal ideation.

The territorial hospital data will capture significant presentations of self-harm and suicide ideation that also initially present to RCMP, emergency medical services, and health centres.

Where the intention for self-harm or suicide is not clear, medical coding used for this data may not capture all the cases. Not all suicide attempts are disclosed or reported to formal systems. Self-harm also tracks behaviours such as non-suicidal self-injury, commonly known as "cutting" types of behaviours, which will confound statistics.

The document to be tabled later today will present territorial hospital discharge data surveyed for the years 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 for the total number of people (unique clients) not accumulated or repeat events, and data collected from the Community Counselling Program regarding the number and percentage of people who presented to the Program with suicide ideation or suicide attempts as their primary concern.

The Department of Health and Social Services will continue to work on refining data collection and exploring one, cohesive system for health records across health centres, Community Counselling Programs, and hospital settings.

4. RCMP and First Response Indicators pertaining to Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm.

The Department of Justice has supplied information about the number of RCMP calls where the primary reason for the call is a mental health crisis for the years 2018 to 2020. This category of call is not specific to self-harm or suicide ideation. There is no breakdown to distinguish between different types of mental health crisis or to allow for specific suicide ideation or self-harm calls to be identified. In 2018, there were 1228 calls identified in this category, in 2019, 1458 calls and in 2020, 1503 calls.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 38-19(2): PROJECT ASSESSMENT POLICY REVIEW

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 38-19(2) asked by the Member for Frame Lake on March 10th, 2022, regarding the project assessment policy.

As shared with Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, the review of the Project Assessment Policy is underway. The Department of Lands is working with all GNWT departments to review and discuss questions and concerns about the Policy, and to develop recommended revisions for Executive Council's consideration. Department of Lands anticipates meeting the timelines set out in the workplan.

1. How the review will address the criticism that the whole-of-government approach muzzles scientists and subject experts, preventing their presentation of evidence vital to the identification and assessment of environmental effects?

The GNWT recognizes that concerns have been expressed about whether the 'whole-of-government' approach hinders the ability of departmental scientists and other experts to provide evidence to environmental assessment bodies when GNWT projects are being assessed. As committed to in the responses to the Tlicho All-Season Road lessons learned report, which is available on the Department's website, the review of the Policy will include a review of the whole-of-government concept, as well as other relevant approaches and the development of a process for evaluating and determining the approach best suited to each individual GNWT project. This evaluation will take into account the nature of the project, the views of Indigenous governments involved in the project, the views of any co-proponents, the

requirements of the relevant environmental assessment and regulatory regime(s), and other relevant factors. As stated in the responses to the lessons learned, the GNWT commits to make public the approach and supporting rationale that is taken for any given project.

The review of the Policy includes consideration of how to better communicate the intent of the Policy, which is to give a voice to the full scope of the GNWT's mandate and to support interdepartmental discussion among scientists and other subject matter experts. Given the interdisciplinary nature of impact assessment, such discussion is important to the GNWT's ability to provide unified and complete submissions to environmental assessment bodies.

The review of the Policy is based on the understanding that individual GNWT departments are accountable for the content of their contributions to GNWT's submissions to environmental assessment bodies. This is currently set out in provision 5(c) of the Policy, which confirms that the Policy respects individual Ministers' authorities under Establishment Policies and legislation.

2. The timeline for completion of the review of the Project Assessment Policy?

As set out in the workplan for the Policy Review, the timeline for completion is December 2022.

3. How the review will provide opportunities for public engagement into the review of the Project Assessment Policy including reporting of public input and GNWT responses?

The workplan for the Project Assessment Policy review does not include plans for broad engagement. However, the review will incorporate the input received within the independently prepared Tłı̄chó All-season Road Lessons Learned Report, input from all departments, who represent a broad range of public interests; as well as input from standing committee, in accordance with the Process Conventions of the Legislative Assembly.

4. How the input of Indigenous governments and co-management bodies will be solicited and incorporated into any revisions to the Project Assessment Policy?

The workplan for the Project Assessment Policy review does not include plans for broad engagement. However, the review will incorporate the input received within the

independently prepared Tlı̄chó All-Season Road Lessons Learned Report, which included input from co-management bodies and Indigenous governments. Additional input from Indigenous governments, in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement of the Intergovernmental Council, may also be considered.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 39-19(2): MINING PROGRAMS AND SUBSIDIES

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 39-19(2) asked by the Member for Frame Lake on March 10th, 2022, to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment regarding mining programs subsidies.

I am pleased to provide a brief explanation as requested for each of the programs and subsidies for mining provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories included in the written question. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document entitled, "Value of Work Completed Under the Work Credit Program 2015-2022".

The Northwest Territories Mining Incentive Program, or MIP, provides funding to prospectors and exploration companies who propose new exploration projects or are already carrying out NWT mineral exploration work. The MIP is intended to stimulate and sustain mineral exploration activities throughout the NWT and reduce the risk associated with grassroots mineral exploration; exploration that is vital to a healthy, sustained, and productive mining industry.

In 2021-22 the MIP program was supported by a one-time increase of \$500,000 from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency to support economic recovery of the NWT's mineral industry and to assist advanced projects in further evaluating their mineral resources and economic potential.

As a one-time COVID-19 relief program for the mineral industry, work requirements for mineral claims were waived on an as-needed basis for those claims whose work requirements could not be met for the period of March 17, 2020, until December 31, 2020. This was addressed by applying a top-up where needed to the credits required to keep mineral claims in good standing until 2021.

Also, as a one-time COVID-19 relief measure, lease rent payments due between March 17, 2020, and December 31, 2020, were deferred

for one year from the day the rent would have been due.

The Prospector Support Program helps local prospectors by investing in the tools, equipment, and activities necessary to prospect. This funding program is provided under the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment also delivers an Introduction to Prospecting course, which is designed to increase the number of NWT residents who have both the knowledge and basic skills to begin working as a prospector. Each participant, in the four-day course, not only learns the key techniques essential to a successful prospector, but also is provided the basic equipment to start their prospecting work.

The Work Credit Program provides mineral claim holders 150 percent credit for eligible exploration work in order to keep minerals claims in good standing. This program has run from April 2015 March 2017, April 2017 March 2019, and April 2019 March 2022.

The Work Credit Program was amended for fiscal year 2021-22 to include an application-based program to provide relief on refundable extension deposits. With an application, clients were eligible for a reduced deposit of 25 percent, which is refundable if work is completed, in order to extend the anniversary date of their claims by one year; with the GNWT waiving 75 percent of the deposit amount. This relief assists claim holders that are unable to work their mineral claims during the continued COVID-19 pandemic.

The WCP encourages exploration at a time when companies are struggling to raise capital for their exploration work. Changes to this program are being looked at in light of the current industry needs and the easing situation coming out of the COVID pandemic.

I would also like to answer the specific questions raised by the Member, including:

1. What are the calculated costs to the GNWT for each of the above programs, including administrative costs since devolution?

The MIP currently has a \$1 million annual budget. For fiscal years 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17, the program budget was \$400,000. Subject to budget approvals, the current budget is planned to increase to \$1.3 million in 2022-23. Under the mandate priority

to increase resource exploration and development, the MIP funding is planned to increase by 50 percent by the end of the life of this Legislative Assembly;

Administrative costs for the MIP include site visits and program advertising; these costs are allocated from the annual program budget and typically represent less than one percent of the overall program budget;

ITI administers the delivery of an Introduction to Prospecting Course through an annual contribution to the Mine Training Society; and,.

The WCP is administered by the Mining Recorder's Office within the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Division of ITI. There is no cost and no revenue loss for the GNWT. It is an administrative exercise by the MRO.

2. What are the lost value of exploration expenditures and work as result of the waivers, WCP and other subsidies since devolution?

Since program inception, more than \$11 million in extra work credit has been granted on 600 mineral claims under the WCP. Financial data related to the WCP elements are summarized in the Tabled Document;

For 2021-22, the WCP was revised to include relief on refundable extension deposits for the year, for 2021-22 to date totals \$181,477 on 63 qualified mineral claims;

A 2020 ITI Economic Analysis Unit study of the MIP's effect on diamond exploration investment found that from 2014 to 2019 the MIP created at least \$2.1 million in diamond exploration that would not have taken place otherwise;

The one-year deferral of mineral lease rent payments for mineral tenure interest holders enabled 39 clients to defer this payment until 2021-22, this totaled \$1,238,517 for 538 leases; and,.

The Prospector Support Program is managed from within the overall SEED Policy program and budget. The Department does not breakout the costs associated with the delivery of each specific program under the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy Policy.

3. What is the direct and indirect economic impact of the GNWTs' programs and subsidies for mining?

Based on full reporting years, more recent years are incomplete due to pandemic-related delays, between 2014-15 and 2018-19, the

MIP has invested \$2.98 million in NWT exploration. This investment has leveraged over \$11.79 million in additional exploration expenditures by MIP recipients. Direct and indirect benefits from these projects include training, employment, and work experience for NWT employees, industry contributions and donations to local organizations and community programs, improved relationships between NWT communities and NWT explorers, increased perception of the NWT as a jurisdiction to conduct exploration, increased knowledge of NWT geology and mineral deposit occurrences, and testing of innovative new techniques such as enhanced geophysical detection of mineralized rocks in the subsurface.

4. Provide an explanation of how the costs and economic impacts of the mining programs and subsidies will be considered during the development of regulations under the Mineral Resources Act.

ITI is writing regulations keeping in mind the current issues and challenges. The MRA enables the development of Zones. One potential use of zones is the ability to determine targeted areas for incentives through collaboration with Indigenous governments. As we look forward to the Mineral Development Strategy renewal, we explore strategic planning options that will work within the MRA framework to promote the NWT as an attractive and competitive jurisdiction for mineral development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents.

Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 627-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACTION PLAN
FOR PROMOTING CRITICAL MINERALS:
WHAT WE HEARD – A SUMMARY OF THE
DISCUSSION FROM A VIRTUAL
WORKSHOP HELD TO DISCUSS CRITICAL
MINERAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 628-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACTION PLAN
FOR PROMOTING CRITICAL MINERALS
APPENDIX: PARTICIPANT COMMENTS
FROM CRITICAL MINERALS WORKSHOP,
NOVEMBER 9, 2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 629-19(2):
VALUE OF WORK COMPLETED UNDER
THE WORK CREDIT PROGRAM 2015-2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following three documents: Value of Work Completed Under the Work Credit Program 2015-2022; Northwest Territories Action Plan for Promoting Critical Minerals: What We Heard Report; and Northwest Territories Action Plan for Promoting Critical Minerals Appendix: Participants Comments from Critical Minerals Workshop, November 9th, 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 630-19(2):
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

TABLED DOCUMENT 631-19(2):
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY
PROGRAM 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 632-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1028-19(2): ACCESS TO CLEAN
WATER

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Environment and Natural Resources Strategic Plan 2022-2026; Waste Reduction and Recovery Program 2020-2021 Annual Report; and the Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1028-19(2): Access to Clean Water. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions -- tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 633-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 997-19(2): CORRECTIONAL
FACILITIES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's open up another round of oral questions; so much fun. Mr. Speaker --

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: I lost my voice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: -- I wish to table the following document: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 997-19(2): Correctional Facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 634-19(2):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN
QUESTION 36-19(2): MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORTS FOR RESIDENTS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following the document: Additional Information for Written Question 36-19(2): Mental Health Supports for Residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 635-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION 2022-2023 CONSOLIDATED
OPERATING BUDGET

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories Housing Corporation 2022-2023 Consolidated Operating Budget. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 636-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HYDRO
CORPORATION AND NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION
2022-2023 CORPORATE PLAN

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and Northwest Territories Power Corporation 2022-2023 Corporate Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Frame Lake.

Notices of Motion

NOTICE OF MOTION 52-19(2):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEES ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I give notice that on Monday, April 4th, I'll move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, second by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the following Member be removed as an alternate to the Standing Committee on Social Development: Mr. Jackie Jacobson, the Member for Nunakput;

And further, that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development: Mr. Rocky Simpson, the Member for Hay River South;

And further, that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development and Government Operations: Mr. Richard Edjericon, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

And Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Notices of motion. Motions. Member for Thebacha.

Motions

MOTION 51-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO MAY 26, 2022,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 31st, 2022, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 26th, 2022;

AND FURTHERMORE, that at any time prior to May 26th, 2022, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour -- oh, sorry. Colleagues, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are in favour, against, or abstaining from the motion. Mr. Clerk.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that she is favour of the motion.

The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour; zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Member for Frame Lake

MOTION 52-19(2):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEES ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
RULED OUT OF ORDER

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Frame Lake is seeking unanimous consent to waive the notice required for this motion and deal with the motion today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Member for Frame Lake, please proceed.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Appointments to the Standing Committee on Social Development and Government Operations whereas Rule 9.2(3) requires that Members be appointed to Standing and Special Committees.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, second by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the following Member be removed as an alternate on the Standing Committee on Social Development: Mr. Jackie Jacobson, the Member for Nunakput;

AND FURTHER, that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development: Mr. Rocky Simpson, the Member for Hay River South;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the following Member be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development and Government Operations: Mr. Richard Edjericon, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Members, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are in favour, against, or abstaining from the motion. Mr. Clerk.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that he is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member from Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion. The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Yellowknife South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): For Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
For Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
For Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Thebacha has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, we'll rule the motion out of order. There's some errors in the wording so we'll deal with it next session.

Okay, motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 51:
APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), 2022-2023,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House that Bill 51: The Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2022-2023 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(30), Bill 51: Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2022-2023, has been presented, deemed read for the first time, and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 51:
APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), 2022-2023,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 51: Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2022-2023, be read for the second time.

This bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make appropriations for operations expenditures for the 2022-2023-fiscal year.

It also sets out limits on amounts that may be borrowed by the Commissioner on behalf of the government, includes information in respect of all existing borrowing and all projected borrowing for a fiscal year, and authorizes the making of disbursements to pay the principal of amounts borrowed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason I put my name forward for the office that I now hold was to advocate for the community of Hay River and to give a voice to those that may not always be heard. At times, one finds themselves painted into a corner. This becomes commonplace for those who represent constituents from regional and small communities. Supports and services required by those in regional and small communities is not always in synch with what bureaucracy has planned.

The reality is that government is managed by a bureaucracy located in Yellowknife that may, through no fault of their own, not have a sense of small community living, amenities, and issues. This often translates into budgets, supports and programming that appear unfriendly and not understanding of the reality of communities outside Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, today we have the main estimates in front of us and we are expected to vote in favour or against them.

With this budget, the government is attempting to move forward the mandate and priority items for each department while making sure this government continues operating beyond today. This is a daunting task as it may require

favouring one region over another, one community over another, one program over another, one project over another, one issue over another, and one MLA over another. In the end, it is about making decisions to direct limited funding to grow regions and communities while supporting and advancing the growth of the economy and infrastructure of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT is made up of 33 communities, with all 33 not being treated fairly when it comes to financial support from this government.

Outside Yellowknife, we have a range of issues that include lack of housing, homelessness, mental health, addictions, policing, access to proper health care, education, aged infrastructure, failing road systems, diminished resource development, inadequate communication systems, increasing community funding gap, unsettled claims, cost of living increases, recruitment and retention of qualified staff through all departments; all impacting the lives of have-not communities.

Mr. Speaker, when Yellowknife requires a day shelter, a public emergency is declared which comes with \$175K of monthly operating funding while the communities are told to use the community sports centre or other facilities as day shelters.

When Yellowknife requires \$2.2 million in funding for housing and wellness, it only requires a one-page letter to this government while the communities are told there is no more funding.

When there is a need for more housing in Yellowknife this government purchases a 24-unit apartment building in Yellowknife for \$2 million plus.

When the Hay River Ski Club requests \$150K to support sports, physical fitness and mental health for youth post-COVID, they are told to go and fundraise at a time when residents just don't have any more to give.

Community governments are experiencing financial hardship due to an ever increasing funding gap at a time when aged infrastructure needs replacing as well.

Mr. Speaker, this government has a shortage of qualified workers.

With an Affirmative Action Policy that was designed to raise the number of Indigenous persons employed in the public sector, the question is: Can we achieve that equity with

the pool of qualified Indigenous people living in the NWT?

Reviewing statistics, I believe many of the qualified Indigenous people are working but continue to experience disadvantages as they are often overlooked for advancement and training.

If we expect to meet Indigenous employment targets, this government needs to provide the resources to educate Indigenous youth and position them to take over the roles many of us are in. In the interim, if we are to grow the North we need persons from all professions with various education, experience and skills who are willing to make the NWT their home. While we provide incentives to encourage people to move here to work, we must also provide those same or similar incentives to those already living and working here.

Mr. Speaker, this government talks about the need for housing, trades, and jobs. Then it goes out and purchases manufactured homes from the south which provides no sustainable impact on the community or the economy of the NWT. Going forward, we must support a combination of stick-built and NWT manufactured homes with those manufactured homes to built in the North.

The community of Hay River, with its access to marine transportation services, highway access, rail access, and access to what should be cheap hydro, is the most feasible place to support manufacturing initiatives. This government has yet to realize the potential for manufacturing in the community of Hay River and therefore does not provide adequate supports required to advance it. The market for manufactured goods would not only be the NWT. And, when we consider Hay River's proximity to the south, the possibilities are endless.

Mr. Speaker, the mineral resource sector has played a significant role in the development of the Northwest Territories. The 19th Legislative Assembly recognized that fact and committed support to increase resource exploration and development. We know that the NWT is rich in minerals and oil and gas. The stumbling block is access and the cost of that access.

If we expect the NWT to grow, we need roads to resources and communities and that, Mr. Speaker, starts with the Mackenzie Valley Highway. This government must work strategically and quickly with the federal government and industry to make this a real priority. The Mackenzie Valley Highway would not only support industry but it would also support access to the south for those

communities along its route while forming a loop with the Dempster Highway which would increase tourism opportunities as well.

Further, it would work towards lowering the cost of living for residents while providing access to education, jobs, business opportunities, improved communication systems, and housing for regional and smaller communities. This is where we must direct additional financial support.

Mr. Speaker, workforce priorities are changing which is impacting our ability to recruit and retain professionals throughout government and the private sector.

One area of concern is health care. Over the past two years we have seen the demand for healthcare workers increase and our success to recruit lessened. The reality is that the workforce is changing, workers priorities are changing, and the demand for healthcare workers is on the rise. It is therefore important this government adapt to that change and find creative ways to recruit professional healthcare staff that will provide for consistent, timely, and quality healthcare services to the residents of the Northwest Territories. We need to place additional resources into this area as it directly impacts the health and lives of all residents.

Mr. Speaker, further to health care, there remains issues with medical escorts and travel costs.

With respect to medical travel, we need to revisit the allocation for meals and accommodations. The amounts provided are not sufficient and need to align with what government employees receive while on duty travel. \$18 a day for meals and \$50 per day for accommodation is not acceptable and unfair to those who are on limited income.

To reach this goal, and because the cost could be substantive, it will require conversations with the federal government to secure additional funding to offset the increase.

Mr. Speaker, this budget may have its faults but the government has promised additional funding of \$4 million for housing programs, \$500,000 for heritage centres, \$2.2 million for homelessness shelters, and multiyear funding agreements that allow for inflationary increases for those third parties who deliver core government programs and services on behalf of the government.

To pay for this, in addition to \$2.4 million cut to contract services, we can expect an increase

in tobacco tax which will generate up to \$3.5 million annually.

These additional financial commitments by government are welcomed and confirms the fact that government is listening to the people of the NWT. Does it go far enough? Probably not. But it is a move in the right direction and we must recognize that fact.

Mr. Speaker, will this budget pass? I expect it will however I am hopeful that this government listened to what we had to say and in their deliberations considered our requests along with information included it in their decision-making processes. We, as Regular MLAs, may not have received everything we requested in this budget but that should not stop the dialogue from continuing as we move forward, as it is not about us. More importantly it is about the people of the Northwest Territories.

Although I will vote against this budget, I hold no ill feelings or animosity to those on the other side of this House as they had a job to do as well. However, this is an opportunity where we can agree to disagree while highlighting inequities between Yellowknife, regional centres and small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. To the principle of the bill. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will be voting against this year's budget for a variety of reasons which I will outline now.

As I said in the March 9th, 2022, Member's statement, the Government of the Northwest Territories budget allocations are not evenly spread across all communities and regions of the Northwest Territories. We see time and time again that the capital region gets most of the funds and everyone else is left to fight over the crumbs. Small communities and regional centres are routinely undercut and forced to fight to get funding at every turn whereas funding for just about everything within the capital region is almost automatically granted.

There is something seriously wrong with that scenario. The current structure of allocated funds within our territorial budget is flawed and needs to be evaluated.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, one of my top priorities for this year's budget did not get any funding commitments which was to allocate \$500,000 to the Salt River First Nation for a tiny home pilot project initiative for

homelessness. This would have been a potential solution to address homelessness in a regional centre.

On March 4th, 2022, the Member for Frame Lake, on my behalf, tabled into this Assembly the letter from Salt River First Nation outlining the project proposal. That letter was sent to the Minister of Homelessness and to the Premier on January 21st, 2022, so that Cabinet over two months to consider that project and find at least some funds to support it. All that was offered was to work with Salt River to submit funding applications to the federal government to access certain funding streams.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. Going that route would take too long and this project would not get underway for at least another year or two, if that.

I understand there may have been some concern from our government to fund this project because it was an on-reserve project. Well, our government could have easily reached out to the Indigenous Services Canada to determine a cost sharing arrangement to fund this shovel-ready project this year. But for reasons beyond me, that did not happen.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, our government received a letter on January 31st, 2022, from the Yellowknife Women's Society requesting funding for the Spruce Bough organization which provides wellness and housing programs to vulnerable people in the capital region.

While I do wholeheartedly support funding for homelessness and wellness programs for the people of the NWT, I strongly urge our government to spread this same support evenly across the board to all communities and regions of the NWT.

In the end, Spruce Bough received a funding commitment almost immediately after their letter was submitted. Although Spruce Bough did not receive the funds they requested, they did receive a substantial amount that was nearly exactly what they asked for.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, while it is good to see our government provide the relief funding to many struggling airlines across the NWT, in the latest phase of air aid delivery our government failed to include all airlines for additional financial support.

I spoke about this issue on Monday when I voted against the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2021-2022.

I said this to the Minister of Finance, and I still feel this way now, which is that the evaluation process for airline aid delivery is flawed. To only look at a financial snapshot during a very narrow timeframe during a global pandemic is not okay.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I take issue with the fact that the Department of Finance increased its budget by 13.9 percent for 2022-2023. The Minister of Finance says these extra funds were needed for additional manager-level staff in the department. Well, I just don't understand why we need these additional staff to oversee a budget deficit that continues to accumulate additional debt for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Our government is hiring more staff to help fix a broken system. That just doesn't make sense to me.

Mr. Speaker, another reason I do not support this budget is the Fort Smith Airport runway. While I do appreciate that funding was given to overlay the existing air side surfaces at the Fort Smith Airport, I'm still upset that the width of our airport runway was arbitrarily narrowed by the Department of Infrastructure.

I understand that Transport Canada changed their runway specifications which affects all airports across the country. However, to destroy a perfectly good and effective airport runway that was serving the needs of our community, our airline and our flight school, just doesn't make any sense. I've asked every which way to the Minister of Infrastructure and Finance to change the Fort Smith Airport runway back to its original specifications, but they will not budge from their position. That is extremely disappointing to me and the constituents of Thebacha.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to realize that regional centres and small communities do not have the same level of physical and social infrastructure as the capital region. More attention needs to be paid to the regional centres and small communities to bring them up to par with the level and programs and services as the capital region.

If this is truly a consensus style of government, then the MLAs from outside the capital region need to have a better say in which goes on into the budget. If we as ordinary MLAs feel that we cannot enter the front door, how is a regular person off the street going to enter that door to advocate the issues they need to be addressed to our Cabinet.

In all my time as an ordinary Member of this Assembly, I have not once seen an MLA from the capital have to advocate for funding on the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, another thing I am disappointed in is the lack of support given to my constituent who endured a tornado that destroyed his home. I know that the NWT Housing and MACA did reach out to that constituent and worked with him to some extent but I still maintain that he was shortchanged and did not receive adequate support that could have been provided.

Also, one other issue I feel the NWT is lacking in is policing in the smaller communities and regional centres.

The Minister of Justice once told me that the NWT has the highest per capita ratio of RCMP officers for our population than anywhere else in the country. Well, despite that fact I still feel that the level of policing is not sufficient and is not addressing all the crime taking place within our communities, particularly when it comes to drug issues that all the people of the NWT are dealing with.

Mr. Speaker, to vote against this budget is not a decision that I have made lightly. I have put a lot of thought into this decision and for these reasons, I will be voting against this budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. To the principle of the bill. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after trying to get some basic financial information about my region from the government, I was told that the GNWT did not budget in this way and that the information I wanted could not be provided. I decided to do my own work, and I can say it has been an eye opening experience.

Mr. Speaker, if we were to break down the \$2 billion operating budget based on population, it amounts to almost \$45,000 per person living in the NWT. Based on this estimate, that the Tlicho's share of the operating budget should be about \$135 million per year. When I look around Tlicho communities, however, I wonder where is this being spent. According to the sources of information I have, I estimate the amount of money being directly spent in my region to be approximately half of that amount.

The question I keep coming back to then, Mr. Speaker, is what happened to the other \$60 million on an annual basis that should be flowing to the people and communities in the Tlicho regions?

Mr. Speaker, the Minister's email provided some insight to this. It talks about work being done that benefits all NWT communities, like

the Executive, Indigenous Affairs, education modernizations, curriculum renewal, and MMIWG. There are many more of these types of projects across government, and I'm not saying that these are bad projects or that work should not continue. But using half of our money, or \$60 million, to work on GNWT priorities, many of which are out alignment with what is actually needed in my region, is really unfair.

For example, Mr. Speaker, if the GNWT was really interested in improving educational outcomes in my region, changing the Education Act will not have the same impact as addressing the social economic conditions like poverty and housing. A change in education legislation is not going to fix the housing crisis.

When you have eight people living in a three-bedroom unit and children do not have a good night's sleep or no quiet place to study, how do you expect these children to have good attendance and to focus on their education when they are worried about basics like food and shelters? Fixing this problem will do far more to improve educational outcome than some legislation changes.

Mr. Speaker, this government says it wants to work in partnership with Indigenous governments, and it says a lot of the right things. But the way it spends money tells a different story.

The fact that \$60 million is allocated to territorial projects without any community consultation sends a message that the GNWT knows better than local leaderships. To add insult to injury, organizations then have to apply for funding that have a lot of restrictions placed on them. The Minister of Health often has spoken about unused pots of funding. Maybe the reason organizations choose not to apply is because of all the restrictions placed on the funding, making it difficult for them to achieve an outcome.

Mr. Speaker, funding restrictions are just a tool that colonial government use to control Indigenous government. If the GNWT is serious about working with Indigenous government, they need to come up with a new fiscal approach that is built on mutual respect and trust instead of control. Just as the federal government trusts this government to make decisions, we need to show Indigenous government that same trust.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this budget as it is out of alignment of what my riding really needs. I would like to see the budget change to reflect more small community needs. GNWT

is using a large portion of our funding, or \$60 million every year, to support territorial projects when my region's basic needs are not being addressed.

My riding priorities are to fix the housing crisis, work on mental health and addictions, and to fix aging infrastructure, infrastructure as previously mentioned. Even if a small portion of the \$60 million GNWT is using for its territorial projects were spent towards our priorities, the housing crisis could be resolved over the next couple years.

I believe that all other small NWT communities are in the same situation and are paying a huge price tag for territorial projects that have little benefit for small communities. That is why we continue to see outcomes for people living in small communities. Communities get worse and the widen gap when compared to those people living in the capital or large regional centres.

If you are from small communities, you would understand our struggles and challenges yet we do not hear this from this Cabinet most who are from small northern communities. We feel no one is advocating on our behalf. Remember, there are 32 other communities outside of capitals that matters. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'm pretty exhausted. I don't have any formal speaking notes, I don't know how anybody else has managed to pull theirs together. But, you know, it's well known that I fundamentally disagree with Cabinet's fiscal framework that perpetuates overspending on capital, some of which is directed at large infrastructure projects of dubious merit and value.

I criticized this Cabinet for its lack of attention to raising revenues in my reply to the budget address. I advocated for one or more tax brackets for high income earners. I think that we can retain greater benefits from mineral exploration and development by retaining or capturing more royalties from mining and other measures that I identified in my reply to the budget address.

However, I was certainly happy to work with my regular MLA colleagues to secure some compromises and improvements to the budget, and those were highlighted yesterday by the Minister of Finance. And, you know, it was a difficult and challenging process that we went through but those changes that we

secured as regular MLAs by working together included, you know, additional funding for housing and for homelessness. And although \$4 million as a permanent increase to O and M funding for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation may not sound like a lot on a \$2.2 billion budget, I think it starts to head us in a better direction.

I support additional funding for homelessness shelters and for heritage centres as well.

I think there was a very significant commitment made on nongovernmental organization multiyear funding that will allow for inflationary increases to their funding. I think that's a really significant commitment that Cabinet has made, and I really look forward to that being implemented.

I support increasing tobacco taxes and a reduction in contracted services that were proposed by the -- or committed to by the Minister of Finance as well.

I did mention that I believe this was a very difficult process of negotiating changes, but I certainly appreciate the collaborative approach that was taken in the spirit of compromise, and it's I think a vast difference in approach from how we approached this in the last Assembly. So I want to give my Cabinet colleagues and the Minister of Finance some credit for that.

And I guess in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I can see my way to support this budget with the reservations that I mentioned earlier. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the principle of the bill. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, do I think this is a revolutionary game changing budget? No.

I have shared my views on the budget as a whole in my reply to the budget address towards the beginning of this sitting. But true change takes time, Mr. Speaker. Evolution takes time. And I'll be the first to admit that I'm not the most patient person in this House. But I acknowledge that we are at a place where costs are being stretched in all directions. Inflation is having a real impact on the people we serve as well as the government who serves them. And our expectations of how the government serves the people of the NWT has also grown.

While we have big asks for funding, we also have an expectation that the cost of living in the NWT not be further exacerbated by our government and that cost savings not be at

the expense of the livelihoods of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Both sides of these constraints, combined with our passion and love for each of our constituencies, made for, at times, a difficult budget discussion. But these discussions, as difficult as they are, also make me proud to work with, and continue to learn from, my fellow MLAs because the people we serve were central to all of our conversations.

So I want to thank my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, for sharing so passionately and candidly as we continue to work together. I'd also like to thank the chair and deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight who advocated for all regular Members with the Minister of Finance, and of course the Minister of Finance who was responsible to draft and implement the budget overall.

Last March, I read a motion into your House, Mr. Speaker, which called on the GNWT to prioritize the review of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation as part of the government renewal initiative, that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation update its mission statement and policies to reflect its role in social wellness, and that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation must include referrals to appropriate government programs prior to beginning the eviction process.

This year, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation released its new mission and vision which centers people at the forefront of its work, and now they are working with the Council of Leaders on organizational renewal by reviewing their policies, processes, and direction of NWT partnerships to house Northerners.

When questioning the Minister of the Housing Corporation during the main estimates review, she committed to a plan to address housing repairs in the NWT with an ultimate goal of bringing Northerners out of core need. There is still so much work to do, Mr. Speaker. But during my reply to the budget address, I asked if listeners only remembered one thing I said that day, it would be to note that the Housing Corporation cannot meet its mandate with a capital investment of \$11 million.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance committed to an additional \$6.7 million in response to MLA negotiations. These included a one-time increase of \$2.2 million for homelessness shelters, ongoing funding of \$500,000 to Northwest Territories-based heritage centres, and to develop procedures for multiyear

funding agreements that allow for inflationary increases for NGOs.

In addition to these three commitments, a fourth final commitment was most notable to me, Mr. Speaker.

After negotiations with regular MLAs, the government committed an additional \$4 million per year in ongoing funding for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. This much needed funding will provide financial support for home repair, fuel tank replacements, home purchase programs, mobility modifications, and to the seniors home subsidy. While this funding does not fully address housing needs in the Northwest Territories, it is a start, Mr. Speaker; and, to me, a reflection that Cabinet is listening.

It is this substantial commitment, along with the promising efforts of the Housing Corporation to change the way it does business, that has secured my support for the 2022-2023 budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the principle of the bill. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, along with several of my colleagues, will be voting against this budget.

I realize that I only just joined this Assembly in the last month; however, from what I've seen in the short time I have been here, I'm not impressed with the funding allocation to the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding.

Mr. Speaker, as a former chief, great knowledge working in our communities, understanding the people in our communities. I heard every day when I was a chief that housing's always been a priority. I sat on the DFN housing committee for a long time, and again at the national level, they've been saying the same thing.

So Mr. Speaker, from what I've seen so far, I do not believe the allocation of funding is eventually distributed across all communities, the regions in the NWT.

More often than not, it is the capitol region that are receiving most of the budgetary funds. Since I've been here, I talked to a lot of -- about the housing needs within my riding but not have received any budget commitments from the Minister of Finance or Cabinet. The closest thing I received on this issue was a commitment from the finance minister to meet with me and to discuss the housing budget needs within the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. While that is a good first

step, that does not address the many outstanding housing needs for the people in my constituency.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I had been questioning the consensus government concept. I feel that there are flaws, and these flaws have to be evaluated and addressed. True consensus style government has not yet been reflected in this budget process. Therefore, I will be voting against this budget. My constituents are extremely important to me and my work here at the Legislative Assembly, and I must see concrete changes in the budget process in the future in order to support any future budget. I am just not seeing enough funding into the smaller communities or regional centres being addressed with concern -- which is concerning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a note too as well I -- I'm wearing the orange ribbon today. And I got one here for my colleague, Mr. O'Reilly. I just didn't give it to him yet. But it's just to show that small communities in the Northwest Territories matter, and they need to be heard. And that's why I want to dedicate this ribbon to the -- all small communities in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the principle of the bill. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to spend any time here today rehashing the items that are in the budget and what aren't. I've sort of sat down to formulate my thoughts over the last week or so and really thought my best bet would be to get up to speak from my heart because that is where I am -- what I am using to make my decision.

One thing that I have really learned over the last three years now in this role -- or almost three years -- is that we are only as strong as our weakest community and that until we start to build up the small communities and all of our residents in need and focus on that, we won't see prosperity for the territory as a whole.

While this budget does do things for Yellowknife as a group, I don't, like others, have an Indigenous leadership to go to; I don't have a specific group within my riding that is going to advise me on what they think. So, really, I have to vote what I think is right from my heart.

As we went through this process and I listened to the needs and the concerns of my colleagues on this side of the House and their frustration with the lack of progress that they

see in their communities, I offered to them that my -- I don't know how to put this, Mr. Speaker, but that I would stand in solidarity with them.

To me, it's important that -- especially now as we are working together better as a group, the atmosphere on this side of the House has definitely improved in the last two sessions. As such, I think it's more important for me to show my colleagues that I support them and I support all residents of this territory.

While my specific constituents are probably getting as much out of this budget as they were going to get, that is not enough for me to say yes to the budget. I watch our government waste money left, right, and centre, and then yet turn down a small community ask or such for \$150,000, yet we'll expand our public sector; we will not evaluate job descriptions to ensure people are working more efficiently.

To me, an economy is not having all of your people working for the government and being bureaucrats. And I very much still believe that senior bureaucracy in this territory is driving the decisions that are being made here and that I'm not sure that there really is leadership or will to change that.

So Mr. Speaker, with all of that being said, I'm going to speak with -- vote with my heart. I'm going to stand with my small community colleagues, and I will not be voting for this budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. To the principle of the bill. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking all of my colleagues for all of their work over the last few weeks in the budget negotiations on both sides of this House. I think this has been a true exercise in consensus government, and it's one where, you know, consensus does not mean we all agree. I understand, and I hear the concerns of my colleagues who have voiced their opposition today, and it is my hope that we will use the next year to win their votes, and, you know, hopefully we'll see another group of MLAs voting against the budget, because that's the balancing act; we need to push the tensions on both sides where not everyone's going to walk away happy, and that's essentially what a budget does.

I don't want to repeat too many of my comments made in my reply to the budget address. I proposed that we spend \$20 million more on housing. I proposed a number of ways we could get there. I encourage my

Cabinet colleagues to, you know, continue that discussion.

And Mr. Speaker, that \$20 million was -- well, it was a number I just pulled out of the air, but it has some significance. That's the amount of money that the CMHC currently gives the Housing Corporation. It's the amount that expires in 2038. I believe it is the number that has completely hampered our Housing Corporation from changing its perspective on housing. It still believes that it is federally funded and hopes that this money will come back one day. And Mr. Speaker, we in this House have to realize that housing is our responsibility; replacing that CMHC funding is our responsibility, and we have to get on our way to do that.

Mr. Speaker, with -- throughout the budget negotiations, we got one fifth of the way of doing that. There's \$4 million more for the Housing Corporation. I'm very happy to see that.

And Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify an important distinction. That is \$4 million in committed ongoing funding. In the past, we have negotiated a number of increases that are one-time funding, and then they disappear. And that doesn't help us solve or systemic problems in any way.

I would gladly take an ongoing commitment of \$4 million than I would take \$25 million in one-time spending. The Housing Corporation needs to know that money is in its budget, that it can plan long-term, and it can eventually get over this fear of 2038. So if we do this five more times, Mr. Speaker, we'd get to \$20 million.

There is also \$2.2 million in one-time funding for shelter services. That is money that is continuing a lot of the great work we did in response to COVID-19 in regards to our most vulnerable. I don't believe that should be one-time funding, Mr. Speaker. I believe that should be ongoing funding and we don't lose that support.

One of the things that came out of budget negotiations which I believe has a long-term potential to be a lasting legacy for this government was the commitment to look at all of our contribution agreements and turn them into long-term contribution agreements, multiyear fundings with inflationary increases.

I have a number of non-profits who operate in my constituency, and they tell me they have contribution agreements that haven't increased since 2009, Mr. Speaker. That is just simply unacceptable. And they have to

report every single year on those with no increase permitted.

Mr. Speaker, I think the devil will be in the details here. But I think we need to review every single contribution agreement we have. Let's turn them into at least three-year multiyear contribution agreements with inflation built in. Let's minimize the reporting. And then at the end of those three or five-year contribution agreements, let's evaluate their program, Mr. Speaker.

And I think for some of our longstanding NGOs who receive those, we could turn it into block funding. We know the programs they're offering. They're not going away any time. We can minimize the administrative burden and give them the freedom to do the work that they need to do.

Last thing, Mr. Speaker, in my budget reply, I expressed concern about contract services. A number of departments continually lapse their contract services budget, most notoriously, the Department of Finance. So they are not spending the money out there.

The contract services is a -- over \$200 million of the budget. It's a very significant area, and some of it is absolutely essential. However, Mr. Speaker, I have seen a lot of contract services which seems to be when a department gets into a situation where there's some controversy and they don't want to make a decision, they -- they get another report; they hire another consultant; they go out and do some more engagement, and we end up in committee getting handed five different reports on the same topic because no one has wanted to make a decision that will -- will offend anyone, Mr. Speaker.

So I encourage when we're doing the contract services report, let's look at those consultants and some of the repeat work we've been doing for years, often to ex-GNWT employees, and maybe let's just make the tough decisions the first time instead of spending millions and millions of dollars on consulting services.

So I encourage my Cabinet colleagues, with the commitment to reduce contract services, to start with that work.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say I think there's also a bit of a tension right now in defining consensus government. I am a firm believer that Cabinet proposes, and the Legislative Assembly disposes, which means we on this side of the House, despite having a majority, have to be hesitant in steering the shipyard too much.

There are line items that I would love to cut. I think we have the majority, and there's millions of dollars I would like to remove from that budget. But Mr. Speaker, we elected those Members to Cabinet. They are responsible for their portfolios. They know them better than us. And I think we have to give them room to govern at times, even if it's very annoying, Mr. Speaker. Yet on this side of the House, I know Members, we are the only ones who review all of the departments. We have a bigger picture than, you know, single ministers. Often ministers have to just focus on their portfolios, and they lose that big picture.

And so it is that tension that is at play in budget negotiations. And I think we have heard over and over from this side of the House that housing is the priority. Some Members here have voiced that we didn't go far enough on housing, and I hope we continue those conversations, and we find the appropriate balance in the next budget.

But ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a concerted effort by both sides on this House to enable the priorities of this Assembly, and I will be voting in favour of the budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. To the principle of the bill. Member -- Minister -- Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think if any one of us designed this budget, it would not look the way it looks. I have things that I would like to see in here that aren't in here, and the same goes for every single Member. None of us gets everything we want. And that is consensus government. We hope we end up with something that is suited for all of us to the best -- to the best of our abilities. And this is a budget that we put together to the best of our abilities given our -- our priorities and our limitations.

To the Members who are, you know, wishing to see this budget fail, who are voting against this budget, I'd like to remind them that the alternative is that starting tomorrow, no one's getting paid. You know, I'm concerned about students going to school. Despite what some people might say, I am concerned about our student outcomes. I want schools to be opened. I want teachers to continue to be paid. I want the lights to be on at schools. You know, I want those power bills to be paid.

There was lots of talk about small communities. And when you arrive here in Yellowknife, even coming from Hay River, you know, this looks like the streets are paved with gold. But, you know, we all know that that's not

the reality. There's more people here. So yes, there's more money here obviously. But there are supports going to small communities as well, and I'm going to speak about my department's.

So at the Department of Justice, this -- this budget is proposing nearly half a million for new RCMP positions in the Tlicho region. You know, I would hope that Members would support that. I've heard it from the Tlicho leadership directly on numerous occasions that they want that increase. And so we've worked with the RCMP, and we're providing that increase. We have additional money for positions in Tuktoyaktuk because there's a need there, and we want to support that community.

And there are some territorial resources which I've heard, you know, so much about today that people don't appreciate. Well, the territorial resources in question here are the RCMP internet exploitation unit. They stop human trafficking. They stop -- they help stop our children from getting on planes and going down south and becoming, you know, part of -- part of something I don't even want to talk about. You know, it talks -- this -- this unit helps everyone in the territory. Those are the kind of centralized funds that we are spending.

The money that is in this budget is being used to decentralize positions. There's positions in Yellowknife that we are sending out to regional centres. This money has budget for -- this budget has money for positions that were decentralized by the Department of ECE last year. So it's ongoing funding.

This money -- this budget has money for Heritage centres which are primarily outside of Yellowknife. And I know they can use it. I have a Heritage centre in my community. I know they could use it. They haven't seen an increase in many, many, many years. And that is going to benefit communities outside of Yellowknife.

And as an MLA, I will say that I share the thoughts of all the other Members who are happy to see this increase in housing funding. You know, I have constituents who apply for grants to have their homes fixed. You know, you might need a roof. You might need a new roof for \$60,000. And you are working full time, and you're taking care of a couple kids, and you just can't afford it. And I've seen those people get denied because there's no money left in the pot. Now we have money left in the pot. That's a real impact on our constituents, you know, and I'm happy to support that as well.

Mr. Speaker, is this budget perfect? Of course not. No budget is ever perfect. But I think that we need to realize that we didn't come into this Assembly to make 50 million, a hundred million, \$150 million worth of cuts the way that we generally see coming into an Assembly.

We made our way through a pandemic without making those types of cuts. We made sure that we kept money in the budget and we kept people employed.

So maybe everyone isn't getting everything they want today, but that doesn't mean that there are not significant benefits to this for the MLAs and for the people of the territory.

So along with my Cabinet colleagues, I'll be supporting this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, government House leader. To the principle of the bill. Minister responsible for Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to speak yesterday in Committee of the Whole and made a number of comments at that point about consensus government and about the process by which the budget is built. I don't want to repeat all of that, Mr. Speaker, but I do have a few additional comments I want to make today.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very frequently asked what am I going to do about the debt ceiling, what am I going to do about rising costs of debt, what are we going to do about the rising costs of fuel, what are we going to do about the rising costs of living, what will we do about the rising costs of inflation, how will we manage our rising expenditures when there's stagnant revenues.

Mr. Speaker, the solution isn't necessarily to spend more. And in the case of being right now in the midst of a crisis where we've been coming out of two years of a pandemic where we had to respond to floods in small communities, and did, indeed, respond to those floods in small communities, Mr. Speaker, we are constantly having to adjust how we deal with priorities across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the budget doesn't get divided up by 13 -- 33 communities. It would be unfair because the small communities, if we did that, wouldn't get a fair share. It would go to the community that has 50 percent of the population and not to the small communities. Would there being money left over to be rebuilding the flood ravished communities that we had? Perhaps not, Mr. Speaker. But that is

simply, again, not how we budget in the Government of the Northwest Territories. We budget at our -- best we can based on need, and that's done -- across departments.

Mr. Speaker, I can paint two alternatives. I spoke yesterday quite a lot about consensus. I believe in consensus government. I believe in the process of negotiations. I do believe in the process of hearing from MLAs. I believe every other Minister feels the same. The Premier's given us very clear instructions that we're always to do that, that we're here to build consensus and that dialog.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, we are not all agreeing today. That is more than apparent. And I want to say right now before I go any further, I will still be available to speak to every MLA tomorrow. I consider the relationship one that is always to be rebuilt, built, grow, change. And we're always going to learn something from one another, Mr. Speaker.

But there's an alternative to the way this process was, and that would be that three MLAs come forward to me, tell me three projects, we build them into the budget, and that that's the end of the discussion, that there are no negotiations, that we don't try to collectively say which topic area, which subject area should we add something more to, which area can we all agree we could probably trim something from without impacting ongoing programs and services.

That's the kind of difficult discussions that we've been having. They are hard. And they're not perfect. And we're still operating within a situation where we have limited funds where we have to still ensure that we're providing every program and service in every community across 33 communities and across a huge geographic region.

It's actually a very complicated thing. It's actually much more complicated, I'd suggest, than perhaps being one of the provinces where there's a much larger opportunity to raise revenues where economies of scale operate differently. We don't have those benefits here. But we have 33 communities that we're serving, many of whom don't have access to roads and all-weather roads.

So Mr. Speaker, the budget process that we have is not one where we pick three projects and then moved forward and assume that it's all sewn up.

Every time we start the budget process, Mr. Speaker, capital budget and operating budget, I know that we will be facing a potential vote. I know that I will face criticism or that we as a

government will face criticism of the budget from Members from -- for a variety of different reasons. That's a very real risk we take every time. And -- but it's a much harder road to take to sort of sit down and try to find what areas we can do some changes in, what programs we can make changes to, what services we can make changes to at this stage that will actually reflect some of the needs and discussions.

And in this particular case, those discussions did land largely on housing and housing changes and housing supports. And the changes we're making are significant. I'm grateful for the discussions we've had because it's changes that we're going to be making to the Housing Corporation's permanent budget are going to be the kinds of programming changes where those dollars are the kinds of dollars that go out to individuals in the communities and to the communities so that they are spending on the seniors program, on the fuels program, on programs that -- again, that are -- that are spent in the communities and by those communities. I think that was an exceptional outcome that I was proud about.

And I think there's a couple of MLAs, too, who've landed on the value -- and we don't know yet the cost of this, but landed on the fact that nonprofit sector, those that provide government programs and services directly, are now not -- are going to be looking at a very different way of approach from the Government of the Northwest Territories. This is quite huge, and it is potentially a significant cost. But it's the right thing to do. And I was, again, very pleased that that's one of the outcomes of our discussions.

There's a few quick comments, Mr. Speaker, just specifically about things that have been raised here today that I want to speak to. And I'm speaking to them because I'm, you know, again at this point, some of the conversations are now being had here on the floor, and so just as I would in question period want to give information fulsomely, I want to take this opportunity here.

Community funding. Mr. Speaker, every -- what Yellowknife MLA hears about underfunding of community. Every Yellowknife MLA hears about it because Yellowknife is one of those communities where the community government stands up regularly and leads the charge for underfunding of municipal and community governments.

The mayor of Yellowknife is very vocal, and she certainly makes sure that every Yellowknife MLA is well aware of the impacts of being an underfunded community,

particularly being a community that winds up actually providing services to residents who come here from across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, as it is, the 2014 calculation that's been used, as I understand it, actually is some of the smaller communities are overfunded on that calculation, not underfunded. My understanding is they will not see any of their funds drawn back or clawed back. But it's just worth remembering that it's some of the larger communities that are actually the most underfunded on that basis.

Homelessness, Mr. Speaker, again, we all agreed this was a critical area. And that was, again, there was an option here where the Yellowknife projects could simply have been funded internally for a year, and that could have just been done from the existing appropriations, and that would be the end of that. Instead, by adding to those budgets, by adding to the opportunity so that homelessness can see an increase in funds, means that more projects get funded. It won't just be Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker. More projects get funded.

In fact, I'll just note that this budget, if it passes, includes \$752,000 earmarked for Hay River and Fort Simpson, Mr. Speaker.

And with respect to the tiny homes project, Mr. Speaker, I do want to be very clear. This Cabinet, certainly myself, I know my colleague the Minister of Housing, are thrilled to have new ideas, are thrilled to have new opportunities. But Mr. Speaker, that project's not shovel ready. And I know the MLA and I might disagree about this -- we often agree about a great many things but this is one that we don't agree on. In my view, it's not shovel ready, Mr. Speaker. But my hope is that with the commitments that we've made to get the right folks in there and to have these conversations, that it will be shovel ready and that it will be ready for funding. I think that would be an outstanding outcome of the discussions that we've had.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss, since the Department of Finance was put on the block here, not to explain it perhaps again that the increase in the Department of Finance is largely -- well, there's three big lings, Mr. Speaker. The Tlicho All-Season Road gets funded by the Department of Finance. Those funds, that payment now as a P3, is coming out of the Department of Finance. And so there was a significant increase in our budget to pay for the Tlicho All-Season Road out to the community of Whati in Monfwi.

Similarly, the asset retirement obligation changes in public sector accounting standards is in there. Insurance premiums for the entire set of buildings and assets that we have across the GNWT in all 33 communities is funded by the Department of Finance. That's where you're seeing the increase, Mr. Speaker. That, and one new position being funded out of all of that. And Mr. Speaker, there's -- beyond that, this budget -- in my budget speech, I talked about the things that are -- you know, it's not just about flashy new things. It's about getting done what needs to get done.

I know that -- I believe the Minister of Justice already spoke to this but just -- it has to be highlighted, Mr. Speaker, that there's two positions -- two additional RCMP positions and associated vehicles going to Behchoko. There's an additional RCMP position going up to Tuktoyaktuk. There's \$809,000 to pay for RCMP housing across the Northwest Territories right now.

ENR sees money going in for over a hundred -- over a million for the conservation and recovery of caribou. That's something that benefits a number of small communities and regional centres in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it's the concern around that this budget doesn't pay for or doesn't help small communities and it's not divided that way. It's not, and it can't be. The headquarters functions of a large organization of any government perform functions and perform roles that benefit the entire territory, that benefit every department that go into every community. I just want to give you four or five examples briefly, Mr. Speaker, before I conclude.

Indigenous -- or the Executive and Indigenous Affairs, it's a department that doesn't always get as much attention. This is the department that's -- that's the Premier's to manage. But Mr. Speaker, this is where the negotiators reside. This is where the negotiations of land claims and self-government agreements take place. That's a critical department to see that it continues to function.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, this is responsible for the Council of Leaders. They're responsible for the GNWT's participation at the intergovernmental council. These are critical things that are -- that are flagship things that I think this government and this entire Assembly has something to be proud of. They're involved in seeing the advancement of UNDRIP, of the United Nations Declaration. These are tremendous opportunities where the Government of the Northwest Territories or the

whole of the Northwest Territories shows a real place of leadership. And while we have lots of work to do, we have an opportunity to be leaders in Canada. But this is where that -- this is where that's happening, is in the headquarters function where that budget goes.

Also, there is the gender-equity unit. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the work on the national inquiry action plan response is so important. There's engagement happening right now across the Northwest Territories. And it is being led by someone who resides in a headquarters department. That's quite true, and that department goes community by community to be engaged and to develop this action plan. I'm deeply proud that work is happening. It's not a budget that gets divided by community. It's work that has to happen in all communities.

Education, Health, I mean the Department of Health and Social Services is almost one-third of the entire budget of the Government of the Northwest Territories. And they've led a response to the pandemic in the last two years that has seen, overall, very positive outcomes for us. And also pays for things like medical travel. You know, it has quite a number of things where -- again these aren't the exciting parts of the budget but these are the things that help people day to day in small communities, in regional centres, and in Yellowknife. They help -- the budget there doesn't get parsed out because medical travel doesn't get parsed out. We don't say that only a handful of folks from one community have been flown out, that there's no more money for that community. That's not how this works. There's always going to be more money that when -- when somebody is going to have to travel out of a small community, we're going to keep funding it. That's how this works.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I do hope and I look forward to the opportunity to vote on this budget. I mean, there's certainly no surprise that I'll be voting in favour of the budget.

I do want to assure Members I'm hearing their frustrations. That's why I'm offering to go myself to meet, to discuss the functioning and the preparing of the budget, to better understand how the money is spent, where it's spent, how it's divided, how those decisions are made. I also want to have the opportunity to make sure that there aren't programs or services that can't be further tweaked and aligned to better service communities. That is, to me, always been the point of budget discussions. Not to pick three things or pick three projects or three ridings but to look as a

whole of territory, what areas, what topics, what services do we need to enhance.

If there's policy matters that aren't funding related, then take those back to the relevant Ministers and have them look at it. There's been all sorts of reviews happening in the last two years. That takes time. But a lot of that work is happening. It's underway. It's being funded by the budget that's before the House right now.

I've already said my thanks, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues on the other side. Again, it's difficult sometimes to hear the comments that are negative about the budget but they're always beneficial in the long term. Officials are listening. We are all listening. And I'm grateful for this opportunity. I'm grateful for the dialogues that we've had.

Mr. Speaker, I remain committed to consensus government, and I remain committed to not picking projects or picking -- picking one thing at a time. It's continuing this dialogue as we have been for the remainder of the 19th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. To the principle of the bill. Minister for Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to try to be as succinct as possible here. First of all, I represent five small communities and one regional centre. So when I'm sitting on Cabinet, I'm listening to my colleagues talk, the departments talk, and I'm also sitting on a variety of committees of Cabinet. So we may not get the -- the information that the regular Members get on their committees, but I can guarantee you the opportunity to sit in and have the conversations about budgets and the process at the table -- I know myself, and I can't speak for Minister Chinna, but I should just say that I've heard her speak about small communities, the importance of smaller communities. We -- this Cabinet here is very reflective of what the Northwest Territory is. It's about small communities, regional centres, and the city of Yellowknife. We have representatives of all three in here as we work on the budget.

Mr. Speaker, when we sit there and talk about it, and there was this old adage way back when, if everybody's not happy it means you've done a good job in the negotiation process.

Am I happy about this? No. There's things in here that I wish I wanted to see. There was some of the negotiations that frustrated me because there was things missing. But at the end of the day, what we're trying to do is the

residents of the Northwest Territories. We are here to make this better for people. It's about the residents. At the end of the day, they are our bosses. That's who we're here working for. And I think, and I applaud Minister Wawzonek in her approach. Is it frustrating? We could find three. I've seen it previously. I've seen the government before I became in to be a Member and before I saw -- became a Member of Cabinet.

We're doing business differently. We're having those hard conversations. We're having those negotiations. We're talking. It doesn't seem like we're listening but we're listening. We're having those hard, frank conversations. And we're able to see improvements in the budget be able by the Members. Is it perfect? No. It's never perfect. But I think Minister Green talked about give me \$500 million and we would have treatment centres across the North. Well, you give me X amount of dollars, and I can fix a whole bunch of other issues. But we don't have all the money. We don't have all the money we need. We're \$1.5 billion in debt. We're getting closer to the debt ceiling. So we got to find creative ways of doing things. And I applaud the regular Members for their negotiations and bringing forth ways to improve things.

Housing has been a struggle for 50 years. We've had the NWT Housing Corporation here. The things that -- we would love to see houses in here, every community. We joke around, I'll give you a house, I'll give you a house, I'll give you a house. We'd love to do that. Is there overcrowding? Yes. I see it every day in my riding. But I work with the Minister on trying to help my constituents like the other regular Members do.

Past experience is when you sit there and you look at big projects. Stanton Hospital, how does that help Somba K'e? Deh Cho Bridge, how does that help Jean Marie? The other highway systems in other regions, how does that help Nahendeh riding? It doesn't, but it helps the people of the Northwest Territories. That's what we're there for working collectively on this. We need to be able to do this.

As the Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs, are we underfunded in the municipal funding gap? We hear all the time are we looking for creative ways of finding solutions to it? Yes. I am now working more hand in hand with the president of NWTAC. We're trying to find alternative ways to get more money into the Northwest Territories. We are going to work together. We're working to -- to try to do a tri-territorial approach to it. So again, it's about how we are able to do things.

At the end of the day, am I happy with this budget? No. I would love to see more things happen in my riding. I would love to see more things happen in other ridings because, you know, when we talk about it, it's about putting food on the table, looking after the people, addressing homelessness, addressing people that are less fortunate. But we're not -- we don't have the endless pot of money.

So I applaud -- again, the Minister of Finance has been true to her word, is that we're going to do consensus government.

What does consensus government mean? It's about working together. It's about listening to people. It's about understanding and understanding and respectful of other people's differing opinions. Because at the end of the day, it's about working together. It's about listening. We need to listen to the residents of the Northwest Territories with the resources that we have.

So is the budget perfect? No. I keep on saying it's not perfect. But the work that's been done has been very helpful.

So Mr. Speaker, I know I said I was going to try to be short, and now I'm almost a little bit longer than I wanted to be. But I am going to support this budget, and I applaud the Minister of Finance to continue on this path. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. To the principle of the bill. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today we are at a giant crossroads. It had always been my approach, and it will remain my approach for the rest of my time here, that I was elected first and foremost to serve the people of the Northwest Territories, all of them, from Fort Smith to Sachs Harbour and back again.

And I pay special attention to my constituency, which is Yellowknife Centre, which is a very diverse constituency. I have the bulk of the homeless population. There's some really fancy houses over on Matonabee, lots of apartments, apartments that are so densely populated they're bigger than any riding of the small community variety.

It's my approach that what's good for all of us is good for Yellowknife Centre. We may not see in Yellowknife Centre the immediate benefits of the Tlicho All-Season Road because it doesn't come anywhere close to Yellowknife Centre. We've got a road. But I think that we understand the principle that

lifting up everybody else lifts us up too; that a rising tide does, indeed, flow to all boats. And so I feel that the best example I can give of this approach is the way we handled the pandemic.

We could have divided the money we received to manage the pandemic into 33 communities, or into 19 constituencies, and we could have said when that money was gone I'm very sorry, it's gone. But no. We decided that we needed to approach the pandemic on a collective basis. So if there was a big outbreak in Fort Good Hope, we threw everything we had at it. If there was a big outbreak in Inuvik, then we threw everything we had at it. We didn't start charging back people based on the per capita population of those who needed testing, needed vaccines, needed the treatment, needed hospitalization, the use of ventilators and so on. No. This is not how health works.

Health is a collective undertaking that provides service to everyone regardless of where they live. And the medical travel, the specialists who work at telehealth where people can call in and get advice from their small community health centres, that is the collective approach that we take in health.

It pains me enormously that this is not something that is supported by people I'm frankly surprised who don't support it, that they're parochial self-interest is preeminent and that the collective interest is secondary. It's frustrating. But it is what it is. And I would like to say nothing about consensus government. I think it is completely misunderstood.

If you think this budgeting process is hard, I invite you to look at party politics. You see it on the day it's produced and then that's -- that's that. There is no opportunity to go through weeks of negotiations to increase the budget in areas that are important to nonexecutive council members.

I want to thank, in particular, the Minister of Finance. The amount of patience that she's shown in this process, and leadership, is extraordinary. And I commend her for that, along with my Cabinet colleagues, as we've sat through hours of discussion about what the budget would be and once it was tabled, what it could become. I'm very sorry that we are at this point now but this is the point that we're at. We have one more to do. Let's hope it works. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. To the principle of the bill. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am kind of really heartbroken in what I'm hearing today, in honesty.

This Cabinet has been different. It's tried different. And those that were in the Assembly in the last Assembly know that, know that we've been working differently. And they know -- I think that Members that were here, and current Members as well, many of them, know that my heart is in the right place, and I am the Premier and I represent our Cabinet.

I've been asked -- I'm a Yellowknife MLA, Mr. Speaker. If I was only concerned about Yellowknife and my own riding and my own get re-elections, then I would be voting everything to stay in the capital city. But I have not done that. I haven't done that in this Assembly, and I haven't done that in the last Assembly.

I've been asked in this House to put single service windows -- single window service centres in Yellowknife because we have them in small communities, and I've said no, against my own riding.

I've been asked when I was the housing minister why don't we put more services in Yellowknife. I put shelters outside of Yellowknife in the small communities, three shelters outside of Yellowknife, because I recognize the needs of the small communities that were needed.

When I was the MACA minister, Mr. Speaker you know that, when I was asked would I take back the money of the small communities that were overfunded, I said no, I wouldn't. I would let them stand because they were still -- even though they were overfunded, they still need more support.

When I was the education minister, I was asked -- I was expected, I'm a Yellowknife MLA, I could have said the headquarters shall be in the capital. We have the population. I said no, the headquarters are safe where it is.

I think I've shown over my term in the last six years that I do care about small communities. And I've seen with all of these Cabinet ministers that they also care about small communities. At no time have I heard at the Cabinet table that this shall be in Yellowknife because Yellowknife deserves it. In fact, I've heard the opposite. I've heard Yellowknife Members in Cabinet stick up for small communities and say that we need to support the small communities. So I know that whatever we say won't make a difference. I know that people make up their minds before;

that's just how things go. But I do say that I do take offence, Mr. Speaker, on the implication that this Cabinet cares about the capital city more than small communities, because in my opinion from a personal standpoint and from all of the Members in this Cabinet, I have seen and experienced the opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's all I will say.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

Members, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are for, against, or are abstaining from second reading. Mr. Speaker.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Honourable Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: For.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member for Monfwi.

MR. SPEAKER: Please say again.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that she is opposed to the motion.

The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that he is opposed to the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: For.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Honourable Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Opposed.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that she is opposed to the motion?

The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I note that when the vote was called, the Member for Great Slave was not in her seat and I'm challenging the validity of her voting in this exercise. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, there's no point of order.

The results of the recorded vote: 11 in favour; six opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried.

Bill 51 has had second reading.

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 23, Bill 29, Committee Report 26-19(2).

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Member for Hay River South in the chair.

---SHORT RECESS

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Committee wishes to consider Committee Report 26-19(2). Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): We'll have a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS.

I'll call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 29-19(2) Standing Committee on Social Development report on Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together.

We left at motion number 1 or -- yeah, motion number 1 I guess it is. I would just ask -- it was read out yesterday but I'll just ask Ms. Cleveland to re-read it. Thank you.

COMMITTEE MOTION 220-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
OVERREPRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS
CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Yes, opening remarks for our committee report were read into the record yesterday, and the first motion, Mr. Chair, is I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories declare the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in child and family services a crisis and develop a whole-of-government response in partnership with Indigenous governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Semmler.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are you able to hear me? Okay, thank you.

First of all, yesterday I had made comments to the opening -- or to general comments, and my comments didn't show up for the record. So what I wanted to say first was that I want to thank every person that spent the time providing the information to our committee for this report. It was a difficult -- some of the information that we received was very difficult. We were able to hear from families affected. We were able hear from youth in care. We heard back from many different other organizations. And so I'm very grateful for all the information.

I think as this committee, when we were looking at to review this Child and Family Services Act, we wanted to focus on prevention. And the reason we wanted to focus on prevention was because of this first recommendation.

And I want to highlight that this is a crisis. When 98 percent of the children in the child and family services in the Northwest Territories are Indigenous, this is a crisis. If this was the other way around and they were non-Indigenous, this would definitely be a crisis and the whole of government would be trying to figure it out how this happened. But

because it's just generational, generational, it went from residential school to Sixties Scoop, you know, and now we got the child and family services, it's just a continuation. This is a crisis. And I am support of this motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Ms. Semmler, can you just hold.

Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I take offence to this one. I think that this one goes against the rules of debate, 3.2(3)(i). The comment that the Member stated that the children are Indigenous and therefore it's not as important but if they were Caucasian that it would be an all-of-government response implies faults or hidden motives to another Member; in fact, it implies that the whole of Cabinet would make this a priority and I think that's disrespectful to all of us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Committee, we'll just take five minutes.

---SHORT RECESS

Okay, I'll call the committee back to order.

On the issue of the Point of Order raised by the Premier based on Rule 3.2(3)(i) imputes false motives against another Member, I feel comments did cross the line and ask the Member to apologize and withdraw the comments. I recognize the fact that it is a very passionate subject that we're discussing but caution and urge careful language be used. Ms. Semmler.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize for my comments, and I -- you know, I take back if the Premier or whoever raised the Point of Order, because I can't hear it on this side. So if they would have let me can -- finish my statement, maybe they would have understood what I was leading to. And I was never making it a point that it was this government. This is an ongoing historical problem that we need to raise.

It's the same fight that many Indigenous families have fought for missing and murdered Indigenous women, that it was never -- it was never recognized as a crisis. And until we start to recognize that it's a crisis -- and the examples were used was if it was a non-Indigenous woman, just like you seen in the media all the time, that a non-Indigenous woman goes missing and it's broadcasted everywhere throughout the media. So if that's what this government thinks that I was leading

to then, you know, I apologize for that but that's not my intentions, never was.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):

Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Semmler. Do you want to continue on talking to the motion?

MS. SEMMLER: You know, like I said, this is a crisis. There are 98 percent of children in care. They are Indigenous. We need a whole-of-government approach to change this. This hasn't changed since residential school. Do I have to speak to the recommendations from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Inquiry? Do I have to repeat what the TRC says? This is the crisis. This is an ongoing crisis. And so yes, I support this motion. And I think everyone in this House should support this motion. Not blaming anyone in this House that they created this. It's just a crisis and we need to come together as a government with Indigenous governments and find a way to resolve this. That is where I was getting to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):

Thank you, Ms. Semmler. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to say that I support my colleague, and I know that it's a difficult conversation for her.

I also support this motion and the use of the word "crisis" and the need to develop the whole-of-government approach. It was my -- to my absolute shock, as I started this work, that it is 90 percent Indigenous children and youth that are in care and to me that is just reprehensible and disgusting. So I will be voting for this, and I hope as well that my colleagues do too. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):

Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If all the children in care were white, there would be a whole-of-government approach. It is absolutely insane to think that is not the case. That is how systemic racism works. We know that. This government has repeatedly acknowledged systemic racism.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):

Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Chair, Point of Order on 3.2(3)(i) imputes false or hidden motives to another Member.

I do not accept, Mr. Chair, that if all the children in care were Caucasian that this government would have a different tactic. This government, its Cabinet, this whole of this government is -- the majority of Cabinet are

Indigenous. And at no time have we said that we shall punish children because they are Indigenous, that we do not care about our children because they are Indigenous, that we give less services because they are Indigenous.

I do not believe in my heart that we would do any different for our children in care if they were all Caucasian. I believe, Mr. Chair, that we are doing the best we can to provide services. And I believe that the Minister responsible is trying to work with Indigenous governments, has supported the federal government move to actually have the children -- the Indigenous governments take over the care of their children, which is the right thing to do. So I take offence that any Member that says that this would be different from our government if these children were Caucasian is totally offensive, and I do not accept that from any Member. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson):

Thank you, Madam Premier. Okay, I just ruled on that Point of Order. And again, I would ask the Member to apologize and withdraw those comments. And again, I recognize that it is a very passionate subject and I caution everyone to, you know, to be careful in the language they're using and, you know, try and keep things factual. Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The test is whether a motive is imputed to Cabinet. I don't believe I was imputing any motive. I was stating a fact about systemic racism. I will not withdraw the comments, and I will not apologize.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): We will have a five-minute recess.

---SHORT RECESS

I'll call the committee back to order. Member for Yellowknife North, I have ruled that your comments were out of order. I will ask you again to apologize.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I stated, I don't -- I was not imputing any motive. I believe I was stating a fact. I will not apologize, and I will not withdraw my comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Member for Yellowknife North, if you refuse to apologize, pursuant to Rule 3.4(4) I will suspend the proceedings and report to the Speaker who may rule as if it happened in the Assembly. Will you apologize?

MR. JOHNSON: No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Members, pursuant to Rule 3.4(4), I will suspend proceedings and report to the Speaker. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 26-19(2).

During committee's consideration, the Member for Range Lake rose on a Point of Order pursuant to 3.2(3)(i), stating that the Member for Yellowknife North was imputing false or hidden motives to a Member by stating that, and I quote, "If all these children in care were white, there would be a whole-of-government approach. It is completely insane to think that this is not the case. This is how systemic racism works. We know that. This government has repeatedly acknowledged systematic racism." End of quote.

Prior to this exchange, I had ruled on a Point of Order raised by the Member for -- by the Member for Range Lake against the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes as similar comments were out of order and recognized while Members are passionate about this issue, we must remain respectful.

I advised the Member for Yellowknife North that his comments were out of order and asked him to apologize. The Member refused.

I asked the Member a second time and he refused; in effect, challenging the chair.

Pursuant to Rule 3.4(4), I have suspended proceedings and am reporting these circumstances to the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you rule on this matter so that Committee of the Whole can resume its consideration of Committee Report 26-19(2). Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Colleagues, this has been a long session and long day. The topic you're debating now is a sensitive one. It is also very important. Before I rule on this matter, I will allow some debate.

Madam Premier, as you raised the Point of Order, I'll go to you first. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize also it has been a long day. I was offended when the comment came that if these children were Caucasian

that it would be different, we would have given an all-of-government approach to it. The majority of our Cabinet are Indigenous. The majority of the Members are Indigenous. And so I took offence to it, Mr. Chair. Then when the second Member stated it again, it was like a slap in the face and so I rose again, Mr. Chair. But recognizing it's been a long day and we have important business to do, I did want to withdraw the statement but it was too late because it was already done. My understanding it was already ruled on.

I guess I have no more to say, Mr. Speaker, other than to say that this government cares. It cares about small communities. It cares about making sure the money. And it cares about Indigenous children. And I still stand by that I do care, and all of this Cabinet cares about Indigenous people and small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's all I have to say.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Do others wish to speak to the Point of Order? Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The test is not whether anyone was offended. We are allowed, and in fact encouraged, to say things that will offend people in this House. That is healthy debate. The test is whether it was imputing motive. And I don't believe the statement that if the children in care were white and not Indigenous there would be a whole-of-government approach imputes any motive. In fact, I don't believe the motives of my Cabinet colleagues or any of the people in this House are remotely, you know, racist or prejudice towards Indigenous children in care. I know they deeply care. But that is not how systemic racism works. Systemic racism and systems that clearly in our territory arise out of -- as the Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes stated, arise out of residential schools, arise out of the Sixties Scoop carry on and that I believe it is a simple fact that if all of the children in care were white, there would be a whole-of-government approach.

We are talking about child and family services. We are talking about a very sensitive subject. And Mr. Speaker, we need to be able to talk about systemic racism and stay statement -- say statements like that. I am very concerned if you make this ruling, you hamper you censor future debate in this House about a very key subject. And you take many people in this House who are then afraid about what they are going to be able to say in the realm of child and family services. We need to be able to have frank debate in this House. It is not a

matter of offending anyone on either side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker.

I will not apologize. I think apologizing, withdrawing that statement, is bad for democracy and bad for the very important conversation that we need to have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Do other Members wish to speak to the Point of Order? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too just want to -- you know, I apologized because the order was ruled in Committee of the Whole so I could continue my statement. And like my colleague said, this is a sensitive subject. We heard stories, and I've lived in the Northwest Territories my whole life and seen this. And, you know, and as -- as an Indigenous woman, you know, you -- you just -- this is my job here. My job here was to be elected to raise the issues of my constituents. And if the, you know, other side doesn't want to hear it then that's their problem. It's not a Point of Order. And I hear what the Premier says. After this is all over and done with, that doesn't make it okay. It's the truth. And I'm not pointing blame at any one of the Cabinet Members. Never was, and neither is my colleague. So I feel that, you know, this is something that maybe the Premier needs to apologize back to us because we are having frank discussions. And if she does believe that this is an issue of systemic racism and we've had, like I said, the TRC, the MMIWG reports that all have discussed this topic, that we all agree with this recommendation. Let's be that change for the Northwest Territories and actually agree together on one recommendation. Let's work together for the betterment for these kids. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do other Members wish to speak to the Point of Order? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a moral and ethical obligation to root out racism in our institutions. This obligation extends beyond the overt, visible, and obvious acts of hate and violence that we can easily see and condemn. It includes the subtle hidden systemic racism that persists in legislation, policies and practices.

Systemic racism is real. It exists in the Northwest Territories and it exists in our

government. Some of our institutions, policies, and practices continue to disadvantage or discriminate against black, Indigenous, and people of colour. We continue to see examples of people facing discrimination based on their national origin, race, religion, ethnicity, and culture. It is an uncomfortable truth but one that we must fearlessly acknowledge and confront if we want to change.

Mr. Speaker, I hope I don't get called on a Point of Order for those words but I can't take credit for them because they are those of the Premier. They were read into this House on March 3rd, 2021 about systemic racism, and this motion is about systemic racism.

I am shaking right now in the sense that I am very passionate about this, and I have a lot of sadness right now because I can see that my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes is hurt. So I believe the only apology that is owed in this House is one from the Premier to this side. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Does any other Members wish to speak to the Point of Order? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I don't really want to say too much but, you know, I accept that systemic racism exists, and I think we all have a duty to discuss it and acknowledge its existence and address it. And I honestly believe that my colleagues on the other side feel the same way. So it's how we do that, Mr. Speaker, that -- that's going to make the difference. And that's, I think, the kind of legacy that we all collectively want to leave.

But somehow this debate and discussion after a long day of some criticism about the budget, budget-making process, somehow discussion has been misinterpreted, miscommunicated as criticism of Cabinet. And that's not what this is about. So I hope that my colleagues on the other side can find a way that we can work together and move forward to finish the business that we have to do today but also really address this issue of systemic racism. It's not criticism of Cabinet. We have to acknowledge its existence and work together to eliminate it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Do other Members wish to speak to the Point of Order? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do support this

motion as well but I do not agree with the Point of Order made by the Premier.

Yes, I agree with my colleague as well, because we have to acknowledge that systemic racism does exist, and I am a woman. I am an Indigenous woman, and I feel it. I feel every day. It's not just me. Look at those little girls, little boys. They feel it every day. So we cannot deny and or act like there is no racism.

And I do accept -- so what is wrong with saying what my colleague said from Twin Lakes? There's nothing wrong with it. And she is correct in what she said. And child and family service is a sensitive issue for a lot of us. And we cannot deny the fact that there are 98 percent of Indigenous kids in care in the NWT, and that is a crisis.

And also the correctional system in the NWT is overpopulated by Indigenous people. Overall the Canadian correctional system is also overpopulated by the Indigenous people. And according to the Canadian statistics, there are not too many of us, the Indigenous people, and this is the truth. Auditor General also acknowledged that report as well and said that too many of the Indigenous people are in care or are in the child welfare system and are in the correctional system.

So we have to acknowledge there is, indeed, systemic racism exists in Canada or anywhere else in the world. So I do support -- I'm sorry, I do support this motion, and I do support my colleagues when they did make the statement. But I do not support the Point of Order the Premier made.

And I can tell you that the only time that child and family services get involved is when the child is apprehended. And we need to do more. This government needs to do more, spend more on mental health and wellness and try to keep the family together. That's the only way that it's going to work. And we all know why. The main reason why there are more aboriginal kids in care is due to neglect because of drugs and alcohol issues abuse and the social -- socio-economic, poverty, and housing. There's no housing. And in the Indigenous community, there's a high rate of unemployment. That is the truth. We need to acknowledge that there is a systemic racism in the Northwest Territories and within the system.

So that's all I have to say, and I do not agree with the Point of Order made by the -- by the Premier. And I do support my colleagues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Do other Members wish to speak to the Point of Order? Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt that systemic racism exists. I've never said it hasn't existed. And I do think we have an obligation to fight against systemic racism.

So, Mr. Speaker, on hearing from the other Members, perhaps I misinterpreted. I was under the impression that when it was said all-of-government approach would be different if they were Caucasian, I took that to say that this -- that this Cabinet would be -- would treat Caucasian children different than we would Indigenous children. But if that was not the intent of the Member and that it was talking about systemic racism and not attacking this Cabinet, then I would respectfully -- if the opportunity exists, I would like to withdraw my Point of Order if the Speaker allows. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. I will accept your withdrawal. But I caution all Members to choose your words carefully, especially with such a sensitive topic. And Ministers, choose your Points of Order carefully. This is a place for the debate - the debate of important issues. In this case, a very sensitive one. The people we represent expect us to deal with these tough issues and speak freely in this place.

Consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Member for Inuvik, or sorry -- Member for Hay River South in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Johnson. First of all, I'll call the meeting back to order. And now you can continue.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hope that the government does declare the situation of overrepresentation of Indigenous children a crisis. And I support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions? Discussion? Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Chair, you know, I've had -- I've been in leadership for 14 years, and I -- when I voted against the budget, I know this is -- it has to do with this too, I voted because I felt I had to do the right thing for my community. I think today we have to have cooler heads and move forward and put these

kind of -- the way things have been going on today is unacceptable.

You know, I've sat for 14 years with a First Nation as chief. I've dealt with all these issues with regards to children in care and have gone to court many times across Canada with members from Salt River. And every time I went, I always had the support of either the territorial government, the Alberta government, the BC government, the Ontario government, and was able to make sure the child was put with family members. And that to me is strong leadership.

Never -- there's many times, even in my own life -- and I'm going to explain because I think a lot of people are just getting too carried away with some of the comments here. We have to represent all the people of the Northwest Territories no matter who they are - the good ones, the bad ones, the whatever. And in my life, I've also been married to a white European person. I saw both sides of the spectrum of racism. And I try not to make my decisions only on that issue. And I've carried the Indigenous file all through my life right from my -- from when my father was in leadership. But I also want to make sure that even in the Dene Nation meetings, okay, sometimes I stood alone but you know what, all the leaders came over and would give you a hug or shake your hand even though you stood alone. And we've got to be able to still stand up, rise, and do the best for the people of the Northwest Territories. That is extremely important.

So I just ask both sides of the House to have cooler heads, vote with your heart, and try to move on, you know. And, you know, I have friends on both sides of the House. That doesn't mean that because I voted against a budget that I don't agree with them on all other issues. And with that, Mr. Chair, I think it's time that we vote on the first motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Any further discussion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question's been called. The motion is in order. To the motion -- oh, sorry. Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I hear the words of MLA Martselos,

and I think that we knew that going in to this work that it would be very passionate work that committee would get to do together. And I think that it is work that has brought us closer together as a committee. And hopefully from today, there will be stronger conversations between both sides to bring both sides together as well. And I think that there were some hurt feelings here today for sure as far as the conversations that happened and through yourself, Mr. Chair, I respectfully ask that the Premier apologize to Members on this side of the House for the Point of Order rather than hearing out Members in full on what they had to say about the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no problem -- that's okay, Minister Green. I have no problem apologizing to the other side of the House. I believe that sometimes that if we do things wrong, we need to stand up and be strong. And if the Members are offended because I was offended because I thought that they were attacking my Cabinet, then I shall apologize to the Members if that's not what they meant. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 221-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
BIRTHING SUPPORT,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that, thank you.

Mr. Chair, the second motion is I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services provide birthing support that is holistic, client-centered, and culturally safe with doula and midwife services staffed in each regional centre. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Cleveland. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 222-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
ADDICTIONS PROGRAMS AND
TREATMENT FOR YOUTH WITHIN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish a territorial treatment addictions recovery program where treatment supports specifically for youth to remain in the territory and maintain their support systems. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 223-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS PLAN,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services create a pan-territorial youth homelessness plan that expands safe community-based housing options by collaborating with communities and non-governmental organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 224-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
HEALTHY FAMILY PROGRAM,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services tailor the healthy family program for vulnerable families to access culturally safe and affirming childrearing practices and expand the program to all 33 communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 225-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – ACCESS
TO RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs lead an all-of-government approach to ensuring access to recreational programming by providing additional funding for recreational facilities and programming so all families have increased access to these spaces outside regular business day hours and additional funding specifically for those children and youth in care to participate in extracurricular activities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 226-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – FAMILY
MENTORSHIP PILOT PROJECTS,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish family mentorship pilot projects that pair vulnerable parents with grandparents or elders to share encouragement, childrearing practices and Indigenous knowledge. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 227-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
ADDICTIONS RECOVERY ON-THE-LAND
HEALING FOR YOUTH,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services increase funding to Indigenous governments, communities and organizations to deliver addictions recovery on-the-land healing options specifically tailored to youth. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 228-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – FAMILY
VIOLENCE EMERGENCY SHELTERS,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services lead work with communities to establish culturally safe and gender-inclusive family violence emergency shelters in each Northwest Territories community with sustainable funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 229-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
TRAINING FOR FOSTER FAMILIES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services deliver, and make mandatory, culturally-safe and trauma-informed training for foster families. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Mr. Edjericon? Oh, okay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 230-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
RECRUITMENT STRATEGY FOR
INDIGENOUS FOSTER FAMILIES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish a recruitment strategy to increase the number of Indigenous foster families, including encouraging extended families to care for children by providing additional financial resources and support. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 231-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES EVALUATION AND
MONITORING FRAMEWORK,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services develop a Child and Family Services Evaluation and

Monitoring Framework, including a data profile on children and youth in care. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 232-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
INDIGENOUS ADVISORY BODY SUB-
COMMITTEE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY
SERVICES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish an Indigenous Advisory Body Sub-Committee specifically for child and family services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 233-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – AUDIT
OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
RESOURCES,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services audit all child and family services resources, ensuring they are all plain language, culturally-safe and easily accessible online, including a plain language summary of the Child and Family Services Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 234-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – LEGAL
SERVICES FOR PARENTS,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services provide legal services to parents as early as the plan of care stage with child and family services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion? Oh sorry, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know we're all trying to end this quickly but I just wanted to make a few comments.

I find it very concerning how many parents, when facing apprehension, sign plan of care agreements without legal advice. I know that our workers are good at informing them they have a right to legal advice and I know if you go fill out all the paper work, Legal Aid will provide you a lawyer, but oftentimes people are signing extremely technical and complicated plan of care agreements that take their children away without lawyers, and I don't think we should be doing that. I think the workers -- I actually think the wording of this motion be slightly changed, that the lawyer is present representing the parents before these agreements are signed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Any further comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 235-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES ACT,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Department of Health and Social Services make legislative changes to the Child and Family Service Act to support the readiness of Indigenous governments to draw down jurisdiction for child welfare using trauma-informed language that centers children and youth as individuals with rights, ensures cultural continuity for Indigenous children and youth, and affirms the unique political relationship with Indigenous groups and peoples. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 236-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND
ADULTS WITH FETAL ALCOHOL
SPECTRUM DISORDERS AND PARENTS
AND CAREGIVERS,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish a comprehensive spectrum of services available to children, youth and adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and their parents and/or caregivers to prevent developmental delay and mobilize support for families. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 237-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER – ANNUAL
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
REPORTING,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services implement annual quality improvement plan reporting include progress on the committee's recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Ms. Cleveland.

COMMITTEE MOTION 238-19(2):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING
NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES:
AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO
KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER –
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report in 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Thank you.

Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): The motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the Report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Hay River South.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your Committee has been considering Bill 23, Bill 29, and Committee Report 26-19(2) and would like to report progress with 19 motions carried, and that Committee Report 26-19(2) is concluded.

And Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Do we have a seconder? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third readings of bills. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 39:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE POST-
SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act be read for the third time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Members, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are for, against, or abstaining from third reading. Mr. Clerk.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member from Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member's indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member's indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Indicated he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour, zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 39 has had third reading and is ready for assent.

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 41:
JUSTICE ADMINISTRATIONS STATUTES
AMENDMENT ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 41: Justice Administrations Statutes Amendment Act be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Members, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are for, against, or abstaining from third reading. Mr. Clerk.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member's indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member's indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member for Sahtu has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour, zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 41 has had third reading and is ready for assent.

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 51:
APPROPRIATION ACT (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES) 2022-2023,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded

by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 51, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures) 2022-2023 be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Members, pursuant to Rule 10.3(1), a recorded vote is required. When the clerk calls on you, please state whether you are for, against, or abstaining from third reading. Mr. Clerk.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member for Yellowknife South.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member's indicated that she is opposed to the motion.

The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The Member has indicated he is opposed to the motion.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

The honourable Member for Range Lake.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member's indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
The honourable Member has indicated she is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Opposed.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour

The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Against.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member has indicated she is opposed to the motion.

The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

The Member has indicated he is in favour of the motion.

The Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: In favour.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes has indicated that she is in favour of the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour – oh sorry, correction, correction. As you can tell it has been a long day.

We have 11 in favour; six opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 51 has had third reading and is ready for assent.

Third reading of bills.

Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret Thom is prepared to enter the Chamber and assent to bills. Thank you.

Assent to Bills

THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Margaret M. Thom): Please be seated.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, it says good afternoon but good evening. Thank you. It is all great to see each and every one of you.

I am again deeply honoured to be in this special place with all of you. As Northern leaders, each of you have tremendous responsibilities and challenges on your shoulders; therefore, I extend to you a huge mahsi cho from the bottom of my heart for your hard work to better the lives of all Northerners.

With my deepest respect, I would like to acknowledge and honour the sacred land and traditional territory of Chief Drygeese. I am always, and will forever, be grateful for be welcomed as a visitor and allowing us to do our work and play on this great land. Mahsi cho.

We are still in a pandemic. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to continue to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and all Northerners, being mindful of our respective social bubbles and the choices we make.

We must continue to be prepared and take all safety precautions as we travel and play on this great land of ours. We have to be extremely proud and grateful for the work and difficult choices made for the last two years to be where we are now. Mahsi cho

After this long and cold winter, it is safe to say spring is in the air. I need to remind each and every one of you of the well-deserved, much-needed break to enjoy the beautiful spring weather, longer daylight hours, single-digit temperatures and the sunshine that will renew and give you new energy.

This break will allow you to breathe in the good fresh air, and to ground yourselves. I wish you all safe, enjoyable travels to your homes, your loved one, and your constituents.

Happy and blessed Easter season with your loved ones.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 37: An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- Bill 38: Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021;
- Bill 39: An Act to Amend the Post-Secondary Education Act;
- Bill 41: Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act;
- Bill 49: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2021-2022;
- Bill 50: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2021-2022;
- Bill 51: Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2022-2023.

Thank you. Quyanainni. Merci beaucoup. Mahsi cho. Koana.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Well colleagues, this day didn't end like I thought it would.

On behalf of the House, I thank the Commissioner, the Honourable Margaret M. Thom, for being here today. It is always a pleasure to have her in the Chamber.

Colleagues, we have just had our first experience with the remote participation in this sitting of the Assembly. It was not perfect, but I believe it was very successful. I am very pleased that Members who otherwise would not been able to join us were able to fully participate in and contribute to this sitting. I thank all Members for your patience with the hybrid sitting.

I want to extend a special thank you to the staff who worked long hours to make this hybrid sitting possible, especially Mr. Vince McLeod and Mr. Chris Cartwright. Thank you, we couldn't have done it without you.

Colleagues, I also want to thank the interpreters who have joined us throughout the

sitting. Our official languages are vital to the people of the territory and our cultures.

When we use our languages in the House, we honour them. We honour our cultures and all people of the territory. The interpreters make it possible for us to use our languages on a daily basis, and I thank them for their service and commitment to honouring our official languages.

Members, I also want to thank each of you. The last few days of this sitting have been challenging, but you have done a lot of important work in this House and should be proud of yourselves. I know that I am proud of you and I am proud of my role and the work you have done.

Also, a job well done to the Members and staff that took part in the MLA-media hockey game last night, and won 6 to 3. The last time we had the game, media won 6 to 1 and a good job once again.

Colleagues, you have concluded consideration of the operations budget, which I know included some difficult conversations and decisions. You have read several very important committee reports and considered legislation. This is in addition to the statements and questions that are a daily feature of our proceedings.

The debates and discussions in this House have been very interesting and sometimes they have been intense. That is good. It is a vital part of our work as legislators.

Consensus government does not mean that we always agree. We won't. Conflict and disagreement are unavoidable in our line of work. Consensus government does not mean that we will always get our way. That isn't possible. Consensus government means that all MLAs in this House have the opportunity to share their views, to influence policy and legislation, and to represent their constituents to the best of their ability. You have all done that and have maintained your professionalism throughout. Thank you.

This House will not sit again until May, but we will remain busy. Our days will be filled with the ongoing business of committees and government and serving our constituents.

Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Orders of the day for Thursday, May 26th,
2022, 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
 - Oral Question 1067-19(2), Inuvik Mike Zubko Airport Expansion Project
 - Oral Question 1076-19(2), Knowledge of Joint Venture and Indigenous Government
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 Motions
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motions 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
 - Bill 23 , An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
 - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Committee Report 27-19(2), Standing Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs Interim Report: What We Heard About the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements

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, May 26th, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

