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**HANSARD**

**Thursday, October 27, 2022**

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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

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**Hon. Diane Archie**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

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*Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

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(Tu Nedhe-Willideh)

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(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister of Justice*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendah)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*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, October 27, 2022****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:33 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):** Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Finance.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 280-19(2):  
COLLABORATING ON BENEFIT  
RETENTION OPPORTUNITIES AND  
APPROACHES**

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a responsibility to ensure benefits from the extraction of Northwest Territories natural resources are provided to residents of the Northwest Territories. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has three initiatives that are advancing the priority set by the 19th Legislative Assembly to advance the benefit retention approach to economic development in the NWT. I would like to offer Members an update of this work.

This month, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment launched a pilot program that will fund capacity building initiatives for Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations ready to take on a greater role in the Northwest Territories' resource industry. Early comprehensive and coordinated engagement between Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations and industry, is key to advancing mineral exploration and development in a responsible and timely manner. These engagements set the stage for positive relationships that help to create certainty and economic and environmental sustainability.

Community leaders have long identified the need to participate from the beginning in mineral exploration and development projects. Funding from the Indigenous Capacity Building

Program will help position them to do this. It will provide support for strategic planning and capacity building activities like workshops and meetings, training, educational opportunities, and participation and attendance of individuals at industry conferences and trade shows. It will position Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, specifically, to benefit from activity and investment in our resource sector.

Mr. Speaker, our territory holds a competitive edge in its environment, social and governance, or ESG, performance approach to mining. It is rooted in the NWT's co-management regulatory system and the collaborative model for resource development that emerged among our mines, Indigenous governments, and communities in the form of socio-economic agreements, or SEAs.

This system established a new way of doing business in the Northwest Territories and has helped to create jobs and training opportunities for residents. It has resulted in the success of dozens of northern and Indigenous-owned companies, development corporations and joint ventures. Mr. Speaker, even these partnerships can be improved on.

As part of its work on this mandate, ITI commissioned a reviewed of its 30-year history of SEAs to evaluate the GNWT's overall approach and the extent to which they have, or can continue to, generate benefits for Northwest Territories residents.

The department will be releasing this review in the coming month. It will be convening, also, a single forum in December to address the review's recommendations and next steps directly with Indigenous governments, industry and GNWT representatives who have worked to implement these agreements to date.

Mr. Speaker, the third initiative promised by our government to support this mandate commitment was a review of the Northwest Territories' royalty regime.

We are advancing this review as part of the intergovernmental council of the Northwest

Territories and guided by our collaboration protocol on legislation, regulation and policy development.

The protocol is the first agreement of its kind in Canada. Consistent with the Northwest Territories Intergovernmental Agreement on lands and resources management, it respects the jurisdictions and authorities of Indigenous governments and the GNWT while also providing for a mechanism towards collaboration and consensus-building. More importantly, the protocol is now being put into practice.

The regulatory framework for the Northwest Territory's first stand-alone Mineral Resources Act is currently being developed according to this protocol, and the review of the NWT's Resource Royalty Regime is one part of this historic work. Between February and July, engagements with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, industry, elected officials and the public centered on whether participants felt the Northwest Territories' existing regulations permit a fair share of royalties to be returned; that they are contributing to a stable and competitive investment environment; and that royalty regulations are being fully maximized. What we learned in these conversations is being compiled in a What We Heard report that will be released by the end of this year.

Ultimately, the input received will be combined with what is learned from financial modelling and other research and analysis in order to inform recommendations for the development of royalty regulations in support of the Mineral Resource Act.

Mr. Speaker, directly and indirectly the three initiatives that I have highlighted today will improve our government's approach to benefit-retention.

Perhaps, more importantly, they are a demonstration of our government's continued commitment to work with Indigenous governments and communities in the pursuit of opportunities for economic investment and growth.

The Northwest Territories has the opportunity to not only realize incredible success from this resource development but has a path by which to do business better. This path includes high ESG value and long-term project certainty.

With these benefits, we come full circle, because the very investments we are making to support stronger relationships with Indigenous governments and Indigenous government organizations will bring greater

value to the projects themselves and in turn greater value for our partners, industry, and the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 281-19(2):  
CLIMATE CHANGE OCTOBER 2022

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, climate change is one of the most complex and far-reaching issues facing the Northwest Territories today. Despite being responsible for less than 0.2 percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, the Northwest Territories is experiencing rates of climate warming up to four times faster than the rest of Canada. This affects all aspects of our way of life. It is a serious threat to the economy, our socio-economic, cultural, and environmental health and wellness of residents. We know we must act now, and we must act decisively, and I am pleased to say that the Government of the Northwest Territories is making real progress as you can see by our response to climate change in the NWT annual report.

In 2021-2022, the Government of the Northwest Territories made significant progress on implementing actions from our climate change action plan and energy action plan, and, additionally, we facilitated four NWT climate change council meetings with representatives from Indigenous and community governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories to identify key issues and find solutions for the Northwest Territories.

The Government of the Northwest Territories also initiated the development of the new 2022-2025 Energy Action Plan that will guide the Northwest Territories' lower carbon energy transition over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, together with Indigenous leadership and with the Yukon and Nunavut, we released the pan-northern leaders' statement on climate change at the northern Premiers forum in Whitehorse this past May. This statement illustrated the three territories' unique situation and sends a clear message about the need for federal support. We will bring Northwest Territories climate change issues and perspectives to the world in November when our officials attend COP 27 in Egypt. I am proud to say the Northwest Territories delegation will include Indigenous representation from both the climate change council as well as a youth representative. They

will be presenting with the Government of the Northwest Territories and Yukon government at the Canada Pavilion to highlight climate changes in the North.

Moving into 2023, we will build on our momentum. The climate change teams are already reaching out to targeted stakeholders and the public to continue the work on how climate change is affecting communities on the ground. This engagement will inform our next steps, including developing the next Climate Change Strategic Framework Action Plan, and will focus on climate change adaptation risks and opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is a priority for me, for my family, my community, and this government. It has been. I am proud of the progress made on addressing climate change in the North, guided by the Climate Change Strategic Framework, 2030 Energy Strategy, and the Northwest Territories Carbon Tax. We are on pace to make progress on almost every funded commitment under the climate change action plan by the end of 2023.

At times, the changes we are observing in our environment can seem overwhelming. But as Northerners we are resilient and we will continue to make progress together as we address these challenges. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1230-19(2): OFFSHORE DRILLING

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's statement's on offshore drilling. Mr. Speaker, 2016, the federal government imposed an order preventing certain activities in the Arctic offshore waters. The federal government prohibited activities in the Arctic Ocean, including oil and gas offshore drilling. Mr. Speaker, this wasn't good news for the residents of the Beaufort Delta. But the end of the order is coming up quick; it expires December 2022.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke in this House before, Inuvialuit region, we're Inuvialuit born and raised, and we want to see offshore oil and gas opening up again. With oil and gas, our people can go back to work, get high paying jobs, and bring monies home for their families. We know the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation will make top priority to ensure of workers of the Beaufort see these measures to protect

the people, the wildlife, the marine environment, and what's written in our land claim.

At the time February 2020, the Premier responded that the GNWT is at the table with the federal government on this topic. The regional strategic environmental assessment is required to be undertaken through the moratorium, the final report complete July 2020. Mr. Speaker, the work required under the moratorium has been completed. We'll see the development opportunities. The Arctic is what's our future.

The GNWT and Canada are prepared to work with communities' potential opportunities in the Arctic Ocean, not only the Beaufort Delta region looking for the offshore oil and gas opportunities we see, the sea ice is melting, the Arctic corridors are opening up and this will increase transportation security, monitoring, and other opportunities could arise in the Arctic Ocean for the NWT residents. How long is the GNWT waiting to respond to this? And I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1231-19(2): RISE IN CRIME

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, over the last few years the number of violent and non-violent offences all appear to be on the rise throughout the NWT. Although crime impacts everyone, the stigma once attached to it is gone. It has become part of our disposable society and is all too common and all too routine.

Mr. Speaker, as with other Northern communities, Hay River is not isolated from increasing crime. Our community has had, and continues to have, our fair share of crime and quite frankly residents are frustrated that current enforcement practices do not appear to be effective or working. It is now reaching a boiling point where residents are considering taking steps to provide their own form of justice. Neighbourhood watch groups are having to form just to protect their homes and property. Homeowners and businesses are installing cameras and security systems to monitor not only visitors but intruders as well.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Hay River need to feel safe when walking down the street, they need to feel safe in their homes, and they need to know their property and businesses are protected. They want justice if their rights

are violated. Residents are losing faith in our justice system and policing services. They want answers on what is wrong with the system and how do we fix it and when will we fix it.

Mr. Speaker, at one time, rightfully or wrongly, correctional centres in the North were full. Now we see inmate numbers have substantially decreased in the North Slave Correctional Facility while Hay River and Fort Smith facilities are in the single digits and at times have no inmates. What is causing this decrease and is it the way of the future?

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that crimes continue to be committed, with fewer perpetrators appearing to be charged, sentenced, incarcerated or rehabilitated. We know people are innocent until proven guilty. We know that police and prosecutors have the daunting task of proving a case. We know accused persons have rights. We know the system is inefficient and slow. And, we know there are often delays resulting in an ever-increasing backlog of matters before the courts. If we know all this, why, or what are we doing to change the system to where it is effective, efficient, timely, and where justice is served?

Mr. Speaker, residents not committing crimes also want protection, and we need to ensure that protection is in place and effective. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1232-19(2): HOUSING ISSUES

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have three sets of constituents who are all facing significant housing challenges. I have sent emails to the Minister of Housing about all these cases over the last three weeks, and I have yet to receive any responses to my inquiries. So today I am going to share some details about what these constituents are facing.

Mr. Speaker, the first constituent, who I will call Jane Doe, is a single mother who is facing eviction. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but she never received prior notice of an impending eviction taking place. So she was caught off guard completely and was unexpectedly forced to leave her house. This happened in early September and she and her daughter have been couch surfing ever since. Jane does owe some housing arrears and is working to pay it off. In fact her mother, who is a senior living in the special care home, has

given her a significant sum of money to help her daughter pay down her arrears. Jane Doe has tried going to Sutherland House, a house for abused women in Fort Smith, but the facility is at capacity. She also has multiple health problems and frequently uses the food bank to get by.

Mr. Speaker, the second set of constituents, whom I will call John and Jane Doe 2, are victims who lost their house to a tornado that struck Fort Smith three years ago. Since their house was destroyed, they were put into market rental housing because Housing NWT evaluated their income and deemed their income as too high to qualify for public housing. However, after they sold their property they were instantly ineligible for public housing but Housing NWT failed to communicate that to them. So John and Jane 2 have been spending tens of thousands of dollars on extremely high rental fees for the last three years. They should not have been paying so much money so Housing NWT needs to reimburse this family from some of their loss of income that they were needlessly spending and re-adjust the rent cost. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

The third set of constituents is another couple whom I will call John and Jane Doe 3. This couple lives in a public housing unit however during the summer, they were living in a campsite near Fort Smith because their unit was not liveable. They had leaks coming in from their upstairs bathroom which leaks in the kitchen downstairs, and there was tons of water damage throughout the House with mould developing in some areas. Jane Doe 3 also has arthritis and can't go upstairs of any multilevel building. There was also an incident where an employee at the local housing authority pulled up to Jane Doe 3 while having a yard sale and yelled, "Just move out of that house." She was trying to pay her light bill with the things she was selling in a yard sale.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, these families are struggling and need help now. Fort Smith does not have a homeless shelter, so these people are particularly vulnerable, especially because winter is here now so it's getting colder outside with each passing day. I hope to see some real solutions from the Minister of Housing on these files. I will have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1233-19(2):  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the GNWT website it states the purpose of the Business Incentive Policy is to give preference on government procurement to businesses that are owned and operated within the NWT. It is designed to promote economic growth and capacity within the NWT business and the economy. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about a non-BIPed business getting the same preference as a local BIPed company in my riding and being awarded the contract even though the policy states otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, the BIP policy applies to certain government agencies and does not capture some of the other government -- GNWT public agencies and department, including some Crown corporations. But in schedule 1 of the Business Incentive Policy, it specifically points out it applies to, number 2, the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, we are asked as Members to approve budgets worth millions of dollars in public funds that flow through this House and some of these corporations. While I understand that it's part of our job, I do think it's a fair request to have our Crown corporations be open and accountable to this House, especially if things go over budget or when policies are not followed.

Mr. Speaker, an example of the BIP not being followed is possibly over \$70 million worth of contracts given to non-BIPed contractors with Alberta mailing addresses this year in my community alone. And I fully understand some part of these dollars are spent from supplies or expertise not available in the NWT but anything that can be done in the NWT should be done by NWT residents who meet their -- and are BIPed and are monitored and held accountable when spending public dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is the intent of the policy. How are we to grow our economy and provide opportunities for our residents if we are not enforcing the BIP policy to its fullest, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, I believe by having one policy that gives preference to our NWT residents and business that is applied across all our departments and agencies, including our Crown corporations, will do nothing but strengthen our residents, businesses, economy, our territory, and if it's implemented and monitored properly. And that's a government that I want to be part of. I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1234-19(2):  
LOCAL HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS  
PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently I had a tenant of a local housing organization contact me with concerns related to the furnace. The furnace started with a bang and when they went to investigate, there was soot spewing all over the furnace room. Mr. Speaker, it would make the hair on the back of your head stand out. I was even provided photos of the situation, and it didn't look good. The couple were very concerned as they didn't know if they were breathing carbon monoxide along with the soot, and this was on a weekend. Fortunately, an LHO maintenance personnel attended to their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, in our old dilapidated public housing units, typically you would find a domestic water tank and associated equipment and no carbon monoxide detectors. If one has ever looked in on a unit that has constant soot being blown out of the furnace, this can be quite messy. Mr. Speaker, this is typical of a lack of a preventative maintenance program at the LHO level. This is typical where there is no training for maintenance staff to understand the operation of heating equipment and to perform basic repairs. Perhaps Housing NWT can tell us how much money they save by not enforcing their preventative maintenance program. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1235-19(2):  
FERTILITY TREATMENT FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one in six couples struggle with fertility. Approximately 10 percent of the female population has polycystic ovarian syndrome, or PCOS, which routinely leads to infertility. For many, medication can make a difference but for others it doesn't work, or they face other fertility issues and complications.

Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, it can take eight months just to get an initial appointment with a fertility specialist. The GNWT does provide services to treat underlying medical conditions that may cause

infertility. However, when it comes to in vitro fertilization, or IVF, it is not covered and there are no plans to include it here.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT does absolutely nothing to cover any of the costs associated with receiving IVF treatment - no medical travel, accommodations, or per diems, including no financial support for the cost of the treatment itself which starts at around \$15,000 per round and often requires multiple rounds prior to conception. IVF treatment also requires a referral from a doctor adding a further barrier to would-be parents as they wait on our broken healthcare system to get an appointment, further clogging up the system.

Currently, five provinces in Canada provide financial assistance to residents undergoing fertility treatments. Some of the largest provinces in Canada provide financial relief to residents requiring family planning support. Therefore, it baffles me that a small territory like the Northwest Territories cannot do the same. The government is clearly letting down NWT residents in this critical healthcare area. Often a person's desire to build their family is so great they will move away from the NWT to be closer to treatment sites, or to avoid continuous travel and work disruptions. Building our population to receive more federal transfer payments should be a goal of our government, so why don't we support residents to start and build their families here? Fertility financial support would likely only be accessed once, maybe twice, in a lifetime and would not be a recurring annual cost. As little as a \$20,000 investment in supporting residents to conceive would return \$37,000 annually in federal transfer payments per each newborn.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see a jurisdictional scan to learn what other provinces and territories are doing to support their residents to conceive. In turn, I hope this will provide ideas for the GNWT to pursue to better support their residents. And I look to the Minister of Finance to look into this for GNWT employees, including the support to travel for treatment. Fertility benefits should be a basic part of our healthcare plans. Northern residents deserve this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1236-19(2):  
CELL PHONE SERVICE

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the leadership in the Tlicho region have been advocating for years to establish cell phone service along Highway No. 3 to improve safety along the route Tlicho people travel to access goods and services from the capital city.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it is well known that many people have lost their life on this road. It is a very busy road with heavy traffic between Yellowknife and Behchoko. As road users, we know there are many curves and dips in this road, and it can be especially dangerous in winter months when the road is icy, the sky is dark, and large trucks come often. Cell phone service is needed to prevent emergency situations where help cannot be reached due to the lack of cell phone service.

The Minister of Finance recognized previously in this House that the lack of cell coverage is a safety risk. Mr. Speaker, Northwestel, with much support from the Tlicho government, received federal funding to build the required cell service tower improvements and provide the service to all residents using this NWT highway. In a letter of support for the cell phone service for the cell service from Yellowknife to Behchoko project from March 11, 2021, the deputy minister of Finance stated the Government of the Northwest Territories appreciated, quote, "The potential for increase wireless coverage," end quote, along Highway No. 3 and on the North Arm of Great Slave Lake and are, quote, "committed to working with the Tlicho government and Northwestel to cover the annual operating cost of these assets," end quote.

Mr. Speaker, the capital funding is approved. The Tlicho and Northwestel did their part. Will the Government of the Northwest Territories keep its word on assisting with the cell service operating cost for the benefit of all residents who use this highway? The Minister of Finance also confirmed that an expression of interest was issued earlier in 2021 regarding lack of cell phone service on Highway 3. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

What has become of this work, Mr. Speaker? Does the Government of the Northwest Territories have a plan to implement cell towers between Yellowknife and Behchoko, and when will it be implemented? I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1237-19(2):  
PAID SICK LEAVE

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Office of the Chief Public Health Officer just released a latest public health warning expecting an influx of respiratory illnesses in a wave from down south to head up here. Additionally, we know COVID is still spreading and we just recently released the bivalent vaccination. And this all, Mr. Speaker, is to say it's a reminder that when you are sick, it is best to stay home. Yet, Mr. Speaker, for many people that is not an option.

When surveyed, the number 1 reason people go to work sick is because they can't afford it. And, Mr. Speaker, the solution to that problem is simple: that is to require paid sick days.

The federal government has recently mandated ten paid sick days for all federally regulated employees. BC government requires five paid sick days. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe this should be a legacy of the COVID pandemic, is that we, as the GNWT, require paid sick days for all workers. And, Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about a lot here. When BC enacted this legislation, they worked with employers and employers said that more than half of employees don't use all of their paid sick time. And generally, a typical employee takes one to five sick days per year. But those one to five paid sick days a year, Mr. Speaker, prevents spreading illness in the workplace. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, for businesses who were surveyed in BC experienced increased productivity, retention of trained staff, reduced the risk of injury, improved worker morale, and increased labour force participation; all things employers want and all things we are desperately in need of in our retention and recruitment problem here in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about whether we can begin the steps to engage with businesses on implementing paid sick days. At a very first step, I think we have to find out who currently is not getting paid sick days in the Northwest Territories and what businesses view as a barrier to providing their workers with paid sick leave. I'll have questions for the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1238-19(2):  
ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project is a mandate item of the GNWT. It is intended to provide clean energy to the mineral rich Slave Geological Province and eventually connect the NWT electrical grid to the south. On the department's website, the project is intended to both increase hydro generation capacity and to stabilize electricity rates for NWT residents and businesses.

A promising aspect of this mega project is that the federal government recognizes the need to update grid infrastructure across Canada. In May, the federal infrastructure minister said that they see a very clear path to funding the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project. And while the government may have a very ambitious and expensive long-term plan to provide clean energy, Mr. Speaker, the energy infrastructure we have today is what we are stuck with for the foreseeable future.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that currently Northwest Territories Power Corporation infrastructure is aging faster than we can keep pace. In NTPC's five-year capital plan, there is 30 to \$50 million capital investment required every year just to replace aging infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, that is a very expensive Band-Aid.

We know too well that our power rates also continue to go up. Just this past May, NWT residents experienced an interim increase of 2.5 percent while the current rate application increase is before the Public Utilities Board.

Mr. Speaker, Northerners continue to pay increasing power rates because the cost of maintaining and upgrading the energy infrastructure is so expensive. We need more demand for energy services, more consumption of energy to bring down costs, but that too, Mr. Speaker, is looking dismal. On one hand, we are encouraged to think of climate change and not to consume energy but on the other hand, the more of us that consume energy in our existing system, the more we share the price and bring down the cost per unit of energy per person.

Mr. Speaker, we are not attracting new residents to help pay our energy bills, nor are we seeing a lot of major resource development projects coming online that require power to bring down the cost for residents. So, Mr.

Speaker, Northerners continue to pay the price, and there is little to change this bleak situation with the energy infrastructure system that we currently have in place. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1239-19(2):  
EULOGY FOR JACQUELINE HARDISTY

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

Jacqueline May Hardisty was born on June 19th, 1969. She was the oldest daughter of Ernest and Florence Hardisty. She was born in Fort Simpson but raised in Jean Marie River.

When Jacqueline was younger, she was adventurous, mischievous, and lived freely with the other younger girls and boys. Jacqueline attended school in Jean Marie River and Fort Simpson.

Jacqueline was always so proud of her children - Malerie, Brennen, Gerald, Terrance and Keaton. She talked fondly of her children and grandchildren. Whenever she would call or was around her friends, she would make sure part of the conversation always turned to her family. When you spoke to them afterwards, they would always say "Jacqueline speaks a lot about her family and Jean Marie River. Thanks to your mother, we know a lot about your family."

Jacqueline was known as an amazing cook and organizer and cleaner. She was able to find employment wherever she lived. As I said previously, she was adventurous and enjoyed travel. She lived in numerous communities in the Northwest Territories, BC and Alberta.

Jackie had a contagious smile and laugh. When you were around her, you were always in for some good laughs. People always felt she was always bubbly. Even if she did not know you, she would start a conversation with you because she just loved to chat. Sometimes it was very hard to get your own words in but you were never offended. You always left with a happy heart and sore cheeks after speaking with her.

Mr. Speaker, the family, and friends would like to thank everybody for all the kind words, love, support and generosity during this difficult time for them. They would like to ask people to remember Jackie and cherish all the fond

memories they had of her. Mr. Speaker, she will be sadly missed. Thank you

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with us today, I'd like to acknowledge the president of the Yamoga Land Corporation of Fort Good Hope, Mr. Edwin Erutse. And also with him, he also has his board of directors as well, I want to also acknowledge Jacintha Grandjambe who is the executive director to Mr. Erutse. And also Tammy Proctor and Curtis Manuel and Shawn Grandjambe who are also the directors.

I'd also like to welcome Marcus Pierrot as well who has just returned from Calgary. The Sahtu had supported a group of students going down to Calgary and viewing and taking a look at the universities and colleges and preparing them for their graduation year. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a young man who is a page here, Will Kanigan, the son of Julian and Heather. And the parents said please make sure you recognize him and embarrass him, so I fulfilled my commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple of students from Fort Providence Deh Gah School; they're acting as pages today - Tianna Head and Shyanne Weninger. They're in the building somewhere. I'd like to welcome them and hope they enjoy their time here in Yellowknife. It's wonderful to see them both here in the Legislative Assembly building. Mahsi.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to welcome and say hello to president Edwin Erutse. President Erutse gave the Standing

Committee on Social Development a very warm welcome to Fort Good Hope earlier this year and spent a lot of time touring us around the community. And it was very much appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think he's going to get lots of recognition, but I'd also like to recognize president Erutse and the Yamoga Land Corporation. It's only by working together as governments that we will provide the best services to residents of the Northwest Territories. So welcome to the gallery.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome my brother-in-law Curtis Mandolin to the House today. It's not too often I see family here, so welcome to the House and the rest of the Yamoga land. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I'd also like to recognize the page from Great Slave, Carys Lyall, who is here. One of my favorite things about being a Member is to have the pages here and getting to interact with them. So I'd like to say welcome to them all. Thank you.

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

Welcome. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber and I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience with us. Mahsi. Acknowledgements. Member for Hay River South.

### Acknowledgements

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is a special day and a milestone birthday for a constituent who I also consider a good friend.

Mr. Speaker, today I wish Mrs. Julia Pokiak Trennert a happy milestone birthday, and hopefully all her birthday wishes comes true. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 1236-19(2): OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING

**MR. JACOBSON:** Mr. Speaker, today I brought up my Member's statement in regards to the discussions on offshore drilling moratorium. I'm just wondering where's the -- with the Premier, where does it stand right now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the moratorium on the Western Offshore Ocean was actually called unilaterally by Canada in 2016. At that time, the Premier of the day called a red alert, which caused a lot of contention in the NWT. Since then, we were promised that they would do that Western Arctic Offshore Accord. We've had 24 meetings since April 2019 to May 2022. We were also promised that we'd be able to take part in the five-year science-based review of the moratorium. So we're looking forward to the results of that and hoping that the federal government will sit down with us and talk about their findings in that science-based review. That work is still to be finished, and now we're in the process of signing an accord.

I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, it's important that Canada work with us on this. It's right in our devolution agreement, section 3.2 of the devolution agreement has a commitment for Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories, with the participation of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, to commence negotiations for the management of oil and gas resources in the Beaufort Sea and other northern offshore areas. So it's important that Canada work with us on this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Government of the Northwest Territories and IRC cooperating and collaborating to strengthen their position with the federal government, and where does the GNWT stand on the offshore drilling and when will the people in my riding see the moratorium lifted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, yes, we're working very closely with the Inuvialuit Regional

Corporation. The moratorium, the discussions, the offshore accord, the science-based review, were to be done in partnership with the Yukon government, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and the governments of the Northwest Territories, with Canada of course. Since that time, though, we've also got engagement from the premier of Nunavut who is also interested in the work that's happening. So we are working together, all of us, to make sure that the interests of the North will be protected because when the moratorium was first enacted in the NWT, we lost jobs, we lost potential, and I am concerned that the Beaufort Delta needs to have an economy. So I will continue that work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really happy for that. I'd like to thank our government for that work that they're doing with the federal government to lift this -- get this moratorium lifted but making sure it's done right in regards to on a go-forward before it's lifted and letting our people advance notice, because we do want jobs in our riding and we do need that and we do need to take care of our own.

So, Mr. Speaker, my last question, how did, with the GNWT working with Canada and the Inuvialuit, support and advance the opportunities in the Arctic Ocean? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I think it's important that the GNWT work with all Indigenous governments and specifically around the moratorium the oil and gas reserves that are -- and the LNR that's in the Beaufort Delta. We need to be supporting that work as we go through.

I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the most critical thing that I've been saying to Canada all along is the importance to work with us, nothing about us without us. It's important as the Member has said that the people of the Beaufort Delta have a say in what's happening with the offshore drilling. And although I recognize that Canada does have the power to make a unilateral decision, Mr. Speaker, as I've said to the prime minister it's not about who has the power, it's how we decide to use that power. And I will continue to carry that message. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1237-19(2):  
HOUSING

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing has not yet responded to any of the three constituency files I referenced in my Member's statement. Can the Minister tell us when I can expect some answers for my constituents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question. Within these files, there are very complex issues that we are dealing with. They are very sensitive. And according to what we've established with our renewal and with the documents that we have presented earlier this year that I'm trying to exercise our commitment throughout the Northwest Territories in making sure that the Housing NWT does make fair decisions throughout the territory and improve their working relationships with our tenants as well.

I will have a response prepared for the Member. But as of right now, I would like to bring that back to the department as this is a very sensitive issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain why it has taken up to three weeks for her office to respond to my emails about constituents' urgent housing concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also thank you to the Member that, you know, like I had said that these are very complex issues. I would like to deal with these three clients very sensitively as well and making sure that we do provide adequate housing. But not only that, Mr. Speaker, we've got to make sure that we are fair and consistent throughout the Northwest Territories and exercising our policies fairly, working with the LHOs fairly as well. I will be following up though with the Member. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, hearing about a nonexistent homeless strategy, while there's no homeless shelter in Fort Smith, is not okay. Will the Minister ensure that these three constituent files will be provided with positive solutions to their situations so they are not out on the street? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be following up with the

Member, like I had said, and I will make sure that Housing is making fair, consistent decisions when dealing with sensitive issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm a little bit puzzled with some of the answers. Will the Minister support a pilot project for tiny homes in Fort Smith, because that would be a real solution to fighting homelessness, rather than just renting a building, as it would give homeless people some dignity and confidence back into their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Member is correct, you know, the community had reached out and they were looking at constructing tiny homes. But at that time, Mr. Speaker, the Indigenous governments weren't ready for the submission. Housing continues to work with the Indigenous groups to further that commitment that we do have. I am open up to being transparent and looking at alternative solutions for housing in the Member's riding as well and also throughout the Northwest Territories. As of right now, Housing has met with the Indigenous governments, but they have not submitted a proposal for tiny homes. But that does not stop our conversation. We will still continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1238-19(2):  
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Traditional sources of public financing alone won't be enough to meet the infrastructure or future infrastructure needs of the NWT, which are large and continue to climb. So my question for the Minister is what efforts are underway to find new sources of finance; for example, increasing the number of power users, tapping private sector funding and expertise through investments or P3s, accessing federal dollars, improving efficiency of existing infrastructure and making smart investments in new infrastructure, or regulatory changes. Thank you.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Industry is changing. Electrification will add new revenue streams to Northwest Territories Power Corporation as customers demand cleaner energy. The federal

government and the GNWT have set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the increased use of clean hydro, renewable energy for home heating and vehicle use will also assist the GNWT to meet these targets and maximize Northwest Territories Power Corporation hydro and renewable infrastructure investment. Northwest Territories Power Corporation is working with Indigenous governments and communities on ownership and investment opportunities. Community-owned renewable generation guidelines were developed as part of the energy strategy and have been adopted by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. These partnerships reduce the dependence on diesel and provides new source of financing for required capital investments. The Power Corporation's strategy looks to leverage our partnership to maximize our ability to fund asset renewals with the lowest cost to customers. As well, the GNWT continues to advance the development of foundational infrastructure which will make the territories more appealing to future investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to commend the person who wrote that because there's a lot of fluff in there, and there's a good job at putting a lot of fluff in there, but what I hear is a lot of targets but without viable solutions that we're sharing with the Northwest Territories that don't simply hinge on one mega infrastructure project that, quite frankly, we don't have the dollars for today. And that really might not end up, in the long run, achieving our energy goals in the Northwest Territories. And I hear what the Minister is saying that we're working on it but we can't say we're working on it without having the clear path to getting there.

Mr. Speaker, if new resource development -- if a new resource development project in the exploration or mine phase was to purchase NTPC power, that could have significant impact on NWT resident power bills. So can the Minister explain how the GNWT or NTPC is attracting new exploration or resource development projects to purchase NTPC power? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member giving me some questions here because there's a lot of good answers that are in here, so thank you for that.

So advancing projects such as the Taltson expansion project, Whati transmission line, Fort Providence transmission line will increase our ability to offer clean energy to industrial

users. In particular, grid connections between our two hydro systems with hydro power from Taltson will open up clean growth opportunities north and south of the Great Slave Lake. As well, by consolidating community, industry, and transportation demand into one hydro grid will also spread the costs and attract new customers so that we can stabilize energy and have clean cost of energy here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister simply tell us how many agreements NTPC has entered into with resource development projects in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Absolutely. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation has signed an MOU with Osisko Metals that outlines the process of negotiating the power connection of clean hydro to the Pine Point mine. Northwest Territories Energy, which is the sister company of Northwest Territories Power Corporation, is also engaged in discussions to be able to provide power to the Prairie Creek mine that is located close to Nahanni Butte. We're also working with Department of ITI to provide power opportunities to other potential mines such as TerraX Minerals, Nechalacho Rare Earth Projects, and Fortune Minerals. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation will also be in active participation in the geoscience forum that's happening in November to be able to build these engagements with other potential mining customers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, improving NTPC's institutional framework and governance model are key pieces to meeting its infrastructure challenges. And I know that this has been a core focus of Regular Members on this side of the House since we literally walked into this House. So by what date will NTPC have a diversified board of folks with expertise in electricity utility rather than deputy ministers, and will the GNWT explore new institutional arrangements for NTPC to provide more effective and efficient financing, funding, and infrastructure delivery? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have a date but I want to note that our current board do have the competencies that are a benefit to the organization, and I want to recognize that they have their own areas of knowledge and

expertise. That said, one of our rationale for making a change would be able to include more members with direct electrical utility experience. I anticipate that any change like that will require transition time, and perhaps even some training for future board members. I believe we all want to have experience on the board. We also want to have northern experience brought to the table by Northerners. I do not want to suggest that all future board members are going to have direct experience with regulated utility companies.

And to the second part of the question there, Mr. Speaker, the governance review is not broadly looking at institutional changes beyond the current model in great detail. The reality is, is that our existing institutional model has features set in legislation, and we have not directed any changes that would dramatically change that. At some point, Mr. Speaker, we may consider changes but only if it's a benefit to the ratepayers.

I would be happy to speak to the Member on more detail. I've got lots of notes here. I'm not going to take up too much time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1239-19(2):  
LOCAL HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS  
PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement spoke of the lack of a preventative maintenance program at the LHO level. This could be for all LHOs in the Northwest Territories. Can the Housing Minister advise if there is such a program at the LHO level and who conducts these checks? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for their question.

As of today, the Housing NWT does fund \$13 million annually for preventative maintenance and also \$250,000 is offered to the local housing authorities for training. Housing does conduct the preventative maintenance program in place for all local housing organizations, and the checks are done annually. And we are also having a preventative maintenance managers meeting in the coming weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. But where I live I know for a fact that no servicing of heating appliances were done this year.

Mr. Speaker, I've been apprised that the Housing NWT headquarters in Yellowknife controls the purse strings of all LHOs. What is the relationship between headquarters and their LHOs in terms of budgets and surpluses? Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And for the budgets that are established and that are worked on through the Northwest Territories, we do have a funding formula. But with the policy review that we are currently doing right now, that is under review as well, on how we do fund the local housing authorities as well, but we do also work very closely with the LHOs to determine whether they have a surplus. If they do have a surplus, we do identify operation and maintenance deficits and also surplus units and also further units that may have to be renovated. And also if there is a deficit as well too, headquarters work very closely with the local housing authorities to try to help them to get back on track as well. There is a lot of support provided from headquarters to the local housing authorities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that. It would have been interesting to ask for financial statements as to the surpluses that go back to headquarters because it may show a lack of a preventative maintenance program.

Mr. Speaker, I'm certain headquarters can determine if and when a preventative maintenance program is not being adhered to. Is there a reporting mechanism that is available to headquarters to determine if a preventative maintenance program is being followed at the LHO levels? Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question. And I just wanted to just emphasize that when there is a surplus at the local housing authority level that headquarters does work with the local housing authority to spend that money that is there. Some LHOs do carry over a certain amount of funding but that does also provide them with a financial security should they be dealing with any floods, any freezups, or whatever that may happen over the coming months. But also headquarters does work very closely and monitors the preventative maintenance of our units as well too.

I just also wanted to just speak about the budget that we do have. We did get allocation of \$60 million over two years from the federal government, and \$30 million of that funding is going to be allocated and put towards home repair programs for -- or I mean, sorry, public housing repair programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that.

Mr. Speaker, many of the heating units, whether they be furnace or boiler units, have ceramic firepots within to prevent burning a hole through the metal heating chamber from the burner. The state and condition of the firepot is extremely important as this will prevent carbon monoxide poisoning to residents. Tenants are not aware of how they can get carbon monoxide poisoning as there is no education material afforded to them. Tenants usually are alarmed when they smell diesel fumes which may not be related to the carbon monoxide. Will the Minister ensure tenants are made aware of how carbon monoxide occurs and if LHOs will install carbon monoxide detectors in the homes? Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member as well too. And I just want to appreciate his work as well, that he did work with the local housing authority and also in his community and also with the technical questions as well. I'm not too familiar with the metal heating chamber and terms such as those. But I can assure you that we will be looking at the monitoring of carbon monoxide detectors within those public housing units, and I will follow up with the department to making sure that we do have them installed in our public housing units. Safety and health is a priority of mine as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1240-19(2):  
INFERTILITY TREATMENT

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Will the Minister commit to completing a jurisdictional scan to learn what other Canadian provinces and territories are doing to support their residents with infertility and report back on it to this House? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question from the Member. We've done a jurisdictional scan, and there are some large jurisdictions with big populations and big revenue bases that can support specialized services such as fertility treatments. But that is not the case here, and fertility treatments are not covered. Thank you.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that the Minister maybe share that with me. I've missed it somewhere in my research.

The Minister's alluded to it a bit, but what other options and ideas has Health and Social Services explored to help our residents on their fertility journey; can she elaborate a bit on what work has been done so far? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. So the GNWT provides services to individuals who need a diagnosis and treatment for an underlying medical condition that is preventing pregnancy from taking place, and this is part of our insured health services. So if that service is required here, it would be provided here. And if it is required in the south, then medical travel would pay for that to happen in the south. So that's the "why aren't I getting pregnant" answer.

In terms of assisting people who don't have underlying medical conditions to get pregnant, that is not part of insured services in the NWT. Thank you.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I guess I struggle to understand how we can spend money and support people to learn why they're not getting pregnant but then not help them to get pregnant after the fact when we talk about growing our population. So can the Minister speak to whether or not she would look at changing the medical travel benefits to include those that are seeking fertility in the south? As I mentioned in my statement, a small investment here could lead to further babies being born in the Northwest Territories and future co-transfer payments from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, falling pregnant is not a medically necessary intervention provided by our healthcare system, and we have no plans to change that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think this speaks a lot to how women's health is treated in our medical profession and healthcare system. If it were men that wanted to get pregnant and they couldn't, I'm sure we would have found a cure for it a long time ago, so. I would like to ask that the Minister work with her counterpart, the Minister responsible for Human Resources, and look to at least adding this to GNWT benefits going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you for the comment.

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

QUESTION 1241-19(2):  
CRIME

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT is known as a leader in one area, unfortunately that area is with respect to the national crime rate. Since 2005, except for a small blip, we have been in first place. However, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to justice, we all have a part to play, whether we're a parent, teacher, health worker, police, judge, lawyer - it doesn't matter. So Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the Minister of Justice if he can confirm what the resulting factors are that have contributed to the increase in the NWT crime rate while we see the correctional centres are showing a steady decrease in population? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a big question. I'll do my best to keep my answers short.

So the most recent information we have is from the 2021 calendar year, and that shows us actually a decrease in crime during that time. The total crime rate went down by 3 percent in the Northwest Territories driven by a reduction in robbery, a 21 percent decrease in drug offences, as well as a 7 percent decrease in sexual assault offences. On the other side, we saw an increase in assaults and breaking and entering. But that's 2021, and I know the Member -- there's issues going on right now in his community and so people want to know what's going on right now. And there's a number of factors that influence crime rates.

Socioeconomic factors, the age of the population. In the Northwest Territories we have a very young population. We have a significant amount of poverty in the Northwest Territories, a significant amount of trauma in the Northwest Territories. And when you talk about crime rate, that means different things. So there's the crime rate, just a pure number of crimes, and there's the combination of the types of crimes. So the crime severity index is one way that we can look at the crime rate by taking into account how severe certain cases are.

The crime severity index in 2021 also dropped by 6 percent, and the youth crime severity index dropped by 23 percent in 2021. So when we say we're seeing an increase in crime, we are -- there's a general trend. We were following the same trend as Canada up until about I would say maybe five years ago, and then we have continued to increase while the rest of Canada has sort of stayed steady or decreased. But we are very similar to other regions that are similar to us.

So Nunavut and northern Saskatchewan, you can almost map our crime rates, the trajectory, overtop of each other; they almost form a single line so. There's a number of different factors that contribute to the crime rate. And I'll also say that we have twice as many police officers in the Northwest Territories per person compared to the rest of Canada. So just the mere fact that we have that many officers would make you think that we're going to be -- there's going to be more crimes reported. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems like more and more people are just being released on bail after committing crimes. Can the Minister explain why people aren't being remanded into custody? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and this speaks to the Member's last question as well. Most of the people who are in the correctional system in the Northwest Territories are there on remand, meaning they have not yet been sentenced.

In the 2010s, there were a number of Supreme Court of Canada cases that spoke to bail and, you know, what was needed in order to detain someone versus to release them. The Government of Canada, in 2019, codified some of that language -- or those decisions. And now the release of accused persons is the cardinal rule and detention is an exception. So the Criminal Code of Canada and Supreme Court of Canada have both been moving in a direction where it is becoming more onerous

on the prosecution, or the Crown, to actually have someone detained while they're awaiting trial. And we can see that in the Northwest Territories here with our numbers.

So between that and COVID, where you didn't want people, you know, crammed in small spaces next to each other, those are the factors that contributed to a decline in the number of people we have in correctional facilities. That being said, we are looking at more precise reasons. So there's a group in justice who is looking into this and hopefully sometime in the new year, we'll have some more concrete information. Thank you.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide any direction to ensure people who are in custody stay in custody while being remanded and not let out on bail? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could provide direction but no one would listen to me. The decision of whether or not to remand someone, to detain someone when they've been charged, lies with the courts, and so it's the prosecution, the defence, and the courts who make that decision and the courts are independent of course. Here we are in the Legislative Assembly which is one branch, the government is another branch, and the courts are the third branch. And I have no authority over that branch. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I said that we all had a part to play in curbing crimes and crime rate. You know, without involvement of everybody, we're never going to see change. You know, we have -- there's a relationship between crime and people's help. So if we're going to do something, we've got to do it together.

So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm what discussions, if any, are taking place with the federal government on solutions for the NWT to reduce crime rate and make our communities safer? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Department of Justice attends a number of different federal, territorial, and provincial meetings at various levels. So I've recently attended a meeting with the ministers for public safety and ministers of justice across Canada, and these are the types of issues that we discussed, and I will say what the issues that are being raised here are also being raised across Canada. So this is not a territory issue alone.

There is work in different jurisdictions to look at policing and how police services could be improved. There's been recent talk about Alberta moving towards their own provincial police system because they think they can approach policing and crime prevention in a better way. British Columbia, there was recently a report from an all-party committee in the Legislative Assembly that suggested -- that recommended that they move toward a provincial policing system so that they could take an approach that is more tailored for them. So I participate in those types of federal-territorial-provincial meetings.

As well, there is a number of different working groups that staff from the department are on with the federal and provincial counterparts. So there's crime prevention working groups, drug impaired driving working groups, guns and gangs working groups, and a number of these. So there are a significant number of conversations happening, which is necessary given that the Criminal Code is a federal statute. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1242-19(2):  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how can a company who is not BIPed and one who is not BIPed because, according to the BIP policy, would not qualify them to be BIPed, still get awarded a contract with BIP adjustments? This doesn't make sense to me. You know, if the Minister can explain to me where this policy exists. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, a company that is not BIPed can still receive a BIP adjustment. That is pursuant to one of the interpretive bulletins that's associated. If you go to the BIP web page, there's a whole list of interpretive bulletins. What it matters is whether or not there's Northwest Territories content or local content and if, in fact, there's -- so in other words, the company that's bidding on a contract, if they themselves aren't BIPed but their direct subcontractors are, including -- or if they have local content, they are still eligible to use the BIP adjustment or the local content adjustments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know I sent a lot of information and I know

the Minister also received a letter from the contractor and the subcontractor, the local content subcontractors. So whose responsibility is it, when there's BIP adjustments, to hold this contractor to account that they ensure that these local content, local suppliers, are being utilized and if not, what happens? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, construction contracts are monitored throughout. There are expectations to have monthly BIP content updates provided. They're monitored certainly by the departments responsible but procurement shared services does also share in that role. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, one of the changes that came about early in the process of the procurement review was to introduce vendor performance management, and that is something that's still fairly new but it has now been added into contracting provisions such that the contractor now knows that they will be subject to those reviews. If they're not meeting the content, if they're not meeting the contents of what they're expected to do, what they've committed to do, that essentially does put them then, now that this has been into the contract, puts them in breach of contract which can bring with it a host of different remedies. One of those remedies may well be, Mr. Speaker, that they become ineligible as not being a responsible company, would be ineligible for future bids. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So Mr. Speaker, will this Minister, you know, review with her clients, like if we have contractors that have ongoing bidding and they're not utilizing local content but they say they are, is there a way to do a review of local contractors that have been doing this and not following this process? I just -- you know, I can't go back to my community and tell these local contractors who live and pay taxes in the North that being BIPed is nothing, it doesn't mean anything, because that's what we're saying, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had a conversation earlier with the Member, and I did receive this letter. So I have details of the specific incident that's given rise to these questions but the questions are ones that should be posed in the context of the work we're doing on the procurement review. Certainly no Minister who is responsible for any project wants to have to hear that, in fact, bids are not being received as we expect them, that the processes and policies we have in place are not being followed. Even vendor

performance management, we don't want to have to use vendor performance management to monitor the businesses in the North. We want the businesses in the North to be bidding on projects, using local content, using local procurement. That's what we've heard from the business community too. So when there is this disconnect, Mr. Speaker, most certainly I will go back to the department and make sure that, as we finish up the procurement review, that the processes that are there in place are clear, simple, well known, that they're not spread across the different departments with different versions and different objectives, that there is a central monitoring agency, and that everyone knows that if you're not following what's there that you will face some form of penalty so that we hopefully are not hearing of cases like this that are creating this kind of confusion within the business community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that the Minister will do that. You know, I mean, when I think of local content, I think of somebody who I could walk down the road and go and say hi because I know where they live, and that's "local" in my community, not somebody who shows up for seasonal work and then leaves or whenever there's a job and then leaves. You know, that's not local content to me.

So can the Minister advise us if a one-stop procurement policy for all NWT, including Crown corporations, is being considered in this new procurement review and when can we expect this new procurement review policy to come into play? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was doing well on short answers but I think this last one's going to be a bit more challenging.

There's a lot happening in the realm of the procurement review right now. There's been a lot happening in the last year with respect to developing a procurement strategy with Indigenous governments and working with them in concert with them so that any Indigenous procurement is done with Indigenous businesses and Indigenous governments assisting us in driving and developing that. But in the meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, there's also the public procurement side of what happens within government. I can't say right now still if those two pieces will be, you know, two pieces or if it will all be worked in together but I'm expecting it will all be one unit at the end of the day.

I can also say, Mr. Speaker, that we have gotten to the point of sharing with Indigenous governments, and with my colleagues, a work plan that we're on, sharing principles that are the foundation to bring a unified focus to procurement rather than having different organizations and different objectives in different departments.

Mr. Speaker, a definition of a northern business and a definition of an Indigenous business are coming. They're coming in the life of this Assembly perhaps -- and not right at the end but sooner than that. And, Mr. Speaker, this will apply to the Housing Corporation. It will apply to the Liquor Commission. It will apply to all departments. Northwest Territories Power Corporation is the one Crown entity that I anticipate may be the source of some of the concern here. They are continuing, I believe, to still be under their own processes but I know my colleague at -- who is responsible for NTPC is certainly following along on what we are doing, and we could certainly have some further conversations on what they might be able to see and benefit from the process that we've undergone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1243-19(2):  
HIGHWAY CELL PHONE SERVICE

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we cannot express it enough or emphasize it enough that cell phone service is greatly needed on Highway 3. Can the Minister commit to providing cell service between Yellowknife and Behchoko? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is over 12,000 kilometres of highways in Canada that don't have cell service, most of the highways in the Northwest Territories that don't have cell service, and while I recognize that this is the most travelled portion of highway, it is certainly not by any stretch a unique challenge faced in Canada or this territory or other territories or provinces. The costs of putting in cell towers and maintaining them is prohibitive at this time. We are certainly hopeful that with the increase of satellite services that that might assist with -- through technology to solve this problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** I think she answered some of this already. And so what

are the current actual financial commitments that GNWT has made to cover the annual operating costs of wireless and cell phone projects in the Tlicho?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly can say that there are costs, if I understood correctly, that we do cover the cost of having -- we do cover the costs of internet service for obviously all government services in the Tlicho. The operating costs for cellular on the highway, Mr. Speaker, as of, I think earlier this year, they were estimated at being at least \$500,000 per year. That does not include costs for inflation; it does not include necessarily any costs if fuel continues to go up. And, again, that right now would be a minimum if that is what was sought. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, before we continue, I'd like to remind Members and everybody to please turn the volumes and phones on silent, please. Thank you very much. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Since Finance issued the expression of interest to address cell phone coverage along Highway No. 3 in February of 2021, what has been done to address this problem? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So back in February, as the Member's mentioned, there was a request for an expression of interest issued. The point there being let's try to get a sense of what the costs would be. We knew they would likely to be high. But certainly it's good to have an update with some concrete numbers. There was only one respondent to the expression of interest, Northwestel. And then a letter was written to support them when they went out -- as part of the process they undertook, they went out under the Universal Broadband Fund to see what kind of funding opportunities there might be within that from the federal government. With that information in hand, they had some information around capital costs and capital coverage. But for them to be any further involved, they would be looking for a fairly significant public sector commitment. At a minimum, it would include some portion -- a small portion of the capital expenditure but, as I just mentioned in my last response, more notably a commitment over the course of at least ten years for a minimum of \$500,000 a year, again in today's dollars, not accounting for inflation, just to maintain services on that one small stretch of highway, which in and of itself would make not a dent on any other highway anywhere else in the

Northwest Territories. And so at that point, Mr. Speaker, this is where the project is deemed not to be one that falls within the current priorities but, again, looking forward to what might happen technologically to get us to a different place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Can the Minister advise of any proposals for improving cell service along Highway No. 3 that they have received? Have there been further expression of interest or responses to the issue of GNWT sent to businesses in February 2021? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not to my knowledge and, you know, and I expect that there wouldn't have been. I'm going back now somewhat in my memory now but there was early in -- early on I had spoken actually with proponents from Northwestel very early on in this stage, and it was quite clear to me that there's not a market case for this request. There's not a market for cell towers in this stretch of highway, even being the busiest. There's certainly not a market to cover the rest of the highways around the Northwest Territories or other rural remote regions all around Canada. And I -- again, Mr. Speaker, what we're hoping is that as some of the satellite options become available and satellite cell services are becoming -- satellite telephone services become available, this may be a direction that we can take to help improve coverage for across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1244-19(2):  
PAID SICK LEAVE

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment who's responsible for the Employment Standards Act. Really, all I can say is I've brought this up many times before, and will the Minister introduce paid sick leave in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't be the Minister to introduce legislation for paid sick leave but as I stated when the Member asked these questions back

in February and then before that in December, we are looking -- the department is looking into amendments to the Employment Standards Act. They've completed a cross-jurisdictional scan across Canada and discovered there's a number of areas where we need to improve our legislation to modernize it. As part of that work, we are going to go out and engage with employers, with employees, and ask these types of questions. You know, do you provide sick leave? Do you want to see something like this legislated? So that work is happening. We expect all of the engagement to be done by the end of this Assembly, leaving the door wide open for the next government to look at making those types of changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I don't have any further questions. I hope the next Assembly gets this done. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North, take that as a comment.

Colleagues, before we continue, I'd like to recognize my new CA Ms. Diane Koe. Welcome to the Chamber. Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 1245-19(2):  
HOUSING CONTRACTS

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation. Will the Minister commit to review the process it went through from posting the tender 6074 to awarding it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will look at that review, and I will follow up with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also will ask the Minister of NWT Housing if she can commit to looking at some -- you know, just do a random of the tenders that have been awarded in my community from her department and just do a random check just to see if they are following the process that they should be following and if she can commit to that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, to the Member, I will follow up with that as well because there should be annual or else monthly quarterly checks at

least when we're looking at these tenders going out for us to be more consistent with what it is that we are putting out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to also ask for a commitment that the Minister will, when ensuring when departments are putting "local content," that they are indeed local and they are indeed under defined -- like, the definitions we have in the BIP. So they're companies that local suppliers. You know, if I can go and I can purchase from them publicly, then they are a local supplier with a local content, if they are a resident there and companies there. So that's what I will ask to make sure that future tenders, if they're given local content and BIP adjustments, that they are and that her department is following up on that. Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question. And I will make sure that -- I will reinforce the local content that is required with these public tenders going out, and once contracts are awarded that they are using local businesses to complete our projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the one last thing that I'd like to ask the Minister is that moving forward, you know, when businesses are deemed ineligible, that that be public for people -- like, for all, because, you know, I think that this is a thing that we need to stand by our NWT businesses and if people are defaulting and spending public dollars not in the means that they are supposed to, then those lists should be made public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to take this and review it with the department, and I will follow up with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1246-19(2):  
INFERTILITY TREATMENT

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, today, when the Minister was replying to questions from the MLA for Great Slave, she indicated that the GNWT provides

services to treat underlying medical conditions that cause infertility. But I have constituents who have underlying medical conditions requiring treatment before IVF is possible and this is not supported by the GNWT or by medical travel. So who decides what conditions are recognized and which ones are not? Thank you.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the Member but I'm not able to answer that question; I'll have to take it on notice. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1247-19(2):  
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS  
WOMEN AND GIRLS LEGISLATION

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice.

In June of 2020, I called on then Minister of Justice to draft missing persons legislation for the Northwest Territories in response to the MMIWG Call for Justice number 5.8.

This summer the Department of Justice started the call for feedback for potential missing persons legislation here in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister inform the House what kind of feedback was received? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that's correct, between June 16th and July 25th of this year, the Department of Justice held public engagement. So the engagement consisted of an unanimous online survey that asked residents a number of questions related to missing persons legislation. The department also sent letters directly to Indigenous governments, mayors, the RCMP, and various other partners and stakeholders to invite them to participate in the survey. We received 81 responses. Most questions -- or most had a strong consensus. While many residents agreed that law enforcement should be able to access some private information to aid in an investigation for a missing person, privacy and protection of personal information was a common concern and most respondents agreed that law enforcement should limit the

information publicly released about missing persons.

A significant number of respondents believed that the information accessed by law enforcement about third parties related to missing persons cases should be limited. Respondents wanted clear legislation with an emphasis on limiting jargon where possible. Some also called for legislation specifically accounting for vulnerable groups of missing persons fleeing from domestic abuse or those who cannot or do not want to return home. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the participation of the Native Women's Association in the inquiry, was input received from the Native Women's Association or from Indigenous governments? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the feedback that was submitted online was unanimous, so it was possible that these organizations did submit feedback. And I will say that despite the engagement period being closed and the drafting of the What We Heard report being near completion, we're always open to feedback. If we receive a letter now from an Indigenous government or the Native Women's Association, that will definitely be taken into consideration. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what are the next steps for the Department of Justice to draft this legislation, and when does the GNWT expect to table a bill in the House? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next steps would be ensuring that the information provided through the public engagement is analyzed. That will then be used to develop a legislative proposal and then the process that follows is that legislative proposal goes to standing committee, comes to Cabinet, the bill is drafted, and hopefully introduced in the winter sitting. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1248-19(2):  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since there's some time on the clock, I thought I'd ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation if she will also look into her department as the Minister of Finance cannot commit for the other Ministers, so I'm going to ask her if she'll commit to review her policies



and keep them in line so that we have a one policy for the Northwest Territories as we can say that the deputy ministers that run our departments in our government are the board that make up the NWT Power Corp. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time I can't commit to putting it in line, but I will commit to speaking to the department to ensure that we are following within our current corporation legislation and to ensure that we see what that means. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'll ask the Minister to ask her department, if it's a department now, that -- and all the deputy ministers that run it -- if they can make sure that the work stays -- as much work as possible that can stay in the North by Northerners stays in the North by Northerners. Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to note that we are following our rules. It is the intent of this government to ensure that we have local content and northern hires. So I mean, that is something that we do fall in line with the rest of the other departments here in the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering if -- and, you know, if the Minister -- you know, I haven't had this conversation with her but if she can get back or commit to following up if there -- same as with the BIP content, if they are not following through and they are not using local contractors and they are not -- you know, if we give contracts to certain organizations, you know, that we hold them accountable, that they do what they say they're going to do, and that if they don't, you know, they go on this deemed ineligible to bid on tenders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories hydro, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Northwest Territories Energy, are just part of the Power Corporation. So we do not fall -- although we do not follow the Business Incentive Policy, we do have a northern preference policy. So what that means is there's a section of our purchasing policy that speaks specifically to northern preferences for any additional references. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member that we are

following within our policy and that we are ensuring that it's northern local content. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Oh, sorry, Member for Yellowknife North.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders of the day, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yellowknife North constituent Tasha Olekshy as well, who works in ENR's climate change and air quality unit is here today, as the Minister will be tabling the annual climate change report. Thank you for joining us.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two of the pages that are from Inuvik Boot Lake, Disikha Dhungel and Indigo Reding-Taylor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. 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 Environment and Natural Resources.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 743-19(2):  
RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN  
THE NWT ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Responding to Climate Change in the NWT Annual Report 2021-2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 744-19(2):  
NWT CARBON TAX REPORT 2021-2022

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories Carbon Tax Report 2021-2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Hay River South.

TABLED DOCUMENT 745-19(2):  
STATISTICS CANADA POLICE-REPORTED  
CRIME STATISTICS IN CANADA, 2019

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the following document: Police-Reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2019, release date October 29th, 2020. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Tabling of documents. Member for Thebacha.

TABLED DOCUMENT 746-19(2):  
LETTER DATED OCTOBER 22, 2022, FROM  
NWT SENIOR'S SOCIETY TO MINISTER  
RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES REGARDING  
SENIORS' HOUSING

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a letter from the NWT Senior's Society dated October 22nd, 2022, to the Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories regarding Seniors' Housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 64-19(2):  
SUICIDE PREVENTION

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I need to start by apologizing to the interpreters for speaking a little fast during questions today; my apologies to everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 31st, 2022, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to

establish a suicide prevention fund of \$250,000 in each region and is expedited directly to communities in crisis without application.

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a coordinated collaborative multi-departmental suicide prevention team to meet with communities in crisis to assist community leadership identify suicide prevention strategies and activities as well as Government of the Northwest Territories funding that communities can access.

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories subsidize all recreation fees in small communities and create new recreational activities for youth and young adults.

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION 65-19(2):  
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 681-19(2), GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE REPORT 26-19(2): REPORT ON THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT - LIFTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES: AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER, TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 31st, 2022, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Tabled Document 681-19(2): Government of the Northwest Territories response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Great Slave.

MOTION 66-19(2):  
REFERRAL OF Tabled DOCUMENT 694-19(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CORONER SERVICE 2021-2022 EARLY RELEASE OF SUICIDE DATA AND MINISTER'S STATEMENT 264-19(2): RESPONSE TO THE NWT CHIEF CORONER'S REPORT ON SUICIDE, TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 31st, 2022, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Tabled Document 694-19(2): Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Suicide Data and Minister's Statement 264-19(2): Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

### Notice of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 60:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND CARBON TAX ACT

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 31st, 2022, I will present Bill 60: An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Member for Hay River South.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 58:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT,  
CARRIED

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that Bill 58, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thought I got off on that one, but.

This bill amends the Elections and Plebiscite Act to implement proposed changes identified by the Chief Electoral Officer in the report following the 2019 general election and the Legislative Assembly's Committee of the Whole after reviewing the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on rules and procedures report to the Legislative Assembly on February 23rd, 2021, and its motions on March 30th, 2021. Additional amendments are proposed as modernized language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 8.2(7) and have Bill 58 referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you the Member is seeking unanimous consent to move Bill 58 into Committee of the Whole later today. Are there any nays? Thank you. Bill 58 will be moved into Committee of the Whole later today.

Second reading of bills. Member for Hay River South.

BILL 59:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTIONS AND PLEBISCITE ACT,  
CARRIED

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscite Act, be read for the second time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** This bill amends the Elections and Plebiscite Act to implement proposed changes identified by the Chief Electoral Officer in their report following the 2019 General Election and the Legislative Assembly's Committee of the Whole after reviewing the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on rules and procedures report to the Legislative Assembly on February 23rd, 2021, and its motions of March 30th, 2021. Additional amendments are proposed as modernized language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. The motion is in the order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 59 has had second reading.

---Carried

Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 8.2(7) and have Bill 59 be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to move Bill 59 into Committee of the Whole later today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Hearing none, Bill 59 has been referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 23, Bill 29, Committee Report 34-19(2), Tabled Document 723-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, committee wishes to deal with Tabled Document 723-19(2), 2023-2024 Capital Estimates Finance; Committee Report 34-19(2), Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud; Bill

58, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act; and Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscite Act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We'll take a short recess and start with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 723-19(2), Capital Estimates 2023-2024. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Finance. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, with me today are Bill MacKay, the deputy minister of finance, and Rick Wind, chief information officer.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Welcome. Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee the Department of Finance begins on page 32. We will defer the departmental totals and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning at page 33 with the Office of the Chief Information Officer with information items on page 34.

Finance, Office of the Chief Information Officer, infrastructure investments, \$3,380,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm going to ask one of the questions I always ask about, is I have concerns that we do not publish the cost of any projects. And, you know, I can kind of understand for tendering certain things but here I'm looking at

a list of software. I guess, is there any concern that if we went out and tendered this software, and somewhere in the public record of this Assembly we showed the costs that we expected it to be, that that would affect the tender? I'll note that I have never seen a IT project or software licence come in anywhere on time or on budget to date. So I have a hard time believing that if I put the amount that we expect it to cost in here that some company who designs software is going to tweak their bid accordingly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So Madam Chair, I mean, it's the same answer in as much as the Member is saying it's the same question which is that, you know, other than I think the Yukon, other jurisdictions don't publish the costs because of the concern that everyone will just simply bid to the known budget rather than trying to put some effort in to minimize costs. So yes, I mean, and just to distinguish it's, you know, actual costs as they are incurred certainly are made available and those updates are made available. But it's the budget that is the issue because it's the budget that we don't want someone -- there is a risk of someone, you know, bidding up to the maximum of the budget rather than making an effort to find ways to minimize those costs. Now, the specific example given with respect to information projects, perhaps having given those general comments on that specific I'd suggest it go to Mr. Wind, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Wind.

**MR. WIND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that it is not our practice to disclose the full budget amounts for multiyear projects. Many of the IT projects are in fact single-year budgets and so they're there as they exist a single year of an expenditure or appropriation. So if it is a single-year project, then the budget you see -- or the appropriation you see is in fact the budget.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you. I guess I'll also reiterate another concern is I really wish that when the capital budgets were estimated or were included that some public information was included about each of these so I did not have to go through each one and ask for a status update. But I'm going to ask for a couple here.

The student records module replacement I see completed for 2025-2026. Can someone just confirm to me, I believe we had previously passed money, and I thought this was for ECE, for a student record system and then I believe at one point the Minister of ECE said we went out to tender it and then it came back and way over budget and then the company didn't want to do it, or is this is a completely different student records system? Can I just have some history of the student records system. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I don't have that level of detail. But let me start with the deputy minister and someone at this table might.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister.

**MR. MACKAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just actually going to request that Mr. Wind answer that question. He has some detail on that project. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Wind.

**MR. WIND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is, in fact, the same project. We did have some procurement issues which resulted in the need to reestablish that project and reestablish the appropriation for it.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you. Is anyone able to tell me any numbers about this? I know we don't do that but, you know, how much were we initially planning to spend years ago and then have we spent any money to date here in our failed procurement attempts? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, Madam Chair, my understanding at this point is that we are in year one of a three-year project and so the costs will begin to be incurred in the upcoming fiscal year. Thank you.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, and I guess I'm wondering if -- you know, this is one of those areas where I also find a hard time for any of us to provide any accountability. You know, we

spend millions on licensing and software and trying to procure these things, there's often problems. I understand that is the case across all governments. I don't really know anything about IT but I'm wondering if -- well, I guess I'll start with a question.

I heard Infrastructure is planning a dashboard to kind of update projects as they go along and perhaps release some sort of five-year capital plan, and I believe almost every jurisdiction does. Would software be included in that dashboard, or is that simply Infrastructure's capital? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not privy to Infrastructure's plans for their dashboards for their projects but I can certainly take away the prospect of a dashboard for all of the IT projects that sit under Finance. Thank you.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you. And I think perhaps, you know, some sort of -- I mean, it's somewhat ironic to me that how little information publicly available with the Office of the Chief Information Officer. You know, we rolled ISSS into, you know, one department, and there's millions of dollars there. I'm wondering if the Minister could take back the idea of perhaps -- you know, I don't even know how many software licences we have presently, how much they presently cost, when they are up for renewal. But I expect that if you looked at the replacement costs and the licensing costs, it's tens of millions of dollars. I don't know exactly the divide of when the chief information officer has it versus department because I know Health is also spending millions of dollars in health software, but I believe they do that on their own. But I'm just wondering if somewhere all of that information could be compiled and then some day, hopefully, someone could perhaps try and track some of the issues that have happened with software procurement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I certainly like the idea of a tracking mechanism. There may be some challenges to determine the cutoff points. And what I mean by that is at what size of or scope of software or materials do we begin to put on the tracker versus not. But

perhaps I'll just ask if Mr. Wind could just speak a bit to the nature of some of the assets that we do have, what is tracked; again, there's probably room to improve that. I appreciate the suggestion. As I say, I do certainly want to spend a bit more time on it but at least we can get a sense of what we do now. Again, I suggest it go to Mr. Wind, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Wind.

**MR. WIND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. IT capital assets are intended to be tracked in their life cycle and amortization through our tangible capital asset system within the Government of the Northwest Territories. Much of the software licensing cost is not a one-time cost. It's an ongoing O and M cost to maintain those licenses, and so that cost and those expenditures are distributed across the organization based on the department or the area that's expending the dollars. We are undertaking some work to improve and consolidate fiscal transparency out of the OCIO across the INT sector. It's early days at this stage, and it's really intended primarily to help with our governance through our deputy minister committee and to make sure that we're spending both O and M and capital dollars on the initiatives and priorities that are most important. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I asked this during -- yeah, and that would also kind of allude to my point of I could go to every single department and try and find in their operations some sort of licensing contract. I mean, actually I couldn't do that and it wouldn't become publicly available. But I think I would easily get to tens of millions of dollars quite quickly in licensing fees every year, let alone the actual initial capital ask that gets made here.

But I wanted to ask one last question, which was, that Infrastructure is spending an undisclosed amount of millions of dollars on replacing all its capital servers. I know the federal government has switched to a cloud first computing model. I recognize that some servers for some information may be needed, but the reason governments are looking at doing that is it's quite cheaper. I'm wondering if that is something the Office of the Chief Information Officer has looked at, is some sort of cloud server system. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I'll turn that over to the chief information officer, please.

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

**MR. WIND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we are looking at cloud as a component of our infrastructure and when we're delivering information systems and technology. It's not a blanket solution for everything, and it doesn't always save costs. What it often does is transfer capital -- one-time capital expenditures into ongoing O and M. So it's a complex kind of fiscal model and analysis that we do when we're looking at them. But, for example, our new service platform is a cloud-based platform and is resident in the cloud. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions, comments, under the Office of the Chief Information Officer?

All right, seeing none. Finance, Office of the Chief Information Officer, infrastructure investments, \$3,380,000. Does committee agree? Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, please turn to page 35 for Management Board Secretariat, with information items on page 36, Finance Management Board Secretariat, infrastructure investments, \$12,738,000. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this item deals with the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link from the Inuvik to Tuk Highway. And given the conversations that we've had during the length of this Assembly in regards to broadband internet and its far-reaching impact on Northerners from, you know, the border right up to the Arctic Ocean and back again, I'm wondering where there is no money showing under the P3s or additional projects mentioned here. And I mean, this has a huge impact on education when we're talking about northern distance learning or when we're talking about the community learning centres in our small NWT communities. It has been an impact on public health and people's ability to access information as we saw during the height of the pandemic where, you know, information was changing minute to minute. And even, you know, daily or monthly activities like somebody being able to request a new healthcare card or update their vehicle registration. A lot of these things happen online now. And without people having access to broadband internet, it's just not possible for

them to really access these government services. So I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to why we're not seeing more capital investment in broadband internet here. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so the Member is correct that this is the portion remaining for the Mackenzie Valley fibre line to take it all the way up to Tuktoyaktuk. But the next major phase of bringing all communities up to a standard of having available to them of 50/10 service standard, right now the CRTC which, somewhat uniquely in Canada, regulates the provider here in the Northwest Territories has set it up such that Northwestel, by virtue of that regulatory arrangement, is undertaking the work to bring all communities up to a service standard of 50/10. I believe that 2025 is the year by which all communities will be at that standard, if not sooner. But I'll leave it as an overpromise if that need be. There is also the project to Whati that the GNWT was involved early stages in assisting to get that moving, but it is a Tlicho government project.

And so with that, Madam Chair, there's not an area where there has been an identified need that falls within the GNWT's area of responsibility or exclusive responsibility to invest additional capital expenses. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So just so that I can make sure I'm on the same page as the Minister, so the work to update all communities to be on the 50/10 is work being done by Northwestel with 100 percent funding dollars then not from the GNWT, is that correct? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is correct.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the other piece, then, that I'm going to inquire specifically about is internet redundancy within Yellowknife. This is something we've heard quite a bit about from the Chamber of Commerce here in Yellowknife throughout the length of our term, and I'm wondering if the

Minister can speak to this project here as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I certainly am live to the redundancy. It's redundancy that matters, if I may, not only for Yellowknife but would bring potentially redundancy to South Slave communities and would certainly assist in protecting all of the government's infrastructure which impacts, of course, all of the Northwest Territories in a territorial or regional sense. So just to underscore that I'm certainly alive to it, and in the communications that the GNWT and Department of Finance is responsible for in responding to CRTC, who are supposed to be undertaking a review of services in the North, we certainly took a, I think, very strong position that they need to be looking at how to fund redundancy projects and to, frankly, fund redundancy projects. We've taken that position before under the Universal Broadband Fund and were not successful. I am hoping that with the CRTC's process underway right now that it will not fall on deaf ears, that redundancy here is more than just better service; it really is providing an essential level of service given that we are otherwise on really one fibre line and satellite-reliant.

So again, while it was good news in my first response that we're going to be at a 50/10, I'm -- all of that does get tempered with the fact that we are reliant on services that are either one line or on a satellite. So that is where that one is at, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The other piece that I don't see in here that I know has been something that we've spoken about during all of the main estimates during every year of this Assembly, and it relates to public safety but ultimately comes down to the Department of Finance, is the expansion of cell service across the territory. And I believe that we have even heard from one of our fellow Members here, had a Member's statement, in relation to this over the course of this sitting. And I mean, there are different regions in the territory where when you're on the highway, you are an hour plus away from being able to gain cell service again and call for help if you need it and so I'm wondering why this piece is again not on -- or found, sorry, in the capital acquisition plan. Thank you

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, earlier today I began to sort of go over some of the information that is available through the Government of Canada. They had put out maps that show cellular coverage across highways across all of Canada, back in 2018. So there may have been some improvements but certainly not dramatic ones, that there's over 1,200 kilometres of highways that have no cellular coverage; 115,000 kilometres of roads in Canada that have no cellular coverage which, you know, that's not a good news story by any way and by any means, but just to say that it's not a problem that the Government of the Northwest Territories can solve alone. The federal government has been called on to support that, and the Universal Broadband Fund was available for that but that's, you know, a fund that had a defined scope and a defined budget to a certain degree. It's not going to solve all of these hundreds of thousands of kilometres of roads with no coverage, including ours. It would still be looking at what then the costs would be to the government.

For example, as I was discussing earlier today an estimate came back for just the stretch of road between here and the community of Behchoko, just that one hour's worth of driving would be upwards of \$500,000 a year in O and M costs. So, Madam Chair, if this is going to be a priority of this Assembly, then that will have to be visited perhaps coming into the next Assembly because it certainly was not one of the priorities that we were mandated to and, as such, did not get priority funding under the capital plan. Thank you

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you are there any further questions under the Management Board Secretariat?

Seeing none, Finance Management Board Secretariat, infrastructure investments, \$12,738,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Members. Please return now to the department summary found on page 32, Finance, 2023-2024 Capital Estimates, \$16,118,000. Member for Kam Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 318-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 723-19(2): CAPITAL  
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – FINANCE –  
DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT,  
CARRIED



**MS. CLEVELAND:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Finance at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you the motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Is the committee prepared to move on to the next item?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee, and thank you to the Minister. And sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 34-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud. I will go to the chair on the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening remarks. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee report was read into the record on Tuesday, October 18th, 2022. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud. The Ombud Act requires the Ombud to prepare an annual report. The report includes information on the number of inquiries, complaints received. It can also include recommendations. The Speaker tables the report in the Legislative Assembly. Once tabled, the committee reviews the report.

As part of the review of the Ombud, Ms. Colette Langlois appeared before committee on February 11, 2022. Committee commends her user-friendly approach in her annual report. The strong visuals, plain language, and ample statistics provided an excellent template to understand the Ombud's activities. The Committee's report follows up on previous recommendations from the Ombud and from committee to improve the Ombud Act – work that the Government of the Northwest Territories has declined to pursue in the life of the 19th Assembly.

Committee also makes two substantive recommendations in this report:

- First, that the GNWT review and amend the Ombud Act by Fall 2025; and.
- Second, that the Speaker amend the Rules of the Northwest Territories Assembly to allow annual reports of statutory officers to be made available to the public sooner.

Committee is pleased to submit this report to the Legislative Assembly and looks forward to its consideration. Individual Members may have comments on the report, and I would like to thank the committee for their work on this report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Committee Report 34-19(2), Standing Committee on the Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud. There are no comments. Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 319-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 34-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW  
OF THE 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE OMBUD – REVIEW AND AMENDMENT  
OF OMBUD ACT,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Government Operations and within the first two years of the 20th Assembly, review each of the Ombud's recommendations in her 2019-2020 Annual Report in the context of a wholistic review of the Ombud Act and amend the Act accordingly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you the motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is my intention, outside of my role as SCOGO chair but as an individual Member, to introduce a private Member's bill this sitting and hopefully get some changes to the Ombud Act in the life of this Assembly. Those are to be some of the smaller and easier changes. Some of the larger ones I think do require the government to go out and thoroughly consider them and perhaps engage with the public; you know, something beyond what a committee or an individual Member can do. And I guess this motion here is just reiterating and asking the government to once again look at the Ombud's report and review those recommendations.

I think in the context of other statutory officers, we had an Information and Privacy Commissioner who, for almost 20 years, made the same recommendations to amend the ATIPP Act and that was never done in her career until the very end the government finally got a new ATIPP Act. And I think that it's a disservice to all of our statutory officers when they repeatedly ask for the same changes and then committee repeatedly passes motions and then the government doesn't respond to those motions. So this motion here is reiterating to the government to look at those recommendations and take them seriously. I think it's a larger issue across all of our statutory officers. And I also think it's a bit of a confusion at times of who is responsible for bringing that legislation forward. In the case of the Ombud Act, you know, committee can only make recommendations. We don't have the ability to tell the government what to do. But, yeah, I do believe this act, you know, requires a holistic review after being in operation for a number of years, and we got to work with our Ombuds and all of our stat officers to make sure, you know, we support them and they don't find themselves just repeating themselves and banging their head against the wall, telling the government to do something, for 20 years. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 320-19(2):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW  
OF THE 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE OMBUD – PUBLIC RELEASE OF  
STATUTORY OFFICER ANNUAL REPORTS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Speaker of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures and before the end of the 19th Assembly, review and amend the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly to allow annual reports of statutory officers to be released publicly once they are received and before they are tabled. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you the motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's not often, actually, that committee gets to pass motions directed at the Speaker so I'm happy to do that. We also made a similar one for the public accounts. But what often happens is the Speaker will have a document in his possession but wait until the Assembly has to be sitting until it's tabled, in this case July 1st. So committee would like to get these reports the minute that they are completed and submitted to the Speaker and not sometimes have to delay their review by three months simply because session is not in. So, Mr. Speaker, if you're listening, we'd like these reports a little sooner. Thank you

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Johnson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 321-19(2):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW  
OF THE 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF  
THE OMBUD – GOVERNMENT RESPONSE  
TO RECOMMENDATIONS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you the motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 34-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review

of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 34-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report from the Ombud. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you there's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I please have the report of committee of the whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 723-19(2), Committee Report 34-19(2), Bill 58, Bill 59, and would like to report progress with four motions carried and that Committee Report 34-19(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 Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Hay River North. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 53:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LIQUOR ACT

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker. No, that's not it either, Mr. Speaker. I am well equipped; it's here.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

### RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Minister has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** The Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Monfwi, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

Thank you. The results of the recorded vote: 15 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 53 has had third reading.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Friday, October 28th, 2022, 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Oral Question 1163-19(2), Homelessness
  - Oral Question 1188-19(2), Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Red Cross
  - Oral Question 1246-19(2), Infertility Treatment
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
  - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
  - Bill 58, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
  - Bill 59, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act
  - Tabled Document 723-19(2), 2023-2024 Capital Estimates
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 Friday, October 28, 2022 at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:34 p.m.