



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 143

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Pages 5517 - 5566

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.
(Mackenzie Delta)

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

(Sahtu)
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

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)
Premier
Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat

Mr. Richard Edjericon

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Hon. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)
Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors

Mr. Jackie Jacobson

(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)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerks

Mr. Glen Rutland
Ms. Kim Wickens

Committee Clerks

Mr. Michael Ball
Ms. Jennifer Franki-Smith
Ms. Cynthia James

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Mr. Toby Kruger

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	5517
MINISTER'S STATEMENTS	5517
NWT Supported Living Review (Green).....	5517
25 th Rendez-vous de la Francophonie (R.J. Simpson)	5518
MEMBER'S STATEMENTS	5518
Northwest Territories Power Corporation (Martselos).....	5518
Proof of Vaccination Requirements (Rocky Simpson)	5518
Opening of the Snowking's Winter Festival (Johnson).....	5519
Northwest Territories Power Corporation Board Decision-making (Semmler)	5520
Increased Power Rates (Edjericon).....	5520
Northwest Territories Power Corporation Use of Limiters (Jacobson)	5521
Winter Road (Weyallon Armstrong).....	5521
Taltson Hydro System (Nokleby).....	5522
Northwest Territories Power Corporation Policies (Thompson)	5522
Mining Royalties (O'Reilly)	5523
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	5524
ORAL QUESTIONS	5524
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS	5535
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	5535
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	5540
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	5540
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	5565
THIRD READING OF BILLS	5565
Bill 56 – An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation	5565
ORDERS OF THE DAY	5565

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 1, 2023****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 318-19(2):
NWT SUPPORTED LIVING REVIEW

HON. JULIE GREEN: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to equitable levels of supported living services. We want to help them live as independently as possible in their own homes, or in accommodations provided by a supported living service provider. To advance our commitment, we conducted a comprehensive territorial review of supported living services to identify gaps in service, future demand, and best practices. The goal is a renewed person and family-centered, culturally safe, and inclusive model for delivering supported living services right here in the NWT.

Later today, I will be tabling the Supported Living Review Report. It provides recommendations for improving supported living services, as well as the GNWT's response to the report.

Mr. Speaker, supported living services provide 24-hour support and supervision for individuals unable to live independently due to physical, cognitive, and/or mental health issues. These services are provided in Inuvik, Hay River, K'atlodeeche First Nation, and Yellowknife. When there is limited capacity within the NWT to provide the necessary supports for more complex needs, residents are provided with supported living services outside the territory.

The NWT Supported Living Review responds to a commitment made following public engagement for the 2017 Disability Program Review and Renewal Project. The review revealed inadequate access to equitable and supportive housing and support services for adults with disabilities across the NWT. A critical piece of the Supported Living Review was to hear and understand the needs of residents, so we conducted extensive engagement. The list included supported living clients and their families, persons with disabilities, Indigenous governments, and service providers. Engagement also included interviews, a survey, and both virtual and in-person public sessions in all regional centers. An advisory group of persons with disabilities, or their caregivers, was also established to gather knowledge, advice, and feedback from persons with lived experience.

Mr. Speaker, findings from the review show that the current system is complex to access, lacks community-based service options, and is under-resourced to meet the range of needs in-territory. The review provides 33 recommendations for

- improving the scope of services;
- standards and oversight;
- workforce development; and
- client-focused services.

The GNWT has accepted 12 recommendations where work can begin with existing resources and has accepted in principle the remaining 21 recommendations pending additional resources to implement them.

The Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT Health and Social Services Authority have established a working group which will advance on the accepted recommendations. They will also help identify the additional resources to implement the recommendations accepted in principle. By advancing the recommendations, the scope of supported living services will be brought in-line

with the objectives and goals of the NWT Disability Strategic Framework and the best practices for supporting adults with disabilities and their caregivers. It will also provide the framework for the GNWT to monitor the outcome, efficiency, and effectiveness of supported living services.

Mr. Speaker, supported living services are essential supports needed by adults with disabilities and their caregivers. This review has provided a comprehensive understanding of current services, and we will action the recommendations to make meaningful change in the lives of NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 319-19(2):
25TH RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA
FRANCOPHONIE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Monsieur le President, as we enter the month of March, we recognize Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. As the Minister responsible for the Official Languages Act, it is encouraging to see such awareness, involvement, and celebration of all of the Northwest Territories' 11 official languages.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, a celebration by Canada's ten million French-speakers, and all Canadians, in recognition of French language and culture. This year, the theme is Celebrations, with a focus across the country on joy, festivities, gathering, and fun.

Monsieur le President, in the Northwest Territories we have much to celebrate. Last September, this government launched a Francophone stream of the Northwest Territories nominee program to attract foreign nationals to the NWT whose skills are aligned with workforce needs. This action of the 2017-2022 Immigration Strategy recognizes the contributions of French-speaking immigrants to the strength and prosperity of our country and to the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of the Northwest Territories.

Celebrating and building our Francophone community also means developing government services, resources, and communications to serve them in French. The GNWT continues to make progress in this area. In 2021-2022, the GNWT translated a record high 3.27 million words into French. We also saw a record number of GNWT staff receiving the bilingual bonus for French, at 188 individuals. According to the 2022 Francophone Community

Satisfaction Survey, 77 per cent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of service they receive from the GNWT in French.

Monsieur le President, this is great progress, but we always strive to do better. This is why a third-party review of the strategic plan on French language communications and services occurs every five years. In September 2022, the public was invited to provide input on the strategic plan, and I thank all those who took the time to contribute. The third-party report and government response will be published in the coming months, before informing the development of the next strategic plan.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, I would like to recognize the Northwest Territories' vibrant Franco-ténoise community - the people, businesses, and organizations who continue to be significant contributors to this territory's social, economic, and cultural development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1396-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for my statement today I am going to join my colleagues in talking about the various aspects of energy in the NWT. First, I want to mention an issue that has been brought up by several Members throughout this Assembly, including myself, and that issue is about the board of directors at the NTPC Power Corp.

Mr. Speaker, in May of 2016, the Minister at the time for NTPC had decided to dissolve NTPC's board of directors and replace the six-person board with deputy ministers from various NWT departments. The rationale for that decision was to cut costs at NTPC and save \$1 million per year. Well, it's now been seven years since that decision was made, and NTPC still has a board of directors consisting solely of deputy ministers, and it's unclear when an actual board of ordinary NWT residents will be restored.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important the board of directors for any corporation to be made up of a variety of individuals with unique backgrounds and skills that are relevant to the company they serve. It's also important for the

board to be impartial and independent minded, which is not the case with the current board of deputy ministers at NTPC. I strongly hope to see a new board of directors appointed as soon as possible, and I hope when that finally happens that they will work together and will support the new president of NTPC.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I also want to reiterate my steadfast support for the expansion of the Talston hydro dam. This project has been a mandate item for the 19th Assembly, and I'm sure the work on that project will carry over into the 20th Assembly as well. The expansion of the Taltson will be instrumental for the Government of the Northwest Territories to achieve our emission targets within our 2030 Energy Strategy. I know there are some in this House who oppose this project, but I consider it an essential piece of infrastructure that will benefit the people of the NWT for the long term. Overall, Mr. Speaker, I hope to see our government move forward very soon with removing the current NTPC board of directors and replacing them with a group of people that are more representative of the diverse people of the NWT. I remain optimistic that the future members of the board will provide good direction and fresh ideas for NTPC to consider in the years ahead, and I'm sure the new NTPC president would also welcome a new board of directors as he leads the power corp towards achieving all the energy-related mandate items that we created in this Assembly. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for NTPC Power Corp later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1397-19(2):
PROOF OF VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm offing today, so. Mr. Speaker, the North American Indigenous Games will take place in and around Halifax from July 15th to 23rd this summer, with a multitude of sports.

Mr. Speaker, many Indigenous athletes and volunteers from the Northwest Territories have been looking forward to taking part in this event and, for some, they now find their dreams may be dashed due to a requirement to show proof of vaccination. It's the role of the 2023 North American Indigenous Games host society board and staff to ensure the games follow all policies and requirements established by the North American Indigenous Games Council, including the vaccine requirement which they

have made mandatory for participation in this event.

Mr. Speaker, some of our northern athletes and volunteers are questioning why it is that these games are open only to those that can show proof of vaccination, while the province of Nova Scotia, where the games will take place, states that, and I quote, "Proof of full vaccination is no longer required to participate in discretionary, nonessential events and activities that gather people together (like going to restaurants, movies, sports events, theatre performances, social events, and the gym)."

Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that I am still speaking about COVID vaccination requirements considering gathering restrictions have been lifted throughout most of Canada and the United States. I would expect that the decision to include and implement such a policy would be based on science and would align with current public health guidelines and advice throughout Canada and the United States. We have seen many sporting events, such as the 2023 World Junior Hockey Championship, the 2023 Arctic Winter Games, the Canada Winter Games, and the Ontario Hockey Federation, remove the restrictive COVID-19 proof of vaccination requirements for participants.

Speaker, these individuals are aware that organizations, such as North American Indigenous Games, have the choice to implement their own vaccination policies. However, just as we had science to prove vaccinations worked and most complied, we have science saying it is not a reasonable requirement anymore and may even be subject to a Charter challenge. It is important we continue to embrace that science and move towards a collective approach in lifting vaccine requirements for events such as the North American Indigenous Games. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not doing so will take away not only the dreams of our Indigenous youth but opportunities for each to rise as ambassadors, role models, professional athletes, and find success in future endeavors, all due to participating in sports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1398-19(2):
OPENING OF THE SNOWKING'S WINTER
FESTIVAL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All of us in this House swore allegiance to the King of England and, you know, some of us begrudgingly but, Mr. Speaker, there is one monarch we can all support, and that is the Snowking, Mr. Speaker. And I am happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that the snow castle is officially open today and thanks to the support of some generous MLAs, it is free for all Members to attend today. 28 years, they've been building the snow castle, Mr. Speaker. I encourage everyone to get down there, enjoy it. There's a great lineup of shows and events, lots of good concerts and fun for the whole family. So everyone, check out the snow castle and support the monarchy, Mr. Speaker.

Twenty eight years is a long time, Mr. Speaker. But it's not as long as another anniversary this year, which is 75 years ago we built the Snare hydro system, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to have some questions for the Minister of Infrastructure on what we're doing as that crucial asset comes to its end of life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1399-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION BOARD DECISION-MAKING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the relationship between the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and the Government of the Northwest Territories is complex. However, it should not be. But we have made it complex by bringing the work of NTPC into the GNWT. The NTPC board should be an independent decision-making body that should be informed by experts who have knowledge of our region. Instead, it's being run by government deputy ministers and Cabinet. We currently have six deputy ministers sitting on the board, navigating this work off the side of their desks.

Mr. Speaker, the intent of an arm's length decision-making body is that it removes the political influence from major projects and operations. It allows for informed decisions that support residents, creates non-political understanding of the capacity of our regions, and seeks partnerships that will create positive change to energy security efforts. However, that is not how we currently operate, Mr. Speaker. NTPC is facing an aging energy infrastructure and mounting operational debts. How can we tell our residents that NTPC's

strategic decisions are being made with the best interests when Northerners continue to pay increased power rates? As the cost of maintaining and upgrading the energy infrastructure is so expensive, the current governance model does not allow for innovation or independence from government. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1400-19(2):
INCREASED POWER RATES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address a passionate issue that concerns us all. Our government has recently intended to raise the power rates to an unacceptable high level, placing undue burden on our hardworking families and businesses. However, I am pleased to inform you that this proposal has been stopped in its tracks by the public utilities board.

Mr. Speaker, before the Minister cries foul that it was the power corporation that pushed for this rate increase, this is arm's length from the Crown corporation. I will remind this House that the board of the power corporation is 100 percent GNWT public servants - deputy ministers who take their instructions from the Premier. Whether this government likes it or not, the power corporation and the GNWT are one in the same. It is arm's length in name only.

In the GNWT 2019-2023 mandate, the MLAs made 24 recommendations. Recommendation 14: Reduce the cost of power and increase the use of alternative renewable energy.

In the third year of the 19th Assembly, the Minister responsible for the power corporation decided to increase the power rates, and that was a total surprise to my constituents, and all the residents in the NWT, with no consultation.

Let me be clear. The government proposal to increase power rates was unacceptable. It will have been harder for families to make ends meet and harder for businesses to operate in our communities. Our government should be doing everything in its power to help, not hinder the economic well-being of our citizens, and honour the mandate made in 2019-2023 not to increase power rates.

Thankfully, the public utilities board recognized the harmful impacts this proposal would have on our communities and put a stop to it. The board decision demonstrates the importance to

have independent regulators who can hold the government accountable when necessary. As the elected representative of our communities, this would have been devastated by the greater shock. I want you to know that I will always stand up for the interests of our people, not the government and Crown corporation. I will fight against any proposal that will harm our families, businesses, our economy, and I will work to ensure that our government is transparent and accountable to the people.

Mr. Speaker, instead of raising the cost of power proposed that it won't be 20 percent over two years, the South Slave consumers, including my riding of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding, the Government of the Northwest Territories -- oh, sorry, the government should focus their efforts on alternative renewable energy and to lower the cost of power. The high cost of power is impeding the NWT economic development, driving skilled workers out of the territory, shutting small businesses who cannot afford the government energy policy. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the public utilities board for their decision, and I want to thank the citizens of the Northwest Territories for their ongoing commitment to building a strong resilient and prosperous community. Together we can overcome any challenges that build a brighter future for us all. I would have questions for the Minister for NTPC at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1401-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION USE OF LIMITERS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made it clear in this House I oppose the use of the power corporation using power limiter devices during the cold winter months in my riding. Life in the Arctic Coast is harsh and expensive. Lack of heat can be life threatening. People who have the power limiters don't know when the power will be turned off and back on. It makes it impossible for them to heat their homes properly and feed and care for their families.

Under the NTPC terms of agreement, it states respect to the corporation's responsibility that continuous supply. The corporation cannot guarantee uninterrupted service. Mr. Speaker,

the High Arctic communities, power is essential. It's survival. It's not acceptable. We need to be able to do better.

Mr. Speaker, I have also spoken in this House many times about the state of housing in Nunakput and living in public housing units, in matchbox houses, paper-thin walls, snow blowing through cracks in windows, the walls and the doors; floors are freezing, people are having to put blankets on the floors to walk around and lock their doors and windows with blankets to keep the wind out. So many people are living in overcrowded housing units in my riding. Not even close to being energy efficient. Without enough maintenance to improve housing stock, it's very little opportunities of employment to earn income to pay for the power. Can I have -- we have to struggle with power limiters and paying our power bills. The government needs to extend to the High Arctic residents to get rid of the power limiters in winter months in the Nunakput riding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, too, the public utilities board that they didn't give 10 percent to the power increase to our ridings back home. It's 5 percent they increased it to so people, maybe they could try to survive. But thank you, power utilities board, for not taking that full 10 percent, what our GNWT government wanted to do today. And I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1402-19(2):
WINTER ROAD

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, climate change is impacting our ability to get fuel, food, and other resources into small communities. The winter road system we currently use is vulnerable to climate change. In fact, the winter road to Gameti opened on February 27th. This will most likely be one of the shortest winter road seasons on record. I have elders, contractors, and residents who do not feel that they can use the winter road systems due to the rapidly changing ice conditions. Some people do not feel safe.

Mr. Speaker, I don't blame these people because in the past -- I do not blame them because in the past we have had trucks and people fall into the ice. This is a major problem, Mr. Speaker. Our people, in small communities, risk being further isolated. This isolation will definitely drive the cost of living up even higher.

The Tlicho All-Season Road was an example of strategic infrastructure that supported the goals of our communities and helped to mitigate the impacts of climate change. An all-season road into Gameti will not only help address the impacts of climate change but also lower the cost of living for that community.

Mr. Speaker, this is a huge project, but work can be done in the short term to help map out where this road can travel. If the government works with the community, there can be important progress made in the development of this road. The Tlicho region has a deficit in our existing infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. If connecting Whati to the North Slave is the first step, then the next logical step would be to continue the road and transmission line to Gameti and eventually to Wekweeti. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1403-19(2):
TALTSON HYDRO SYSTEM

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we know, building infrastructure across the million square kilometres that make up our territory is a huge challenge. From an economic point of view and from an efficiency standpoint, we should be looking to expand our infrastructure corridors to benefit communities and encourage investment in the territory wherever we can.

As often mentioned in this House, the NWT is largely dependent on diesel and gasoline for heating, electricity, and transportation. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we sit stalled on a renewable energy project that could connect more communities to renewable energy while supporting much needed industry investment in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, the Taltson Hydro System encompasses a water basin that has the potential to generate significantly more electricity than is currently being harnessed by the dam. We have a solution to our energy dilemma in our own backyard, but it is not being captured. We know, Mr. Speaker, that Osisko Metals, with their Pine Point mine, is already on the Talston grid, just waiting to purchase additional power if it was made available. And Mr. Speaker, Osisko Metals would be happy to buy even more power if it was available too. We know that the Snare Hydro System that powers Yellowknife is old. It operates close to capacity and is sensitive to water flow rates which can

lead to shortfalls in supply leading to the use of fossil fuel generators to make up the difference.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need to connect these two hydro transmission lines. The Talston Hydro Expansion Project must move forward, connecting the hydro grids in the NWT and all the communities along the way. This includes the line to Whati.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is challenging and expensive to build infrastructure across our territory therefore we must plan the most efficient linear systems that we can.

The expansion of hydro and fibre optic line should follow our highway system. Not only would it be easier to construct the systems themselves without disturbing new areas, it would allow for cheaper development along the roadway to serve the people and communities they connect. Connecting people, communities, and businesses to renewable energy is a win-win for our territory, Mr. Speaker, and I strongly support the expansion of the Talston Hydro System. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1404-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION POLICIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, open the GNWT's 2030 Energy Strategy and you find multiple suggested solutions to help reduce the territory's greenhouse gas emissions. Small wind turbines, the Inuvik wind turbine, liquified natural gas, solar, mini hydro, and transmission lines to connect grids, come together in this plan with promises of 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Achieving our both energy solutions doesn't only get us closer to our GHG goals, it supports our collective economic goals through potential critical mineral industry expansion and our individual goal of affordable sustainable energy.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not as easy as flipping a switch to bring these energy solutions online tomorrow. Adding a fleet of alternative energies takes time, investment, and a transition from our current energy source provided by NTPC.

Today, NTPC serves much of our energy needs led by its vision to enrich the lives of Northerners by providing power that encourages living, working, and investing in the NWT, and by its mission which is to generate, transmit, and to distribute clean, reliable, and affordable energy to the Northwest Territories.

NTPC currently uses net metering to allow customers and communities to install renewable energy projects and offset their power use. This is a good thing but with a huge catch, Mr. Speaker. NTPC's policies cap the amount of clean energy it will purchase at 20 percent of the electricity mix. Our own policies put a ceiling on the potential for residents, businesses, and local and Indigenous governments to reduce emissions. But without this policy, costs could be out of control.

NTPC's high base cost system means that one client decreases demand, thanks to renewable, that the remaining ratepayers are left to swallow the ballooning energy bill, Mr. Speaker.

For alternative energy solutions to grow and serve the NWT, NTPC needs a new policy and business foundation and a long-term plan. It must be able to provide affordable energy as the energy landscape in the NWT shifts away from diesel.

Mr. Speaker, in the length of this term, NTPC's board has been represented by the GNWT's deputy ministers - capable people, but with competing focus and priorities. This board has not been able to fully achieve NTPC's vision and mission. NTPC's public governance structure needs to be reinstated with a goal of designing a creative, sustainable system eager to move into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1405-19(2): MINING ROYALTIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The review of mining royalties continues to grind along. Industry, Tourism and Investment released a discussion paper in February 2022. Public engagement closed at the end of July 2022, more than six months ago. A so-called "what we heard" report was finally released quietly during the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver in late January.

The report attempts to summarize 13 submissions that appear to have been sent, 11 online and two written submissions. Those written submissions are actually appended and consist of a detailed 12-page letter from Alternatives North and a two-page letter from the Chamber of Mines criticizing Alternatives North. No details are provided on any of the other submissions.

Three types of engagement seem to have been undertaken.

- Submissions could be sent by email.
- Requests could be made of ITI for meetings, and ITI initiated some "targeted engagement" which appears to have been 25 secret meetings with the mining industry.
- There were also 21 different surveys open only to those holding prospecting licenses. No data from these surveys is compiled or presented in the "what we heard" report. It's not clear why these surveys were only open to those holding prospecting licenses.

Ironically, the first item in the report on the targeted engagement, those secret meetings with the mining industry, is called "transparency and confidentiality." Public trust and the need for a lot more public disclosure are mentioned. Again, rather ironic that this was discussed at meetings that ITI held secretly with the mining industry.

I tabled the presentations from those secret meetings I obtained under access to information last week. Then there is a classic statement that "the public release of total royalties and production information is not seen as an issue going forward." What? All we're going to get out of this royalty review is the public reporting of separate resource revenues for mining and petroleum?

Quebec already has a mine-by-mine public disclosure of royalties paid. Many countries already release this kind of data as part of their public reporting and all we can do is separate mining and petroleum royalties? Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Merci, Monsieur le President. To be fair, the document only says that the views gathered will be thrown into a hopper and combined with some financial modeling and other research and analysis to form policy options for future regulations.

The Yukon government recently started its review of mining legislation being done collaboratively with Yukon First Nations. There is a discussion paper with policy options that I tabled in the House. Public meetings open to everyone, Mr. Speaker - We could learn a lot from their better engagement process. I will have questions later today for the Minister of mining on the status of the royalty regime review and when the public will be engaged again. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1406-19(2):
EULOGY FOR JOHN MOREAU

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today it saddens me to stand in this House and speak about the passing of a well-known man from the community of Fort Simpson.

John Moreau was a hard worker, told it like it was, and was an honest businessman. I watched him work and his commitment to his work was excellent. Nothing was too small or too big for him to take on. John was born and raised in Winnipeg, a '50s greaser that use to race T-birds down the Pembina Highway. John was always a very independent man who raised his children with his wife Louisa, who were married for 54 years.

John was an avid traveler who went from New York, Vegas, Nova Scotia, to Alaska and heard about the Yellowknife gold mines in Edmonton. In true John fashion, he hopped on a plane to Vancouver, got his explosive technician training, and headed to Yellowknife to work and this is where he met the love of his life Louisa Tsetso.

John and Louisa decided to go back to Fort Simpson for a two-week visit and, as the stories go, they never left. John had many business ventures in Fort Simpson since the '60s with line lopping, gas stations, arcade, and various construction businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you there wasn't a house, roof, door, and fence he hadn't touched or looked at in Fort Simpson. John was a self-taught carpenter.

Mr. Speaker, John was a good listener, advocate for fairness, amazing family supporter, avid golfer, and dart player. I had the pleasure of golfing with him and his wife a few times throughout the golf seasons. I can tell you, like everything else in his life, he was willing to share and tell stories that engaged you.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit him about two weeks before he passed away. I can tell you he spoke a lot about his children and how proud he was of them. He loved the fact that they were all independent, hardworking, and had strong family values. He talked about his son taking over the business and him being able to work with both his sons. He spoke about his daughters being successful in their adventures in life, whether it was competing at

a national dart tournament to operating a successful business or making life choices. He spoke about how proud he was of his grandchildren and the things that they were doing and accomplishing. As he said to me, his children and grandchildren were Louisa's and his legacies.

Mr. Speaker, when it came to his wife, he was very proud of her. He spoke about how she was willing to share her traditional knowledge with their children and others in the community. When it came to getting help to look after moosehide, from the very beginning to the end of the project Louisa was the person to contact.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that he will be sadly missed by his friends and family. He will always be in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community at this time.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I am pleased to recognize a group of legislative interns visiting us from Ontario. They are here this week to learn more about our consensus form of government. With us today is Alia Mufti, Esma Boztas, Karissa Singh, Leah Wilson, Lucas Fisher, Sharon Lee, Sky Shi, Sophie Williams, Teah U-Ming, and Administrative team member Michael Vidoni.

Please join me in welcoming them to our proceedings. And I hope you enjoy your week here at our beautiful legislature. Thank you.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery.
Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Range Lake constituent Ms. Samantha Stuart. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1406-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION LIMITERS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I was going off of power limiters and, you know, state of housing in my riding in Nunakput. Today, Mr. Speaker, it's minus 39 in Sachs Harbour, 30 in Paulatuk, minus 42 in Ulukhaktok, and minus 41 in Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Speaker, what work is the NTPC undertaking to address issues of power limiters, especially to the residents in the High Arctic; what has the Minister done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation puts limiters on houses and anybody that has overdue accounts. So if you have an outstanding account that's 28 days after the billing, then the corporation may give notice of disconnection of service in writing to the customer. Where accounts are not paid before the expiration of such notice, then, you know, we work with the customer and perhaps have to install a limiting device. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what has the Minister accomplished in the life of the Assembly to bring down of the cost of the power in Nunakput riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just for context here, in December of 2022 we had 3,423 resident customers' accounts that are in arrears. We had 387 commercial customers that are in arrears. Mr. Speaker, we are working with the customers to be able to work and try and get their bills paid so that we don't have to put these limiters on. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister thinking of getting rid of all those bills on behalf of the whole territory then we could start over?

Mr. Speaker, you know what? Many residents are on income support in our territory. It's hard for them to pay their bills. Can the Minister commit to work with ECE to ensure that the clients can pay their power bills in the winter without having to give up the income support for food and other essential supplies; can she work with that with the Minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we already do work with the Department of Education, Culture and

Employment, and we also work with our income support program to be able to help the residents to work together and get their payments. So, yes, we do work together and perhaps we will continue to work together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, our units in our small communities, the appliances are old and they suck the power and the power bills go up, Mr. Speaker. In that turn, the residents struggle to pay for that.

Has the Minister done any work with the Minister responsible for housing to get energy efficient appliances in the public units across the territory, especially in Nunakput riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the department works with NWT Housing. And, you know, we work with our partners like Arctic Energy Alliance. Mr. Speaker, there are some great programs out there that help support some of the housing that, you know, needs some work in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1407-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corp.

I'd like to ask the Minister how the work of NTPC is considering the operating realities in my region? We continue to focus on the Taltson Hydro Expansion but in the Beaufort Delta what are we doing to build energy security and lower cost of power? And please, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to hear about the wind project and I don't want to hear about how it's saving us 3 to \$4 million in offsets to the diesel costs, you know, because we already know that project is double in costs and is far from complete and we're going to be making it up for years. So what other strategic plans are in place? Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know the Member

doesn't want me to bring up the wind project, so I won't. Other than, you know, we are on target. It's, you know, a great project when it gets completed. But talking about in our region actually, Mr. Speaker, I'm the Member for Inuvik as well. So I mean, working together, we are working with the Indigenous groups trying to look at strategic ways. The Inuvialuits got the line perhaps coming in for the natural gas. That's one strategic work that we could do together. The Nihtat Band has some great opportunities for other sources of renewable energy. So we are working together in the region. Perhaps we don't have access to a hydro system that is elsewhere in the territories. But I just want the Member to know that we are having discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with our governance board in place right now, I'm just wondering, like, I hear the Minister with the answers that we got but what other -- like, what I'm asking is what is -- in the Beaufort Delta, we are the highest cost of power. We use the most diesel up there to run. We don't have trees in half the region of the Beaufort Delta. Our barges don't make it in because of, you know, weather and different things so we can't get supplies up there so then we're flying stuff in. All this stuff is going to get passed down. But we have a board that's supposed to be making these strategic decisions. So what strategic decisions has this board made for my region that's going to make a big difference? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, yes, we do have a board of directors, and I'm sure I'll have further questions based on all the Member's statements that was said today, so, I mean, I'm quite prepared to speak on that. In terms of dealing directly with the Member in the riding that, you know, we can further discussions and just to see if perhaps there are recommendations that the Member may have and have that discussion to see how we can collaborate and get some projects going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd go on about net metering and I'd go on about the board, but I know my colleagues are going to ask those questions so I'm just going to continue down this path.

So has this Minister secured increased funding, or is there even talks of increased funding, to cover these overruns that the wind project is going to cost because we've already heard what they were at, about 60 to \$70 million of a \$40-million project. So are these costs going to

passed off to residents of the Northwest Territories on their power bills? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so we will talk about the Inuvik Wind Project now. We talk about it, we don't talk about it, yes, there's costs overruns. And I want the Member to know that, you know, I've been to Ottawa several times speaking with federal ministers in terms of green energy and how we can reduce our GHG emissions here in the territories. So that is further discussions we will have. And yes, I'm sure I'll speak more about it all afternoon today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my question was have we asked for money to pay for these overruns or are we passing these off to NWT residents? But, you know, I guess the final thing is, as a Member of the 19th Legislative Assembly, am I going to be able to go the celebration party of the opening of the wind turbine in Inuvik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: I hope it's blowing there too, Mr. Speaker, because, you know, there was a lot of work that was put into this Inuvik Wind Project. You know, we've secured the funding from the federal government. So I mean, we've had to go back and request further funding to be able to complete this project. Right now we have -- we're hoping that this fall, or to the spring of 2023 to address some of the issues. So I will give the Member enough notice so that she can come with me to the Inuvik Wind Project and have the opening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1408-19(2):
SNARE HYDRO

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Snare Hydro System is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, which is perhaps not something to celebrate, and that's approaching the end of its life and replacement costs of hydro systems are in the billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. Not a number any of us are happy to see. I know the system is actually -- it's something like seven turbines at four different locations that have been built up over the years at different times. But I'm hoping the Minister can provide me with what is the end of life for any of the current infrastructure at Snare? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just keep standing here. But it is a common practice for hydro utilities to upgrade and overhaul hydro infrastructure, to ensure we have continued operations of hydro assets in a safe and reliable manner with no foreseeable end of life date. Northwest Territories Power Corporation will continue to manage its assets, complete maintenance and overhauls to hydro infrastructure so we can extend the life of the hydro assets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I guess I'm happy to see that there is no current end of run but I'm not sure that's exactly how dams work. I think at some point they just eventually need to be replaced. I note that we are doing a complete overhaul on the Taltson system, which is going to be shut down, and the result of that will be some more efficient turbines to get some more power out of that. Are there any overhauls planned on the Snare Hydro System? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to correct the Member to say that we have six hydro turbines that are ranging in size from 8 megawatts to 500 kilowatts. So I want to talk a little bit further because I think this is important.

Over at the Snare Rapids plant, we have completed a large -- an overhaul on unit number 2 back in 2022, and it's expecting to complete an overhaul on unit 1 in the next five years. Over at the Snare Falls plant, we completed an overhaul in 2017. At the Snare Cascades plant, which is owned by Tlicho and we lease it through -- at the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, an overhaul is expected to be completed in the next five years. And finally at our Snare Forks plant, Northwest Territories Power Corporation completed an overhaul on unit 1 in 2021, and we're expected to complete an overhaul in unit 2 in the next five years. So we are doing work at the Snare plants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of overhauls; I'm glad to hear that. I'm curious whether there is any plans to increase capacity on the Snare Hydro System or whether any of these overhauls will actually result in that? I note that about 20 percent of our power here is actually from diesel at Jackfish because of water levels and lots of different problems that occur at Snare over time to time. And there's no way that that system has capacity to open up another mine on it, allow for electrification of vehicles, or population

increases. So are there any plans to increase capacity in the future on the Snare Hydro System? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to see that the Member has did his homework too, because capacity building is so important. So I'm happy that the Member raised this question with me.

There is no plan to increase at the Snare system; however, the Department of Infrastructure, which I wear my other hat on as well, is looking into updating the hydro -- I can't even say it. Hydrology work right across the Northwest Territories, including the North Slave region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1409-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know in this House that the current makeup of NTPC's board of directors consists solely of deputy ministers from our government, and it has remained that way for seven years.

Does the Minister have any timeline for when a new group of board of directors will be appointed at NTPC? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Sounds like a theme day here. Minister responsible for NTPC.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm starting to -- yes, there's definitely a theme happening here, right? Anyways, I want to -- so the Northwest Territories Power Corporation governance review, it continues, Mr. Speaker. Recommendations from that review will inform some of the decisions and on the next steps in this regard. So we expect this work to be completed within the life of this Assembly. So I think that's very good news, Mr. Speaker. The Member had talked about this being a seven year process. And, you know, we are getting to this. So I'd like to, you know, reassure that we are working on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I know this current NTPC Minister was not the Minister when the decision was made to appoint deputy ministers to the board of directors; however, can the Minister tell us if Cabinet or NTPC has anticipated that it would be seven years and counting for the NTPC board of directors to be

solely deputy ministers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can only speak to what has been done since I became the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. And I want the Members to know that I support the undertaking of this governance review which will be able to determine the decision in this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, it was stated in 2016, by the NTPC Minister of the day, that appointing deputy ministers to the board of directors was a cost saving measure that would save \$1 million per year.

Can the Minister confirm if that turned out to be true and provide some dollar figures for how much money this decision has saved NTPC over the last seven years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation did benefit from some of the cost reduction in things like public relations, donations, public association dues, professional development, retainers, utility advisors, consultant contractors - I can just go on. Especially in our board chair. So in the period of 2014 to 2022, the savings range from approximately \$415,000 to about half a million dollars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide the House with an update on the status of the Taltson Hydro Expansion and if she expects more funding confirmed in this year's federal budget? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good progress continues to advance the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project with our Indigenous partners, Mr. Speaker. That's very important key to this project going forward. So we have now focused on two routes. So one is right across the lake here and the other one is right around the western side of the lake, and we hope to have a preferred route this year. We are working to collect Indigenous knowledge, environmental engineering information to be able to support the future regulatory applications. As well, Mr. Speaker, we continue to work towards a final business case for this project.

Taltson has been a key federal item that is related to Budget 2023, and we have had

strong signals from federal ministers that they are supportive of this project. Mr. Speaker, you know, when we were down in Ottawa as Cabinet and attending FPTs, we continue to hear a theme from the federal government that, you know, we need to reduce GHGs and work together. But we don't want to get -- we'll not get confirmation of what's in the federal budget before it's announced other than to say that, you know, we've been working together and pushing it as our agenda. It is a mandate of this Assembly so that is something that is a priority for us in this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1410-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION RATE INCREASES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't around in 2019 when the MLAs got together and they went to a retreat and they put in all their wish list into a bucket, and then they came up with 24 recommendations. But part of those recommendations was very clear, that there will be no power increase. In the Northwest Territories, we got the highest power rates in Canada, next to Nunavut, Saskatchewan, and so on. And right now, in last year, just after the budget was ended, this government made an announcement to increase the power rates by 20 percent over a two-year period.

Mr. Speaker, now that the public utilities board has squashed the power corporation's excessive demands for power rate increases, what is the Minister's plan to make up for revenue shortfalls that this increase was supposed to cover? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for NTPC.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories Public Utility Board has issued a decision on NTPC's rate application. The public utilities board gave very specific direction to NTPC and NTPC is filing a response to these directions. Again, Mr. Speaker, I need to say this again: It's the public utilities board's role to be able to determine final energy rates here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just picking up on where the Minister left off there; my question is a two-part question: Is the power rate going to go up now when you bring back an application to the utility board; are we looking at another power increase? At the same

time, Mr. Speaker, the Minister made the announcement to raise the power rates only after the 2022-2023 budget was passed last year, without the opportunity for debate in the House. I'm asking the Minister to commit to more transparency around rate increases and commitments to consult with Regular MLAs before giving direction to the power corporation. Will the Minister do this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, the Northwest Territories Public Utilities Board is the body that determines rates for all utilities here in the territories. Northwest Territories Power Corporation has previously provided Regular MLAs information on rates. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do so. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I take it that the power rates is going to be going up. So if that's the case, Mr. Speaker, then why do we have retreats? Why do we go to these things and bring our voices to the table when we're not consulted? You know, we got over 9,000 customers here in the Northwest Territories and, you know, we want to raise powers rates? Maybe it's time to review the power corporation and maybe quit giving out these bonuses.

Mr. Speaker, the high cost of power is breaking the backs of residents, small businesses, and big industry in the Northwest Territories. How does the Minister propose to reduce these costs and make more power rates affordable in the NWT? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories energy policy seeks to balance reliability with sustainability and affordability. Projects such as the Taltson Expansion Hydro Project would allow for increased mining activity using socially-accepted, clean, green energy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfunded infrastructure projects, mega projects, that are decades away from completions are not a solution. Northerners can count on what short- and medium-term solution is the Minister working on to provide our residents with relief from high rates of power and to also meet the mandate of this government that they put out in 2019-2023? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Northwest Territories Power Corporation has signalled a Memorandum of Understanding with Osisko Metals to use excess power at the existing Taltson hydro facility. So revenues generated from that industry sales would be used to mitigate some of the increased cost of power. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1411-19(2):
RENEWABLE ENERGY

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The problem with the theme day is sometimes your questions get asked and answered ahead of you getting your opportunity, so bear with me. But I'm really excited to hear that one of the routes that the Minister says they're looking at is the west side of the lake. I just want to emphasize that given my statement today, about allowing for future development, I would prefer that versus going across the lake; therefore, we could have expansion off the power lines on the west side of Great Slave.

That being said, can the Minister please tell me where the total costs for the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project is at; how much of that funding is secured and how much are we still waiting on? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to know that the Member's quite excited about one of the two routes because when we first had these discussions, there was several routes that were contemplated. So, you know, we will continue to engage. Right now we have -- the federal government has allocated about \$20 million to the GNWT to advance this Taltson expansion project. So funding is being used right now to develop Indigenous partnership, talk about some of the planning, the regulatory and feasibility work that needs to be done. So in addition, additional support from Canada will be needed to move this project to the construction phase.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have that final number yet. We're still such in the early stage of looking at this project. And, you know, I'm sure it will cost a lot of money. I just don't have that in front of me right now without having some of the work done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess it's good that there's been no final number before now so that we don't have to listen to how the cost of the supply chain has driven that number up and that's the reason why nothing has advanced on the project. So I'd say that's a good thing here.

Can the Minister speak to how much of that \$20 million will be retained using northern businesses and how much of it is sole sourced to former bureaucrats? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm always happy to hear good things that are happening on this side. So I mean, when you hear that that's very exciting that we're doing good things, such as working with Indigenous groups, looking at MOU, starting all this planning work, until we know the exact costs of what's the project going forward, I don't have that number in front of me, Mr. Speaker. That's very technical, and I just won't be able to answer that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister was responding to my question before that one. I asked how much of the \$20 million that has already been secured and is being used towards all the work that she's listed, like the regulatory and the pre-feasibility, how much of that is being retained with northern businesses and how much is being sole sourced to former bureaucrats? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really don't have that number in front of me. I'd be happy to get back to the Member and respond so I'm just going to have to take notice on the costs. I just don't have that in front of me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1412-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION POLICIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have questions for the Minister responsible for NTPC about greening -- I know, it's a shocker -- about greening our electricity mix without making rates less affordable than they already are.

One of the GNWT's main policy tools to green the electricity mix is net metering. But that policy isn't sustainable for ratepayers or for our 2030 Energy Strategy goals. A 2021 policy review found that by 2030, electricity utilities will

be losing up to \$2.7 million per year on net metering, and that's without going beyond the 20 percent cap on renewables. That policy review made five recommendations. I'm not aware of what, if any, the GNWT has done in response to the review in the last two years.

So my question for the Minister is, can the Minister tell this House whether she's been briefed on the findings and recommendations of the report and what the department is doing in response? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Would the Member for NTPC please stand up.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Again, Mr. Speaker? So I do want to note, Mr. Speaker, in 2020-2021, Infrastructure commissioned and released three independent studies to be able to look at the policy options to develop more renewable power in remote communities and in the hydro zones while establishing electricity rates and ensuring grid reliability. These studies -- three things: Assess the maximum limits of renewable power in thermal communities. It also explored how the Northwest Territories could generate additional revenues from excess power. And looked at options to contain rate inflation from the current net metering and self-generation policy.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2022-2025 Energy Action Plan that was just released here in December, the GNWT committed to provide direction to the public utility board to make changes to the current policy framework so that we could support renewable power built without compromising grid reliability and impacting electricity rates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report recommended that within one or two years the GNWT reduce the credit for renewable generation and allow utilities to increase their fixed charges by 5 percent. Is the GNWT considering reducing the credit for renewable generation and will the GNWT consult before making such changes? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned, we committed in the new energy action plan to provide direction to the public utility board to make changes to this current policy framework so that we can support renewable power build out without compromising grid reliability and impact electricity rates. I'm sorry, I repeated myself; I think that's really important to say.

Regarding the credit for the renewable energy, it's important to remember that utilities operate

within a very complex and regulated environment. The GNWT cannot unilaterally decide to change rates like the one establishing the compensation received for renewable generation. It is up to the public utilities board to decide following a detailed process of investigation and public consultation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of Indigenous-led renewable energy projects that can't go ahead because of this 20 percent cap that NTPC currently has. While our energy strategy commits us to reduce emissions from diesel power generation in communities by 18 kilotons every year by 2030, we are turning down proposals for renewable projects.

So can the Minister commit to make changes to the policy so that NTPC will work with any business or community that bring forward green energy projects even if they are above the 20 percent cap? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is exactly why we're actively looking at this issue and why we made a commitment, not only to assess it but to provide an update direction to the public utility board on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have liked to have heard a yes, not a -- I want a yes, just a passionate yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My last question for the Minister is can the Minister clearly confirm whether our 18-kiloton reduction goal is attainable with only 20 percent renewables in diesel communities? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, achieving the 18-kilowatt -- kiloton, sorry, big difference here -- kiloton reduction in the electricity sector is still possible. This will be achieved by a combination of things like the Inuvik Wind Project, the LNG projects, Fort Providence Transmission Line, as well as assuming some of the 20 percent intermittent generation limit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1413-19(2):
MINING ROYALTIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for a different Minister, the

Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. There are only two written submissions to the five-month long public and targeted engagement on mining royalties and 11 other online submissions.

Can the Minister tell us more about these online submissions and provide a list of who made them? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Member got my name right. It was the Minister of mines earlier and that of course doesn't exist. There is the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment, sometimes known as Minister for the economy for which I'm responsible for the mineral resources sector and all of the work to get the Mineral Resources Act implemented, the mineral resources regulations ready to go. And in the process of doing that, one part of that is the royalties and for that purpose, Mr. Speaker, there was a five-month long process, as the Member's made the point of helping me out in explaining. I am grateful for that. That was an extensively long engagement process. That's the formal engagement.

There's actually been, since 2017, when this process began, lots of engagement around mineral resources, mineral resource industry, Mineral Resources Act, the mineral resources regulations, and all of the different parts that go into it.

With respect to this one particular part, unless we, as the GNWT, tell someone that's bringing their opinions to us that we're going to turn around and publish them, it would be fully inappropriate for me to now stand up and read out names of the submissions. The "what we heard" report is a standard process that all departments go through. Once there's been a formal engagement putting the information out of what we heard, the point is to summarize it so that individual people who are making submissions don't have to be putting their names forward.

So I'm certainly glad to commend that report to the House and hope folks out in the public will read it and be reviewing it and can consider whether or not it reflects their views. We're still open to receiving information. I'm always open to receiving information and -- because the decisions haven't been made yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for her statement

there. There was also 21 different surveys open only to those holding prospecting licenses. No data from these surveys is compiled or presented in the "what we heard" report. If these surveys had been open to others, there could have been some useful data generated on, you know, possible divergence of views.

Can the Minister explain why these 21 surveys were only open to prospecting license holders and indicate whether any actual data will be publicly presented? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these were specifically intended to gather information from prospector licensing holders because, of course, they're asking questions along the lines of "do you agree with adopting the PDAC exploration assessment digital data form EADDF for work assessment reports for data submission and digital format including PDF reports or other acceptable files, metadata, spatial map locations, geophysics submissions, including raw field data." Mr. Speaker, the average member of the public does not want to be answering that question. It would not be appropriate. It was targeted to the folks who understand this, who work in this, and who can provide us that valuable feedback. And as with all other things, Mr. Speaker, we are gathering it and it does go into "what we heard" reports in due course. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, I think our interpreters are running at full speed here. So please, please take your time. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for the response. Yeah, I actually tabled that information earlier this week in the stuff that I obtained access to information. But, you know, people shouldn't have to buy a prospecting license to be able to participate in targeted engagement.

Ironically the first item in the "what we heard" report from those secret meetings -- sorry, from the targeted engagement/secret meetings with the mining industry is called transparency and confidentiality. It appears that all ITI is going to do in terms of transparency is to separate resource revenues from mining and petroleum. Quebec and many companies already report this information mine by mine.

Can the Minister tell us exactly what is going to be in the royalty regulations regarding public disclosure of mining royalties? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the translators, I am sorry; I will try to slow down.

Mr. Speaker, I take issue with the continued characterization of an engagement process as "secret." This has been since 2017 that we have been going out and talking about the Mineral Resource Act and its regulations, before I even came in here. And part of the concern was raised in 2019, when are you going to start to do something and stop keep going and doing consultation processes? We hear that all the time. And, yet, ITI is out doing both public meetings, engagements, forums, sessions, surveys, and targeted engagements with the sector, which of course means Chamber of Mines, operating mines, advanced exploration projects, prospectors and developers, people who are interested in the industry, secondary members of the industry. It is not inappropriate for them to be doing that. It would be wholly inappropriate for them to not be doing that. And what we are at the point of right now, Mr. Speaker, with this is being able to go do the modelling to develop, to take back to the Intergovernmental Council about what should be determined and what types of policy options should go forward for drafting under the royalties. That's the stage we're at now. It is clear that one of those things is going to involve publishing more data from the mines about what types of royalties they have. That's obviously not the system we have now. I can't go out and change that right now. But we've received that information, and we'll be going forward with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I promise I'm not going to call them secret meetings anymore but as long as the department can find a way to share that information with everyone, which they don't do. So they continue to be secret meetings.

But there remains a lot of work and public engagement required for the Mineral Resources Act to be brought into force. The engagement report also mentions other research and analysis on royalties. So can the Minister tell us what other research is being done, whether it's going to be released publicly, not just shared with others, and whether all this work is going to be completed before the end of the 19th Assembly? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, at this point, Mr. Speaker, having received feedback and being

aware of interest in the area over the last six years, the department is at the point of being able to do the modeling and to be able to then take that, develop a policy, and develop it in concert, of course, with the Intergovernmental Council and the technical working group with whom we've been developing the Mineral Resources Act regulations from the start. It's part of a co-development process. They will make some decisions as a group. That will be what determines what the drafting instructions might look like. And I would just note, Mr. Speaker, one other thing: This is the first Assembly that actually has open to it, a process by which draft regulations do go out for publication. That is a new thing. Typically it's only with bills that would get published. But now there actually is a process where a draft regulation itself would actually be open for input before being final. That's at the one end. There are certainly steps to come in between.

And once we have guidance from the technical working group, we'll be able to provide that and to come back and to speak to where we're at with those directions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1414-19(2):
YOUTH GAMES COVID PROOF OF
VACCINATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after last evening's discussion on sports and youth, I think the Minister of MACA knows the importance of supporting youth in their endeavours to go on to greater things in sports.

So, Mr. Speaker, with respect to sporting events within the NWT, will the Minister of MACA confirm if there's any requirement for a proof of COVID vaccination prior to participation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was getting jealous of Minister Archie in answering all the questions here, so I appreciate the Member from Hay River South asking the question.

So some good news for the Member, and hopefully it'll be the last time he has to talk about COVID in this House here. We don't require any COVID vaccination requirements for sporting events in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if there was any requirement for proof of vaccination either at the Arctic Winter Games or the Canada Winter Games, and if not, what was the reasoning for it? Both these events were outside the territories. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that both the Arctic Winter Games and the Canada Winter Games did have the policy in there. But on November 18th, 2022 the international committee, in conjunction with the host community, decided to withdraw or revoke the policy for mandatory COVID-19 vaccination reports, as well with Canada games on November 23rd, the host society and the Canada games council revoked it there. So in my conversations with both ministers, both societies in Charlottetown, PEI and Fort McMurray, both ministers and the host society said that that was the public safety requirements that are no longer required. So that's why it was removed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yeah, the issue I guess is that some of the organizations are, you know, dropping the requirement at the last minute and what that does is take away an opportunity for potential athletes or participants because they don't get selected because they can't meet those requirements.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell me what he is doing to ensure that all NWT athletes, coaches, and volunteers can take part in sporting events across Canada regardless of vaccination status? Is the department intervening on behalf of those who are not able to provide proof of vaccination? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member's frustration. When I heard about the vaccine requirements being dropped, I did reach out to both ministers and had that conversation and the international committee and saying hey, we had a process. We, in the Northwest Territories, to select our teams had to follow the process that said you had to have vaccination requirements done and report it in. That didn't happen. They changed it and so we weren't able to do that. So unfortunately, we as a government don't intervene, but Sport North and the TSOs have that ability so we encourage the athletes to reach out to Sport North and to the TSOs to intervene on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the next event coming up is the North American Indigenous Games. The same problem. They're requiring proof of vaccination. So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to sending a letter to the North American Indigenous Games council questioning why the need for proof of vaccination and request that it be withdrawn to allow for participation by any athlete, coach, or volunteer from the NWT? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on February 28th, the NAG council stated it was continuing with its mandatory COVID vaccination policy. The NAG council stated the priority is the safety and well-being of all 5,000 athletes, participants, coaches, and chaperones participating from 756 nations. This includes elders of the Mi'kmaq host territory who have shared that they are not comfortable with unvaccinated groups coming into their territory. NAG council indicated they respect the territories of the nations and wishes of the elders. So, Mr. Speaker, I also respect the wishes of the NAG council and the host territory but can commit to reaching out to the NWT Aboriginal Sports Circle to understand their perspective and talk about sending a letter to the host society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1415-19(2):
CLIMATE CHANGE

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people in my region are concerned about ice roads given the changing climate. My question for the Minister, has Infrastructure been tracking the impact of climate change on the life of our winter roads? Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes. And I'm so excited to deliver a Minister's statement tomorrow that talks about some of the examples that we're doing in terms of how climate change is impacting our infrastructure, including our roads. So, yes, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know to mitigate the impacts of climate change we need resilient infrastructure that is done in collaboration with communities. What planning has occurred to begin to develop an all-season road to the community of Gameti by the Department of

Infrastructure, and also to Wekweeti as well? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, building a Whati-Gameti all-season road would cost about one-third of a billion dollars. That's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. But I do want to say that, you know, the Gameti ice road, over the five-year average, the opening date has been around February 16th. In 2019, the opening date was March 4th. So I mean, we do have some of the stats in terms of -- and we track a lot of our roads, all-season, our -- any of the roads that we do through Infrastructure. We track them. We kind of get a sense of when they open/when they close. I'd be quite happy, Mr. Speaker, to share that information with the Member in terms of some of the roads in the Tlicho region. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I live in the area. A couple years ago I know, due to climate change, the road to the communities, to Gameti was closed early, and to Wekweeti as well. So, yeah, I think she doesn't need to tell me, but we do know because we live there.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see a lot of benefits for energy and food security with all-season roads to our communities. What future planning is being doing to connect all the Tlicho communities to clean and renewable energy? When can the communities of Gameti and Whati expect a transmission line? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: You thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Infrastructure continuously engages with Indigenous groups. You know, that is one of the things this government has been mandated to do, is to work with the Indigenous groups. In terms of the transmission line -- so we are proposing to build -- it's a 60-kilometre transmission line that's going to connect the Whati to the Snare system. You know, one of the options that was looked at in the past was the mini hydro project. So we are going to proceed engaging with the Tlicho government. They are in full support of this 60-kilometre transmission line. So those discussions are underway. You know, we talked about, you know, how we can partner and how, you know -- just recently some of the announcements that the Tlicho, as an Indigenous government, is doing to look for some funding. So, I mean, we look forward to these partnerships to continue that collaboration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's

address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

COMMITTEE REPORT 45-19(2): REPORT ON BILL 60: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND CARBON TAX ACT

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has reviewed Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, and reports that Bill 60 is not ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole and not be further proceeded with in its current form. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

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

MR. JOHNSON: We've got 10 pages today, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, and commends it to the House.

Introduction

Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, received second reading on November 1, 2022 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

The current carbon tax law sets a tax on six fuel types that, together, cause 75 percent of the territory's greenhouse gas emissions. The tax rate depends on the emissions content of each fuel type.

The GNWT introduced a made-in-the-NWT carbon tax in 2019 in response to Canada's Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. This framework sets a base tax on carbon emissions across Canada. Provinces and territories could create their own legislation to meet federal requirements. They could also voluntarily opt into the federal system, receive all the net revenues, and then

decide how to spend them, as Yukon and Nunavut have done. If not, or if their plans weren't acceptable to the federal government, the federal government could impose its own carbon tax, known as the federal backstop, and return the proceeds directly to households.

In 2021, the federal government announced new, tougher requirements for the carbon tax including:

1. Increasing the carbon tax rate by \$15 per ton of emissions each year, from \$50 per ton in 2022 to \$170 per ton in 2030; and
2. Eliminating at-source rebates on heating fuel and large emitters.

Bill 60 is the GNWT's attempt to match Canada's new requirements while keeping the made-in-the-GNWT approach. Separately, the GNWT has proposed several budget measures and regulations to return some of the money it collects from the carbon tax. It plans to increase cost of living offset payments to households, adjust the 72 percent rebate for large emitters, and phase out the large emitter grant program within five years.

Department Unable to Answer Certain Key Questions

Committee's goal in reviewing Bill 60 was to decide whether to recommend that the bill become law. If so, committee wanted to identify what changes could help mitigate the economic impacts of the tax, advance progress on emissions reduction goals, and ensure a high standard of accountability and transparency. If not, committee wanted to understand the implications of reverting to the federal backstop.

Our task was made difficult because of the lack of public information from the Department of Finance. When the Minister announced Bill 60 on October 31, 2022, the department did not appear to release even basic information like how the new tax would impact heating costs, the cost of living, the cost of doing business, or the economy. Committee had to ask for that to be made public. Committee also held a public technical briefing from the Minister and departmental officials on November 25, 2022.

Committee asked for more detailed information and analysis on the advantages and disadvantages of the made-in-the-NWT approach compared with the federal backstop. The department provided a lot of good information, most of which committee can share with the public in an appendix to the report. However, the department was unable to

provide satisfactory responses to certain key questions including:

1. Impact on emissions.

Committee wanted to understand how the NWT's greenhouse gas emissions profile has changed since the carbon tax's introduction in 2019. The 2030 Energy Strategy estimated that a \$50 per ton carbon tax would reduce emissions by 66 kilotons, or 3 to 5 percent. However, the department said it was "not possible" to draw conclusions due to data limitations and that the required data "will not be available for many years." Modelling work appears to have only begun in 2021-2022. Committee is troubled that, after more than three years with a carbon tax, the government cannot assess whether the carbon tax has met its primary goal of reducing emissions.

2. Economic impact on different groups

Committee wanted to understand how different groups of people would be affected depending on factors like their community, household size, and energy consumption. Committee also wanted to know the impacts on businesses, NGOs, community governments, and Indigenous governments. The department provided good data on impacts based on community. But besides that, the department did not provide much information for other groups.

3. Comparison with the federal backstop

Committee repeatedly asked for more information to compare the made-in-the-NWT approach with the federal backstop, including their differences for tax burdens and the cost-of-living.

The department provided some good information – they clarified that the tax burden may be better under the NWT's system for small mines and those in the closure phase but no different from the federal system for everyone else. However, the department did not provide any cost-of-living comparisons because it does not know how the federal government would return revenues to Northerners under the federal system.

This missing information from the department made it hard for the committee to assess which approach is better for the NWT and to identify ways to improve either approach.

I will now pass it over to the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

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

MS. SEMMLER:

Participants Had Serious Concerns About Carbon Tax Approach

Committee sought public feedback on Bill 60 with a public notice and targeted engagement letters to those who may have had an interest in the bill. Committee received written submissions from:

- The Northwest Territory Metis Nation;
- The NWT Association of Communities;
- The NWT Chamber of Commerce;
- The NWT Senior's Society and Yellowknife Seniors' Society;
- Pivot Strategic; and
- One member of the public.

All written submissions are included in an appendix to this report.

Committee also held a public hearing on Bill 60 on January 16, 2023. At that meeting, committee received oral comments from the NWT Association of Communities, Pivot Strategic, the Yellowknife Seniors' Society, and a member of the public. Committee appreciates everyone who participated in the review of Bill 60.

Some participants were surprised and disappointed that the government is proposing a significant tax change with minimal consultation and public information. Indeed, the Minister of Finance indicated that public consultations only focused on the large emitters. Yet many other groups, like businesses and seniors, are significantly impacted by the changes.

Committee finds the government's approach problematic. It stands in stark contrast to the Yukon's approach to carbon tax consultation, which featured a public survey, public information sessions, and targeted information sessions with local governments and First Nations.

Many participants expressed concern that the government's carbon tax approach is not suitable for the NWT. These concerns can be summarized in three broad categories:

1. Lack of alternatives makes carbon tax ineffective

A carbon tax makes carbon-intensive fuels more expensive. This nudges users towards cleaner energy consumption. Carbon taxes can be an effective policy to reduce emissions.

However, the North has few alternatives to fossil fuels. Many communities rely on diesel generators for electricity because there is no grid connection. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC) only allows for 2.6 megawatts of intermittent renewable energy capacity out of an average load of 13.2 megawatts across 25 communities – essentially capping these clean sources at 20 percent of the electricity mix. For heating, most Northerners depend on wood, heating oil, natural gas, or propane. They cannot easily or cheaply switch to another fuel. And the territory has little infrastructure in place to support zero-emission vehicles.

Without alternatives, Northerners have no choice but to pay more for the fossil fuels they rely on. As a result, the tax has a minimal effect towards reducing emissions.

2. Northerners can't afford higher costs

Northerners face some of the highest costs in Canada. Our vast geography, sparse population, remote communities, and harsh climate create high costs for goods and services.

Members heard clearly and strongly that households, businesses, local and Indigenous governments, and NGOs cannot afford to pay even more. Some residents already pay over \$2,000 per month to heat their homes, and the higher carbon tax comes at an especially bad time: in the last year, average prices have gone up 6.3 percent, more than the Canadian average. Because things cost more in the North, the carbon tax will be more expensive here than in other parts of Canada. Northerners will also pay more for the goods and service tax, which is charged on top of the carbon tax. The carbon tax also makes it harder to reach their other economic goals like recovering from the pandemic, kick-starting the population growth, attracting investment, and diversifying the economy. Committee is worried that with a higher carbon tax, more people will move away from the North and businesses won't be able to stay here.

Any federal requirements around carbon tax plans should recognize the unique circumstances of the Northwest Territories. The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1

That this Assembly call on the federal government to better recognize the specific needs and circumstances of the Northwest Territories in its climate change approach.

These specific needs include significantly more funding to make renewable energy options accessible and affordable for all Northerners.

Further, committee recommends that the Premier of the Northwest Territories convey this motion without delay to the Prime Minister of Canada with a letter requesting a reply.

Recommendation 2

That the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC) increase the cap on intermittent renewable energy generation that residents and communities can install to offset their power use, and develop a plan to support projects above the current cap.

Committee further recommends that NTPC and the Department of Infrastructure provide their response to the May 2021 Net Metering and Community Self-Generation Policy Review. For each recommendation, NTPC and the department should indicate whether they agree, its work plan for implementation, and its progress towards implementation.

I'd like to request, Mr. Speaker, to turn it over to the MLA for Kam Lake. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

3. Rebates are too little and leave out too many

Committee understands that Northerners have little choice about imposing a carbon tax: If the GNWT does not impose the tax, the federal government will.

But the made-in-the-NWT approach does give us a choice on how to spend revenues from the carbon tax. Unfortunately, the government's chosen approach leaves some households, most businesses, and all community governments, Indigenous governments, and NGOs worse off or at least treated very differently from the large emitters.

In November, Finance released a projection of carbon tax revenues and a breakdown of the associated offsets. Next year, for 2023-2024, the GNWT expects to collect about \$63 million in carbon tax revenues. But only \$47 million of those revenues are allocated as offsets. The remaining \$16 million in revenues – about 25 percent – will go into general revenues. Committee is disappointed the government is not using more of these funds to soften the cost-of-living impacts of the tax.

At the same time, the government is not providing direct rebates to community governments, Indigenous governments, general businesses, and NGOs. The rationale provided by government that retail businesses can simply pass along the carbon tax to customers, that businesses will be eligible for GNWT energy savings programs, and that NGOs can adjust, is not accepted by committee.

Each of these sectors are facing financial pressures and will be forced to make tough decisions. One example of this especially alarmed committee: the NWT Association of Communities explained that facilities and recreational programs are among the easiest spending items to cut. Without proper rebates, local governments may be forced to reduce spending on programs that address mental health and community wellness. After the isolation experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and amid a mental health, addictions, and suicide crisis, committee finds this outcome unacceptable.

By contrast, of the \$47 million in offsets that the government will provide, over half - \$24 million – will go to the large emitters. That's more than the \$20 million in combined COLO and COLO heating payments to households. Committee finds that the government's overall rebate approach allocates too much to large emitters, and to its own revenues, and not enough to other key impacted groups.

Yukon provides a good example of a carbon tax that is revenue neutral and benefits more sectors of society. Its approach is formalized in the Yukon government Carbon Rebate Act. 100 percent of net carbon tax revenues are rebated to five groups:

- General businesses;
- Mining businesses;
- Residents;
- Municipal governments; and
- First Nations governments.

Each group receives at least as much in rebates as it pays in overall tax. Individuals, who pay 27 percent of all carbon taxes, receive 45 percent of all rebates. Yukon's government, which pays 12 percent of the tax, does not keep any net revenues for itself.

The Government of Yukon also provides municipal governments with 3.5 percent of its carbon rebates, more than compensating the estimated 2.6 percent share of the carbon tax that local governments pay. If the GNWT

provided 3.5 percent of our rebates to community governments, they would receive \$2.2 million.

As committee was finalizing this report, the Minister of Finance proposed a new community offset grant. The grant would offer all community governments revenue sharing agreements equal to 5 percent of annual net carbon tax revenue, after deducting all other carbon tax offsets, like COLO and the large emitter rebate.

While committee welcomes the proposal, committee would like to see a bigger amount and a different basis for calculation. Five percent of net revenues amounts to less than \$1 million for 33 communities, which is unlikely to fully offset increased costs. The amount is also significantly less than the \$2.2 million communities would receive if the department applied the Yukon's approach. The offset grant should not depend on how much money is left over after providing offsets to large emitters and households but be calculated on the basis of total rebates.

Committee wants to see better supports for all groups affected by the carbon tax. These supports should be set out in a law, regardless of whether Bill 60 passes, with the GNWT maintaining a made-in-the-NWT tax, or Bill 60 fails with the GNWT opting into the federal backstop and receiving revenues from Canada. The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of the Northwest Territories provide funding to community governments to compensate for their increased carbon tax payments. Committee specifically recommends providing an additional \$2.2 million in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, with subsequent funding increasing proportionally to any future increases in carbon tax rates.

And, Mr. Speaker,

Recommendation 4

That the Government of the Northwest Territories create a law that requires all carbon tax revenues to be rebated to households, businesses, community governments, Indigenous governments, and non-governmental organizations.

In creating this law, the government should consider how rebates to each group will work and whether the carbon tax system should be revenue neutral. This law should also require separate accounting and annual reporting.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the reading of this report over to my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Had a Hard Time Comparing GnwT Approach To Federal Backstop

Committee's primary work for this review was to compare the GNWT's approach with the federal backstop. This work was challenging due to a lack of information from the department and overall uncertainty about what the federal system would look like if Bill 60 fails.

Committee asked the department why the GNWT's approach is better than the federal system. The department provided three main reasons:

1. Greater freedom to design the carbon rebate system;
2. Flexibility to adjust how the tax is applied; and
3. More certainty for new mines, small mines, and mines that are shutting down.

Committee questions how well the government is using the first advantage. While the GNWT has more freedom to design rebates as it sees fit, its proposal for 2023-2024 keeps a quarter of revenues in general revenues and leaves out several affected groups. The government has also pursued minimal consultation on how to use rebates. The Yukon, by contrast, is under the federal backstop and still designed its own rebate system.

Committee also asked the department what would happen if the Legislative Assembly does not pass Bill 60. The department expects the federal government would impose its backstop starting April 1st, 2023. The government would need to eliminate its carbon tax to avoid double taxation and would likely remove its carbon tax rebates, including COLO.

The Minister has said that if the federal backstop applies, it is uncertain how the federal government would return revenues to the Northwest Territories. Two approaches are possible. First, the federal government says that provincial and territorial governments that "opted" for the federal backstop receive all proceeds and can decide how to spend them. This approach is like the arrangement in place in Yukon and Nunavut. Second, in "remaining provinces" where the backstop is in effect, the government uses 90 percent of the revenues to

provide direct "Climate Action Incentive" payments to households. People in rural and smaller centers receive a 10 percent top-up. The GNWT has not been clear on which approach it would take if Bill 60 fails.

Though committee asked, the department was not able to provide data comparing how rebates under the federal backstop options would compare with the GNWT's approach. Committee is uncertain whether residents would be better off under the GNWT's approach or the federal backstop.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn this over to my colleague, MLA Yellowknife North.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON:

Committee Cannot Endorse GNWT Approach At This Time

Overall, committee does not see a benefit to passing Bill 60, compared with the alternative of the federal backstop.

The government has not provided committee or the public with enough information to show that its approach is better. While the government can't control whether or how the tax is imposed, it does control how to use those revenues. In this area, the government's proposal to address cost-of-living impacts of the tax are not enough. The government's budget holds on to 25 percent of the carbon tax revenues – equal to \$16 million – in general revenues rather than providing direct rebates to businesses, community governments, Indigenous governments, and NGOs.

In recent weeks, the government has taken a couple steps that respond to committee's concerns to address the cost impacts of the tax. The department has proposed a regional COLO to heating offsets, allowing residents in the five communities with the highest fuel use to receive higher rebates. And at the clause-by-clause review, the Minister said she was thinking about a \$1 million fund for community governments to offset increased costs. While these proposals are welcome, they still do not go far enough. The \$1 million amount, spread across 33 communities, is unlikely to fully compensate increased costs.

Committee is mindful that there is little time left for the GNWT to meet Canada's April 1st, 2023 deadline to update our carbon tax law. Some Members disagree with the carbon tax in principle and prefer allowing the federal government to impose its own tax. Other Members believe there is still a narrow

opportunity to improve the government's made-in-the-NWT approach. For now, committee decided to report Bill 60 as not ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole, and that Bill 60 should not proceed at this time.

Conclusion

On February 14th, 2023, committee held a clause-by-clause review. Committee passed a motion to report Bill 60 to the Legislative Assembly as not ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' review of Bill 60.

Recommendation 5

That the Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has reviewed Bill 60 -- I think this is the wrong one, right? One second, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that the Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 60: An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. The motion is in 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 60 will be referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

---Carried

Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 862-29(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SUPPORTED
LIVING REVIEW FINAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 863-29(2):
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES RESPONSE TO SUPPORTED
LIVING REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 864-29(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1311-19(2): SPEECH
LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Northwest Territories Supported Living Review Final Report; Department of Health and Social Services Response to Supported Living Review Recommendations; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1311-19(2): Speech Language Pathology Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 29, 61, and 66, Committee Report 40-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), and Tabled Document 813-19(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 Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates, with Department of Justice. Mahsi, 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 resume with Department of Justice.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, I'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates 2023-2024. We will now consider the Department of Justice. Does the Minister of Justice have any opening remarks?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present the Department of Justice's main estimates for the fiscal year 2023-2024. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$8.5 million or 6.2 per cent over the 2022-2023 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of the proposed main estimates include:

- Forced Growth funding totaling \$6.2 million of which \$56,000 is increased funding available to essential partners impacted by rising inflation. The remaining \$6.1 million is additional funding for the Territorial Police Services Agreement of which:
 - \$611,000 is for additional RCMP members to better serve NWT communities with two additional constable positions in Behchoko and one additional constable position in Fort Providence;
 - \$239,000 for the increased housing and capital infrastructure needs; and
 - \$5.3 million for the ongoing impact of the RCMP Collective Agreement.
- Other adjustments totaling \$3.3 million of which \$2.9 million is for multiple federal cost sharing agreements being extended or introduced, including:
 - Enhancing Victim Services Agreement;
 - Access to Justice Agreement;
 - Canadian Family Justice Fund Agreement; and
 - The Indigenous Justice Program Agreement.
- In addition to the cost sharing agreements, there is also an additional \$273,000 to establish 18 indeterminate relief coroners throughout the territory and one additional coroner in the North Slave Region; and
- Sunsets of \$ 1.1 million.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly and support the vision of budget 2023, by working to keep our residents and communities safe while supporting vulnerable populations. That concludes my opening remarks.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I do.

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

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. With me, I have deputy minister of the Department of Justice, Charlene Doolittle. As well as James Bancroft, the director of corporate services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with community justice starting on page 299, with information items on page 300 to 301. Are there any questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking at page 299. I'm looking at the community justice funding line. I see in last fiscal it was about \$5 million and now it's about \$3.3 million. Can someone just explain to me -- it appears it got some one-time funding last fiscal and now we don't have it, but what's going on there? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'd like to direct that to Mr. Bancroft.

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

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that increase is to do with two federal agreements coming online, one being the Enhancing Victims Services Agreement of \$1.3 million, and the Indigenous justice program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you. I see that the victim services line item is increases. So perhaps I'm just going to assume this money moving around due to federal agreements. I guess I just -- I think community justice is not running as well as we all would like it to. I know that fine options is not even always available in Yellowknife let alone in every community. Diversion is, you know, really dependent on when you got a community justice committee up and running. I know we've struggled to staff many of our community justice committees.

And I know that they really struggle to run the level of programming that alternative measures is doing elsewhere. Certainly none of them would be capable of doing multiple week kind of on the land programming or really doing much more than holding a meeting and kind of getting a little bit of a diversion plan. You know, I have lots of thoughts on this. I guess my thought is that we probably need some more coordination. There probably needs to be some territory-wide staff who could fly around and work with all the community justice committees. We probably need some new programming money for healing circles, etcetera, but I'll wrap that all into a question. And I'm just wondering if there's any sort of review going on in regards to how we deliver community justice? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'll hand it to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Doolittle.

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's no formal review going on at the moment. This is something we can certainly consider. Our community justice committee process is decentralized. It is community-led. We did do some really -- training -- posting a training symposium just this February 14th and 16th. We are very focused on building capacity and these positions do change often and, you know, could be dependent on the communities that they're hosted in. But we do try to work with communities, build capacity, build training, and work with our partners to, you know, run good diversion programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, I guess I complain about reviews sometimes but I've seen some reviews lead to really good results. And I think this is one where there probably needs to be a rethink. Even a well-run community justice

committee with a good staff person is pretty limited in what they can do. You know, they can hold a couple meetings and they can work with the accused and get them to do some volunteer service but they're certainly not able to get to run any sort of larger programming.

And I think that's the step that's missing. I'll frame that in a bit of a question. I see there's some federal money flowing into this area. Do we know if there's any work to secure additional funds; you know, for the type of programming that this House always talks about, you know, on the land programming, mental health programming, treatment programming, anything you can kind of do to get our youth who are diverted or accused who are diverted to do a little bit more than the very small work that diversion is presently doing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. The department does receive a significant amount of federal funding for a number of different projects. Many of our initiatives are not funded by the GNWT solely but for the federal government and so we do understand the value of having federal partners, and the department is constantly looking for federal funds. You know, we've received some new funding through new agreements through those efforts recently. So, yes, we're alive to that. We would like federal funds. We're looking for federal funds all the time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any other questions from Members under community justice? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I just want to ask some questions about victim services. This is something I raised in the last Assembly and the then-Minister agreed to do a review of victim services, and I think it actually ended up resulting in an increase in funding, which was one of my objectives. But it looks like there's some federal funding that's coming in because, on page 300, victim assistance support projects is going from -- well, it went from 2022-2023 Main Estimates from \$945,000 to over \$2 million. So can someone explain what the extra \$2 million is for? I'll start there. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And this was mentioned earlier, and I wanted to comment on it but I didn't. But the Department of Justice does receive a lot of federal funding through

agreements. Those agreements never seem to line up well with the main estimates process and so we'll often come here with a line item of zero or a certain number that will then be adjusted through a supplementary appropriation once we sign that agreement. So Members will probably be seeing a bit of that in here. But for a specific answer, I'd hand it to Mr. Bancroft. Thank you.

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

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. And the Member is correct, there's a significant increase there made up of \$725,000 with regards to enhancing victim services. Along with that agreement, we received an extra \$2.3 million over a four-year span for the independent legal advice service to be provided to victims of crime. Specifically for 2023-2024, the last increase was \$607,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So we're, I guess, maybe a year or more into that federal funding. How successful has it been in terms of victims receiving independent legal advice? I'll start with that. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. This is a very new initiative; it just started. I'm not quite sure how far along it is. I don't think it's far along enough to be able to provide that type of information. I'm not sure if either of my witnesses has more information on this. I'd hand it to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Doolittle.

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're in the process of formalizing this. We have started it informally but we are going out seeking panels of lawyers who will provide legal advice to victims. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess one of the concerns I'm getting is these kind of batches of federal funding is what happens to the service when the funding ends? Because, you know, you create expectations, draws; you know, people begin to rely on that service and then all of a sudden the federal funding ends and then are we actually going to

fund this stuff ourselves. That's, I guess, what I ask. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So that's a decision for the, I believe, 2026-2027 budget year, because that's when the agreement will expire. It expires in 2026. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks. Maybe I'll be a zombie and come back. Thanks.

So I guess one of the concerns I've heard about victim services is that, you know, we offer that the money to communities, to regions to do this, and they kind of do it in different ways and there's probably some need for some greater consistency there. But do we actually have full coverage across the whole NWT now for victim services? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we have been adding positions. Last year there was a new position added to Fort Providence. There was a new position added in Fort McPherson. So we are using the money that we have internally to explore more creative ways to expand these services and we have been able to do that. But there's not someone in every single community in the territory if that's what the Member is asking. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks for that answer. Is there any money in this budget for further positions or, you know, I don't know, some regions may want to take a regional approach; I don't know. But is there any additional funding in this budget for further agreements/contributions, to allow for this service to be extended? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Not specifically.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks, Madam Chair. Is there actually even a plan or a strategy to kind of complete a network across the NWT? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So like I said, we are always looking for more federal funds and we're continuing to do that. If we had a bigger budget, we could create those positions but the fact is that we have the budget we have and we have to work within it. And we have been able to do that and still expand the program. So until we can secure some significant federal funds, we'll continue to work in that manner. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, no thanks. I guess I just kind of remember, I think it was within health and social services -- maybe even -- maybe it was actually this department that did a return on social investment evaluation for the integrated -- or no, integrated case management. It was actually a really good study, and I want to compliment the department for having done that. And I'm not talking about it in the context of this but that kind of approach, I think, should be applied to victim services and doing a bit more of a review at some point soon because you're going to need a case to take to the FMB to get more money to complete that network. Without the funding, without the proposal, the so-called business case, you won't be able to do it. So I guess I'd like to just put in the Minister's ear a bug to actually do that work, make it a bit of a priority in your transition work for the next Assembly, that there be some work to actually develop this network. Well, do that return on social investment study if you want to, but I do think we need to pay more attention to this area and develop a full network across the NWT to better serve our citizens. So I'll just leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, I appreciate those comments. The department has, like the Member mentioned, we have undertaken some reviews. We've been chipping away, making our way through our programs, implementing new initiatives. So while we can't get to everything at once, I do take the Member's advice seriously. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I want to say that in the 14 years as chief of Salt River First Nation, these two items were used constantly, and the office in Fort Smith is running well. The people that work

there care about everybody that goes through that door. I've had to access this office many times as chief because it's always our people that are put up before a system that is impossible to defeat. And there is always someone there to assist the client and assist Salt River to ensure that the best outcome always came. And I want to commend you for that. I don't like that the budget is being reduced. I think that enhancement is very important. I'm glad that victim services is being increased. And it should be increased more especially with some of the things that have been happening in the communities because of drug addiction and all these other things that are happening in the territories, and it affects a lot of people with victim services. And I think that we have to work to make sure that the budget with victim services is increased for the victim. And I don't have a lot of questions because I just want to make sure that, you know, one of my colleagues said that this doesn't work, that maybe it doesn't work in his community of Yellowknife but in Fort Smith, I've had nothing but positive things to say about this branch, because they go out of their way for the people that will never be able to get through that front door with justice. And it's an excellent oversight, and the people that work there are incredible. And that's all I have to say. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. Are there any further -- Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my questions are in regards to the men's healing program. I note that the contributions remain unchanged, and I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to how many communities are supported by this program currently and the anticipated number of communities that will be supported by that program fund in the following fiscal year?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So right now there are programs in Inuvik, Behchoko, Smbaa K'e, Fort Simpson, and Fort Providence. The programs -- the contribution agreements for the programs in Smbaa K'e and Fort Providence expire at the end of this fiscal year, and the other ones expire in 2024. There is not a change to this budget but there's no decrease to the budget either, don't intend to roll this back at all. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So at the end of this fiscal year, we'll go from five programs being supported to three programs being supported. Is the intent to open the funding back up then to two more communities, or what is the intent for the next fiscal year for the men's healing fund? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And I think I misspoke here. I believe the Samba K'e program was extended until 2024. But this money is intended to go back out to communities. I can ask -- do we have any more information on that? I think I said it all. Thanks.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm concerned about this one in the sense that -- and I know that the Minister and I have spoken both on the floor of the House and outside of the House in regards to the men's healing program. When we first started this Assembly, the men's -- it used to be the men's A New Day program. It transitioned from the way that it once ran -- and I'm not going to open that box again -- into the men's healing fund in the life of this Assembly. My concern is that what was once a much broader program is now a targeted program.

And my concern is that it is potentially serving less people of the territory in the way it's currently being run with the budget that it's currently being run with. And my concern too in that is that are we, at the end of the day, kind of losing traction that we already have on a call to action from the MMIWG Calls for Justice. Calls for Justice 7.3, calls for programming for Indigenous -- healing programming, sorry, for Indigenous boys and men. And so I'm wondering what the intent is with this program to be able to serve more communities in the territory. We have 33 communities, and we have a number of people who need access to healing programs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And so earlier I stated there was no increase or decrease. There is a \$5,000 increase to this line item due to our support for NGOs or organizations who are facing inflationary pressures. The one agreement that will be expiring is for \$12,000, and so that \$12,000 plus the \$5,000 that -- \$17,000 that will be available for an organization to apply for to

provide some of these programming. I know it's not a lot, but we are trying to get every penny out the door.

So the program used to be -- when this fund funded A New Day program, that was exclusive to Yellowknife essentially. So we have moved out to the communities, and we are providing Indigenous governments with -- primarily Indigenous governments with this funding to run their own programs. From what I've seen so far, and these are still very early days for these programs, they seem to be very tailored to those communities. So I am happy with the way things are going at this point. I would love to see this expand and like I'd like to see a number of our programs expanded, but we don't have a plan right now to expand this -- or to increase this budget significantly enough to replicate this in more communities. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No. And I appreciate the direction providing communities with the autonomy of being able to decide what their own program looks like and what is best in a community-driven manner. I agree with that and appreciate that and I, you know, look forward to hearing some success stories from these programs. My concern is not about how the department is running the program. My concern is strictly in regards to who has access to that program. And, you know, running a program like this in five communities out of 33 and then having \$17,000 left over for 28 additional communities is not realistic of the needs of this territory. I'm wondering, given that this key activity had the highest unspent portion of dollars, if justice is looking at being able to redirect some of those unspent dollars that seem to occur in this key activity to expanding the Men's A New Day program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the Department of Justice rarely has any unspent funds. We have a couple large divisions or contracts that generally eat up all of our excess funds. So if I had excess funds to put into certain things, I would do that, but that's generally not the situation here with Justice. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So we sit here and we go through key activity after key activity as to, you

know, where money's going to go and then, you know, later on as the dust settles and we look at public accounts, we see how dollars are actually spent. And one of the things that was noted is that the community justice key activity had the -- was the program with the highest sum of budgeted money that went under spent. And so how then does the Department of Justice identify how they're going to reallocate those dollars within their department? So I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what process they follow to prioritize those items. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So during COVID, a number of communities had difficulty spending their funds. So that could be the reason for the surpluses that the Member is talking about but we do offer the opportunity to carry that over if they are unspent. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am going to wait for questions on additional key activities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was thinking whether I should put my hand up. Anyways, one thing that I think that we all noticed in the last several years now is the increase in drug use and drugs coming into the Northwest Territories. And we do have a, you know, a gun and gang violence action fund. Has there been any -- I guess, has there been any thought put into maybe doing something similar with respect to drug trafficking and transporting across the border or is that something that's included there somewhere? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So those are -- there's definitely connections there. I know that the provider in Hay River who receives -- who had received funding under this has worked with those individuals who are in that world. But the initiatives like the Member is talking about would be undertaken by the RCMP as opposed to community justice necessarily. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess I ask that because every

once in a while somebody will send me a picture of somebody sitting there with a bunch of 20s, big piles of it, on their lap so I think it's important that we do something or we have something in place and, you know, look at new ways because you look at the programs we have and the number of people that are being incarcerated and, again, it falls back to addictions I think. So I guess just more of a comment there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions or comments under this section? All right. So please turn to page 299, Justice, community justice, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$6,411,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now move to page 303, corrections, with information items on page 304 and 305. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I wanted to ask about the unchanged proportion of offender reintegration program. This line item, my understanding, remains at \$179,000. I'm wondering if the Minister can provide a little bit more information about what this line item actually funds. Is it just in salaries? Is it specific to the costs of reintegration in society? I am wondering if the Minister can provide more information there, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'd like to hand it to Mr. Bancroft.

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

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The offender reintegration contribution funding, like the Member said, has been unspent but the budget remains constant. This is out of the South Mackenzie therapeutic community. That's where this funding is based out of. And as part of the South Mackenzie therapeutic community model, which came online in November of 2021, we were to offer reintegration funding to community organizations to assist with their offenders coming back into the community. That's been our process. To get to that point, due partly to our low population count at SMTC, and along with that there are some very last phases to be implemented alongside John Howard Society. And this contribution of funding is part of that

last implementation that -- they're actually up here right now implementing the policies surrounding this. Thank you, Madam.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, where do the -- like, is it out of this pocket of money then that dollars, for example, for support with housing people on release would come from? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So it is to provide funding to people who are being released to reintegrate into their community. So that is one example of how the money could be used. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my understanding is that there are staff within Justice that will work with people to secure housing in order to step in and stop the cycle of corrections to homelessness back to corrections back to homelessness. And so if this is what is supporting people through that fund for housing and homelessness, I'm wondering how the \$179,000 actually funds that process? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'm sorry, if the Member could repeat the question; I didn't quite catch the end.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Can you repeat your question, Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: I can be way more specific. Thank you, Madam Chair. How much does it actually cost to reintegrate offenders into our communities in the Northwest Territories, because I'm not sure that \$179,000 actually accomplishes what we're setting out to accomplish. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a big question. I'm not sure if I can put a price tag on how much it costs to reintegrate an offender. There's the practical considerations of depending on where the person is going back to. So if you're going back

to Sachs Harbour, things are going to be more costly than if you're going to somewhere like Fort Smith. And because we've had relatively low numbers and the program is still relatively new, I can't provide an average cost or anything like that to the Member yet. But I'd be happy to ensure that the department does that work so that the next time the department is up here, there could be more information for the Member. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my concern is that this funding pot here is not actually providing people with the -- or maybe, sorry, let me rephrase that. This funding pot is not providing the department with the tools that it needs in order to stop the cycle between homelessness and incarceration. And I understand that there's programming involved in that, it's not just housing, but I don't think that this funding pot actually helps people access stable housing. And so if it's simply housing that people are looking for -- what I'm -- okay. People are leaving our correctional facilities and they are going back to the street straight from there. If we have a team of people who are responsible for finding housing, is this enough money for Justice to be able to actually help people access that housing when they leave corrections?

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So for a while there, there was very few people going through the therapeutic community. I think there's four or five right now. And so these are relatively low numbers. This is not a fund for everyone who is incarcerated. It is only for those people going through the therapeutic community. And so far, we haven't seen indication that we need to increase it. But as we have more experience, we'll be able to make that determination. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Is there a funding pot that supports people who are leaving incarceration from our other correctional facilities, for example, North Slave correctional centre here in Yellowknife? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'd like to hand it to the deputy minister.

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

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have some beds at the Salvation Army but as soon as offenders or inmates are in our facilities, case planning begins. So their case manager works with the community that they're in or that they're going to. They also work with the integrated case management folks here in Yellowknife, or if not in Yellowknife, interagency services, to support finding people homes where they need to or a place to live. So that's all part of their case planning. And they don't -- they wouldn't send them out without addressing that issue. So thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you very much, Madam Chair. This is public knowledge. It was in the media, and so I'm going to -- I'm going to speak to it here today.

When somebody is released to the Salvation Army, sometimes -- or any shelter across the territory, sometimes that's not either the right fit for that individual or relationships have already been broken, and that is possible, or maybe that facility is already full. When someone -- when a facility operates on a first come first serve basis and has policies to that effect, for Justice to step in and say okay, this person goes there, it's very difficult when you have competing policies. And so how does Justice handle that, and do they have the funds in order to mitigate that so that people aren't falling into a -- and I'm saying people aren't, but so that we can do -- or the government, rather, can do what it needs to do to support people to find stable housing so that they can be taken out of that cycle.

There are Members sitting in this House who get approached every fall by people in their communities who literally say almost time to go back to jail; it's going to get cold out. And this -- so this is a very well known cycle of people simply using the justice system to find housing. And so what is the justice system doing in order to actually provide that housing or that link to housing to stop that cycle if people are using a very expensive system simply to find a roof over their head? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. The corrections service has representation on the NWT transitional housing advisory committee. The committee is also represented by staff from the NTHSSA and ECE. The committee supports transitional housing for additional recovery program, which is a transitional housing program designed to provide aftercare services and supports to individuals returning from addictions treatment. However, I will say that whether you are being released from jail or you are just a resident who is not in jail, there's housing challenges in the territory for you. And so the department does not provide a house to inmates after they are released. We do provide some support for the transition, but we are not in the business of housing people after they are released. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I know that we don't have integrated service delivery. But it seems to me that people being released from our correction centres would be people who would be identified at being at high risk of falling through the cracks of the system, falling into chronic homelessness, and needing an extra hand and a case manager to actually help them through this. And I know that the Minister has said that there are case managers who can do this work, but I don't think these case managers are actually being provided the tools to properly do this work. And so I think that putting a little bit more effort -- and I know, Madam Chair, I'm out of time, putting more effort into this case management piece, I think would save this government a lot of money and would save a lot of residents a lot of heartbreak. So I'm just going to leave it there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any other questions under corrections? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I heard the Member say there is about four or five inmates in Hay River, and that made me happy because I think at one point we were running an empty jail down there. Can the Minister just speak to -- I know the trend has been pretty much a steady decrease in inmates, and it's kind of perhaps plateaued. Some of that may be due to COVID. Some of that's due to federal bail changes. Just whether there's been any changes in the trend to how many inmates we have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So as of today, there are 82 adults and three youth who are incarcerated. There are -- at NSCC, there are 63 males, SMCC we have five, and at FSCC we have 12. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's also one of those kind of not something to celebrate that we have three youth in jail but sometimes that facility is also empty. I'm just wondering if the Minister can speak to whether -- when that facility has, you know, zero or one inmates that it still incurs the same amount of costs, or is it essentially just the guards will move over to NSCC, or is there kind of a fixed operating cost for that facility at all times whether it has inmates in it or not, the youth one? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the guards are trained in both the youth facility and the adult facility. And so if there are no youth, then the guards would be in the adult facilities. So we wouldn't be incurring those costs when there are no youth. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So in the last Assembly, and I know the Minister was there, there was a new Corrections Act that was passed, and it was one of the probably few and best pieces of legislation that was developed in a collaborative fashion with standing committee. There was a number of significant changes made to it as a result of concerns that had been raised. And there was to be sort of new complaint processes put in place, new training that was going to be made mandatory for corrections officers, and a whole bunch of things.

There was to be advisory committees set up for each of the correctional facilities. But I don't see any changes in staffing levels here. And I don't see -- you know, I guess there's some increase in corrections administration but nothing really in terms of facilities. So is there any additional funds in here for implementation of that legislation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we have an additional position that is the investigations and standards office. So the director of investigations and standards I suppose, and that is a position that was created under the act. It's my understanding that although there was a collaborative effort, and Justice worked with the Regular Members to make improvements and to create new processes in the bill, there was no additional money added at that time. So we've been doing what we can internally, but we do have the one new position, and I believe the budget for that was \$243,000. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. So what budget line here reflects that additional funding in -- you know, that the staffing levels are flat? So did someone else -- another position was cut or something to make way for this new office; what happened? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Yes, funds were found within. And this position would actually not be found in this section because we want a separation between the corrections officers and the investigations and standards office. We don't want them to be, you know, reporting to the same people. We want there to be separation. So we can discuss that further as well once we get to that section. Thanks.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister just let me in on that secret. What other section is that staff person found? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I couldn't get away with it, hey? It's services to government.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: I trust this Minister so that's great. Look, thank you for that. And I trust most of the other Ministers; I love them all. But more seriously, there were to be these advisory committees set up for each of the correctional facilities, and I just wonder where we're at with those committees? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Those have been a bit of a struggle to set up. There has not been the uptake that we would have hoped. I know that the one for NSCC I believe came together a little quicker than the other ones. So maybe I'll hand it to the deputy minister to see if she can provide us with an update of where they all are right now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister Doolittle.

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the Minister's correct. The one for NSCC is up and running, and the others we had a little bit more of a difficult time completing a full complement of membership, and we're working on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. No, okay, for the one that is in place, is there any kind of -- I don't know, it would be nice to know if there's been a news release or do they report, do they say anything -- I understand that probably some of it may be stuff that has to be communicated carefully or whatever to the department but -- and correctional managers or whatever. But how does the public kind of know that these things are actually up and going and what they do? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'll hand it to the deputy minister. Thanks.

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

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there certainly was advisement seeking membership for -- so the public is aware in that sense. With the board -- or the community advisory board being so new for the NSCC, they'll take some time to, you know, provide any communication that they think that's appropriate. However, with most initiatives for the NWT, certainly justice we do communications planning. So that -- I don't have the specific details but that would have occurred with this item. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, no, thanks for that. Maybe I could just ask if the Minister could

provide some details on the communications planning, at least to the MLAs that have correctional facilities in their ridings. I think that would be helpful for Members to get. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, we can do that. Thanks.

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

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks. Appreciate all the information and the responses. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under Justice? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. We're on page 301 -- 303? Okay, corrections, yes. I just want to ask the Minister if they have data. I know that the -- from the health status report in 2018 -- from 2018, the crime rate, Tlicho region had the highest rate. But in NWT, it had the highest crime rate. But is there any data that you guys have, like recent data, on which community, which area has the highest crime rate in the NWT?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'm not sure if we have that broken down by region. If you can just give me one second, I can -- thanks.

All right, so we don't have it broken down by region. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you. Well, then okay, this crime rate, community corrections, correction administration and all that, of the total fund here, so how many of this funds is allocated to Tlicho region, because I know -- I know we're still in the high, you know, with the crime rate. So how much of this money is allocated to Tlicho region alone?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the vast majority of the corrections budget is associated with the correctional facilities. So that would be spent in those communities where those facilities exist. However, we do have probation officers in the Tlicho region. We're just looking

for that information right now, to see how many there might be. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. No, the reason why I asked too is that because in June when we went to Whati, since the all-season road opened, the crime rate increased. And they don't have -- I think -- I know I've been advocating for more jobs to be decentralized. We only have one probation officer in Tlicho region, and which is -- the position is in Behchoko. I think Whati needs another one. Like, we need another probation officer because to deal with the people and then the one person that we have is overworked. So I just wanted to know if there's any commitment from the Department of Justice or from the department if they're going to create a position in -- or another position in Tlicho region specific?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Just for the sound people, if you could just end -- because we got to pick up on the mic so just say thank you or something just to close so then he knows when to switch the mic. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So there are two positions in the Tlicho region, two probation officer positions and they're both in Behchoko. And we don't have a plan right now to create a position in Whati. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay. Well, I just said that he should -- they should create a position in Whati so that way people can work with their -- you know, deal with -- work with the people over there in that community because the two -- yes, the -- in Behchoko, we have -- there's over 2,000 people there and the last -- in January, when they had the court, I know a lot of our young people's name were on the list and it's -- you know, it's sad, you know. And a lot of these young people, you know, there are a lot -- there's a lot of good people but everything involves drugs and alcohol. So if we do have more positions, we have more people working in the region, then, you know, we can eliminate or we can deal with the problem as it, you know, arise. So that's why I'm just asking that if we can have -- if there's more position situated in Tlicho region, I'm sure most of these crime rates will reduce because they're dealing with it, they're working with the people. I mean, they're working with the young people because it's mostly the young people. And just like my colleague said, it's some of the people are returning, you know, when the fall time comes,

it's the same old people and it's -- we got to do something. We got to do more for the people. And I just wanted to see more jobs transferred to Tlicho region from the North Slave. And, you know, even in Gameti, they need something over there too for their own security. That's what the people are asking for, is that they need something from the police. They ask for it. They ask for a police station. We have a visiting police. You know, they come to the community but they announce, you know, that we're coming, you know. And then they come on Monday after weekend, after everything -- all the -- everything happened. So it's like they don't need them on weekdays, that's what they -- that's what I was told, that they need them on weekends. That's the busiest time. So we're talking about corrections so I just wanted to know that. You know, so there's two things. We want more jobs to the Tlicho region and an RCMP station in Gameti. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So I'll be happy to talk about policing once we get to the section on policing. And to the Member's earlier point about more probation officers and more people to work with individuals who need assistance, I don't think there's any denying that, you know, if we had more social workers, more case workers, more counsellors, more teachers, more everything like that, that we would be able to help people more. As it is, we are doing what we can with the resources that we have. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Well, the detachment has a jail. So it's correctional. So that's why I mentioned that, you know, like that's what they need. So that's why I said that. And then, yeah, we do need more jobs. And we need more programs and services. So a lot of these program and services will help our young people, you know. But right now, we don't have much to go on. So what does the people do, the young people? They do the same old and it's not -- it's sad, you know. We shouldn't have to be going through the justice systems to get the help that we need. And a lot of them are doing that. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. There wasn't really any questions in there but do you have any other questions? Okay. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. And I just want to thank the Minister and your colleagues for being here and to give

us an update on your budget and everything else.

So I don't really have a question to the budget. But I have a couple -- I want to frame this this way here. When I go through your budget though, I'm just trying to understand what's -- what you guys are really doing as Justice overall. But what came to mind as I was going through this document is that, you know, I guess when I think about residential school and federal day school, all the trauma that's been happening to -- of the people here in the Northwest Territories and throughout Canada, you know, there are -- the Royal Commission report. There's UNDRIP. There's Truth and Reconciliation report.

So I'm wondering, like, you know, we have a huge undertaking here in the North, and especially in your department, and we could see the impacts in the facilities and etcetera here. But I'm trying to see a way how we could maybe -- as a government, maybe through the Premier and your department, look at how we could maybe try to work with all the Indigenous governments and come up with maybe a separate department or something to that effect under the justice department to really look at how can we come up with a plan to address a lot of these issues that we're having. And we know that, you know, you're limited in terms of money for your department but, you know, when you really take a look at, you know, this whole initiative from the federal day school and residential school, we're stemming from Government of Canada.

So is there a way where we could maybe try to figure out a plan and maybe work with Cabinet and going into the next government somehow, and work with Indigenous governments, to come up with a plan to tackle this because, you know, we can't bear all the costs to undertake the problems we're having today in the system but I think Canada is going to have to step up and really take a look at -- I mean, there's a lot of reports -- I mean a lot work has been done under the Royal Commission like I mentioned, Truth and Reconciliation report and including UNDRIP. It talks about the clarity and some of the roles and responsibilities etcetera. But anyway, it's kind of an open statement and a question maybe the Premier -- sorry, the Minister could maybe -- maybe talk about that briefly and see if there's room for bringing this forward maybe into the next government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And we're always open to partnerships. Justice is not

really the department best suited to deal with people's, you know, housing issues, addictions issues, things like that. You know, while they're in the system, we do have programming but once they're out of the system, they're out of the system. And so we really do need partnerships. We need to work with Indigenous governments. We do have programming that -- or program dollars that we provide to Indigenous governments. The men's healing fund was one of those. There are initiatives across Canada. Indigenous justice institutes, things like that, that the federal government is supporting that, you know, we are looking into as well.

So the federal government has been moving in a certain direction with some of these things, and so I think there is opportunity there. We could reach out to British Columbia and see what they're doing because I know they recently instituted some of those. So, yeah, there are creative solutions that we can do. We just need to get there. And the department has been working on a number of different things. The workplace assessment, the therapeutic model, those types of things, that have been taking our attention. But as we go forward, there are opportunities to explore those as well. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Minister. And, yeah, because, I mean, I've been thinking about this for a long time, even as a former chief and a leader in our community, and I keep thinking, you know, this is a big issue. It's a huge undertaking. And I'm thinking that maybe somehow we can't do it alone but at the same time I think the Premier is here, and I think she hears me what I'm saying, and it's something that we may have to take a look at because it's a big issue that we all have to work together on and we can't solely just put everything on your department. But I think there's an opportunity here, if we all do this right, we could work together, work with Indigenous governments, and really hold Government of Canada to account because this is not our -- really our problem.

It's a problem that we inherited from the Government of Canada, and they've got to -- I think, if anything, you know, they're going to have to step up and really -- and start implementing a lot of these reports and these recommendations. So anyways, it's just more or less a comment. But I just want to say thank you to the Minister and your staff. Mahsi.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a couple of questions just for clarify and for the record. The rehabilitation and re -- you know, having inmates going back into society, a lot of the programs that were in place before have disappeared. Some of the programs, like some of the inmates in the Fort Smith facilities were able to work in a workplace. That's not happening anymore. And I'm wondering why that was taken away. They used to go clean all the yards for all the seniors, you know, and all these other smaller things. And it happened for years. Then all of a sudden, it disappeared. And I'd just like to see some of that programming come back into the facilities so that the facilities that are situated where they are have a better understanding of their -- there are, you know, most of these offenders have records but it's repeat offenders, and most of them are Indigenous, and trying to get them back into society is -- that's one of the ways we do it, make work programs. And you know with the shortage of common work, whether it be working at Tim Hortons or pumping gas or petrol or anything, I think we have to start encouraging that program to come back to the facilities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And I believe in the Member's community in particular, there's been increases in the security classifications of inmates who are there. And those who are lower security classification are now going through the therapeutic model. And so definitely in that model there are opportunities to do what the Member is talking about. We have to take into consideration the fact that there might be a business who, you know, shovels people's driveways, and so they don't want to compete with government labour essentially that is being offered at no charge. So there are those things as well. But I agree with the Member. We need to -- you can't just put someone in a cell and expect that once they get out, they'll be -- or their problems will magically have disappeared. So we do need to work with them, and that's one opportunity. So thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I don't know if this is the place to bring it up, but there's also got to be an opportunity to wipe off some of these records. Some people are sitting with a minor offence that happened, like, 30 years ago and it's still on their record. There has to be a mechanism within justice to ensure that people have clean records after that many years. You

know, people make mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes in life. Not everybody has to go before the justice system. There has to be a mechanism within justice, especially for offenders that are just minor offence and happened like 30 years ago. I know a few people, even within Salt River, that this has happened. And you know, there's no place to go except to go to maybe a lawyer, which they would never do. I'm just wondering if we could see a program that would promote getting rid of criminal records off individuals that are at no risk to the public. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So for people who are in the system, their case worker can help them with those types of things. It's application-based. It's under the federal government so it's not the Department of Justice who would be doing that. And I can also say that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, through the income assistance program, will help people who don't have the funds to go through that process to get their record expunged. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Okay, that's it.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Are there any further questions under corrections? Seeing none, please turn to page 303, Justice, corrections, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$39,344,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We'll now turn to court services beginning on page 307 with information items on page 308. Are there any questions under court services? Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm just curious to know a little bit around how lessons learned during the pandemic with having some of the stuff moved towards more virtual or having defendants appear remotely by camera, etcetera. Has there been an improvement to our system? I think a lot of us can see in other areas that COVID firmly, you know, forced us to upgrade and become, you know, evolved quicker in our work. So I'm just wondering how any of this has translated into court services for the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And during COVID, the Member's correct, we did utilize technology much more often. We've provided more resources to the courts to help them manage this technology because the judges and court workers aren't necessarily tech people themselves. There have been videoconferencing systems installed in the RCMP detachments across the territory so that people can appear virtually there. Perhaps I can hand it to the deputy minister for some more discussion about the things that have happened. Thank you.

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

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. And this is a discussion I'm sure the Member knows not only in the territories but across the country as well, and there's a best practices and sharing that go on regularly at our FPT meetings to learn from each other and the differences are not -- they're not so different. But as the Minister explained, there's remote appearances. We went to bail and show cause hearings remotely in detachments, so this is an excellent option for those in the community. They're not removed and brought to Yellowknife. This equipment is to be installed in 20 detachments. So the first six went live in September 2021. Other detachments have been activated as necessary. And we only have three now yet to go live, and that's Sachs Harbour, Fort Resolution, and Hay River still in process. We also have remote docket appearances that were circuits that were -- I won't call it piloting but we're trying out that system as well. So it's an alternating circuit where there's, you know, not matters where a judge would need to see a person testify, give evidence, that sort of thing. So there may be a facts and sentencing, adjournment, that sort of thing; they can all be done remotely. So those are the two initiatives that we've definitely continued with and taken advantage of. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: I think I've got a few more minutes left. So I'm really glad to hear that we didn't just decide to kind of go backwards in time and that we are keeping up with some of these opportunities. And I think that's great if people don't have to travel when they don't need to. Is it safe then to assume that some of this upgrade then is the increase for the materials and supply costs for this unit? There's looks to be about \$100,000 that was during the

pandemic time versus last year and this year -- or the upcoming year. I'm just curious to know if that's for that type of service. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'll hand it to Mr. Bancroft.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Bancroft.

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct there. We did during the pandemic time have considerable savings as far as travel costs go as court wasn't operating as frequently. So we did take those funds and reallocate them to materials and supplies to be able to implement these digital improvements. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I guess just sort of more out of, like, a bit of curiosity, is there any way, and I'm assuming this has probably been looked at in the FPTs and such, but that people could create a legal challenge around the fact that they weren't able to come in person to a sitting? Is there anywhere it impacts people's rights that they're only able to come virtually? I am just curious to know if it opens up the government to any sort of liability or challenge? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And so that would determinations that the courts are making for the most part. But I'm comfortable right now, that being said with this rapid expansion of these types of appearances. Who knows what we'll see in the near future. You get two lawyers in a room and you get three different opinions on what's legal so it's hard to say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not going to touch the lawyer comment. I'll keep my opinions to myself. Just looking around compensation and benefits, I note that again during the pandemic, we were at a much lower cost. We have increased. Is this the compensation for the judges, etcetera, that was recently approved? Is that why we're seeing such a large jump there? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'll hand it to Mr. Bancroft. Thanks.

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

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$8 million that the Member's seeing there is actuals during the last year of the pandemic. And we did have a number of vacancies within court services. And they jumped to 11, that you're seeing in the far right-hand column, is the budget going into 2023-2024. So there were -- we're comparing the savings that we had during COVID times along with the budget which just saw a very slight increase over last year to this year going constant. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So is that safe then to say are we up to capacity then, and that amount is the amount we actually need for compensation and benefits, or is there still vacancies and some of that money ends up freed up later? I'm just kind of trying to get a gauge if that's, like, the actual number for the compensation and benefits. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'll hand it to Mr. Bancroft.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Bancroft.

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are fully based funded for all of the positions within court services. There will organically be vacancies in any organization, but we are fully resourced in that area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm not trying to get super hung up on the numbers changing from the COVID year because I do understand that a lot of that had an impact. Again, I sort of have the same question around the sheriff services. You know, there's a \$400,000 increase from the COVID year to the next. And I'm just curious to know, again, is that just a rebound from COVID, or is that an actual increase sort of in funding, if that makes sense? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, just the change there will be the downturn in court operations during the pandemic. A significant reduction expenditure around travel, overtime for staff related to the travel and court circuits. And, yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: And lastly I guess just a quick question around contract services, which was the opposite of everything else I've been talking about was quite higher during the last year of the pandemic. Dropped again post, and then came back up. What sort of contract services are those? Are they around supports for the actual process there or is it stuff that, you know, is helping with victim services, things like that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So all of that work we spoke about earlier that would allow people to appear remotely installing videoconferencing systems, that accounts for that -- those funds. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. All right. Members, do we have any more questions under court services? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd just like to ask the Minister if the Hay River courthouse is fully staffed and what is the full staff complement that's required to operate it? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I believe the full staff complement is eight. I believe there are five court workers, and those are -- I believe those are fully staffed. Or sorry, court officers. I've used the incorrect term for a couple of our positions. So I can hand it to Mr. Bancroft for some more detail on that. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Mr. Bancroft.

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have seven positions in the Hay River court registry made up of a manager, an administrator, and five court officers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope this is the right place for this. I'm just wondering how many JPs do we actually have available in Hay River? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'll have to -- I'm not sure if there's any right now actually. But I can find out and get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell me if the caseload in Hay River is sufficient to warrant a -- you know, or to support a territorial judge at this time? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So when you're a territorial judge, you travel the whole territory; you hear cases across the territory. And so if the judges would want to set up in Hay River, then we can have that discussion. But it's currently up to the courts to make that determination. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And has there been any territorial judges that may be interested in coming to Hay River?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Not to my knowledge. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Members, are there any further questions under court services? Seeing none, please turn to page 307. Justice, court services, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$15,321,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Please turn now to legal aid services, beginning on page 310 with information items on page 311. Any questions under legal aid services? Seeing none, please turn to page 310. Justice,

legal aid services, operation -- what? We called it.

Well, do you have questions for legal aid services, because I'm calling that right now. I called that page. All right, does committee agree we'll go back?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay. Member for Frame Lake, pay attention. Ok. Go ahead.

MR. O'REILLY: I'm trying to do triple duty. Okay. I just had one or two questions about the M.M. DeWeerd Public Legal Resource Centre. This used to be the court library. We know this was a problem in the last Assembly. We're the only place in Canada that doesn't have a court library. What is this centre now and is it actually open to the public? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll give it to deputy minister Doolittle.

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, it is open to the public. It is in the courthouse. It's a resource centre. We have been trying to work to find front space to combine some services for sort of an information -- a legal information centre. That's been proving difficult to do that. We are still trying to do that but, yes, it is available to the public in the courthouse. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. In my week off, I'm going to go over and check it out because I've heard little stories about this being a cubbyhole or a closet somewhere or something, so. And I do think that -- you know, look, there's probably some efficiencies there, having some legal aid stuff next to it or whatever in case somebody walks in there and bumps into a legal aid lawyer or something. But I think we can and probably should do better. But I'm going to go by in my week off and I'm going to check it out. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Any further questions or comments? I think we've gone through everybody. So Justice, court services, operations expenditure summary, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$15,321,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We'll now move to legal aid services beginning on page 310, with information items on page

311. If there are no questions, please turn to page 310.

Justice, legal aid services, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$7,991,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now turn to the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations beginning on page 313, with information items on page 314. Questions.

There's no questions, please turn to page 313. Justice, Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$1,230,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now go to policing services on page 316. Questions? If there are no questions, please turn to page -- Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know I was trying to listen to the Minister's opening remarks. How much of this increase in policing services is actually kind of a result of collective agreement requirements? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: \$5,314,000.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I don't know, is any of this public in terms of what the percentage -- what's the term of the collective agreement? I'm just wondering is this going to continue to increase over time, or is this like a one-time thing; how's that going to play out? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I imagine that every time a new collective agreement is negotiated that there will be increases. The current collective agreement expires at the end of this month. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. So I'm just trying to figure out then there's an agreement in place.

Does it actually set out what the anticipated requirements are of GNWT in terms of funding year by year in the agreement, or is it kind of a negotiated arrangement each year; how does this work? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we work with the RCMP to determine resourcing levels, and if there are increases that they are requesting then we can work with them to implement those. And depending on the type of service, generally we pay 70 percent and the federal government pays 30 percent of those costs. We do have the First Nation and Inuit policing program where it is more of a 50/50 cost sharing split. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. So basically it sounds like it's negotiated on an annual basis and then shows up in the main estimates and would include things like collective agreement increases, if there's a desire of change in service levels, in individual communities and so on. Is that the case, and how much input or influence do we really have on this? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we have the budget for the previous year, let's say, and then the RCMP says we need more -- or we would like more resources here. Then we can work with them through our normal budget planning process to put those resources into the budget. So it's similar to other divisions of the government in that sense that it does follow the normal business plan process. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, no, I don't think I have any other questions. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Are there any further questions on policing services? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about the First Nations policing program. Can you provide a status on that and how many people are in that program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I believe we currently have nine officers under that program. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And how successful is it, I guess? Are we looking at potential expansion of it or contraction? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So this program, it is -- it's a program to put officers in communities and the way they police is what's called community policing. So it is working with the community; it's getting to know the community. That's the whole idea. We do that across the territory. That's the way the RCMP operates across the territory so they integrate well into the rest of -- with the rest of the RCMP. And we are actually looking -- we are discussing whether or not we can expand that program. For many years, we did pursue the federal government and tried to get an increase to our allocation. I believe we had five members funded through that for the longest time. And a couple years ago got an increase of another four. And we would like to see more because it is a 50/50 cost share as opposed to 70/30. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I was just looking at the 2021 -- or 2021-2022 actuals, and it's showing at \$1.55 million, and then in the main and revised we're looking at \$429,000. What's the big change there? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. That would be the five additional members. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. Also in the biology case work, I see a decrease there from 275 to 183, is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I'll hand it to Mr. Bancroft.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Bancroft.

MR. BANCROFT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The 275 represents actuals related to the biology case work program, which is the cost sharing program for all of our lab work for the RCMP. And they did see a significant cost increases due to diminished capacity as well as increased caseload during the pandemic. So what we're seeing there is an increase in those costs. And yes, thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I recall there being a discussion, I think, at one time about reporting of, I guess, the RCMP or the head office here to somewhere in Alberta now. Is that something that's happening, or if you can maybe provide some background information or some context to it? No?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. No.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With the increase in I guess -- or it appears there's an increase in drugs coming in the territories and, you know, increase in, you know, addictions and that type of thing. Is there anything in the budget incorporated to address that area because it seems like drugs are, you know, the big problem in all areas. It's -- you know, it's in -- it's in, you know, the health. It's in, you know, suicide. It's in violent crimes, all that. So I'm just wondering how much effort that the RCMP would be putting into that area now as we see that increase keep climbing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So I have met with the commanding officer on this as well as other detachment commanders across the territory. And I know that they are focusing on it. They are seeing these increases. And this is what they do, they enforce the law. And when it comes to drugs, they see the negative impacts; they know that where we are now is in a better position than where we could be in the future and they're doing their best to try and stop us from getting to that. So there has been an increased focus. As well I've been working with the department to try and figure out what we can do on our side to get better data about what's going on, to see what sort of civil legislation we might be able to enact to support

the RCMP. And I think that the Member may have noticed an uptake in the number of drug busts that we're seeing. I know there was a long period in Hay River where we didn't really have a lot of those busts but we have seen a few of them now. So it is indicative of increased drug use and increased crime, but there's also showing that the RCMP are taking it seriously. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, and it's good to see that, you know, we are getting drugs off the street. And one thing I think we are getting hopefully a little bit of uptake from the public as well. So do you see or do you hear from the RCMP, you know, if we are getting more calls from the public with respect to, you know, drugs coming in or potential drugs coming into the territories?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And, no, I don't have the information about the number of calls or the number of tips the RCMP are receiving. I'm not sure they would even want to share that with us. But one thing they always do mention, and what I try to impress upon people as well, is that we do need the public to come forward with information. I think that a lot of the times the information that people bring forward is that, you know, there's a drug dealer in that house. Well, everyone knows there's a drug dealer in that house. There needs to be some more information. So it needs to be people who actually have some insight into, you know, maybe that person, that physical house, things like that. So those are the types of people we'd like to step forward and provide us with information so that the RCMP can get search warrants, so that they can begin investigations, they can start building cases. The public support is, you know, extremely important. It's the key to many, many of these investigations. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, you know, I think it is important that the public are engaged as well. And, you know, I think that it's up to the department or up to this government as well to make sure that they're -- the public are aware of, you know, how they can contact the RCMP, how they can provide these tips and, you know, what their role is. You know, they're concerned about liability. They're concerned about backlash and retaliation from some of the -- you know, the

people who are, you know, moving the drugs, addicts and that. So, you know, we've got to ensure their safety as well so somehow we've got to be able to, you know, convey that to the public that there's a way to do it and a way to keep safe at the same time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And members of the public can always call the local detachment and provide information, a tip. If they are concerned about that, they can also call Crime Stoppers, and that can be anonymous as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Anything further, Member for Hay River South?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: No, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. So do we have any other questions or comments under the policing services? Seeing none, please turn to page 316.

Justice, policing services, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$56,011,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will now move to services to government beginning on page 318, with information items on page 319 and 320. Are there any questions under this section? If there are no questions, please turn to page -- Mr. O'Reilly, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. The rental office here -- oh sorry, next one.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): So if there's nothing under services to government, please turn to page 318. Justice, services to government, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$13,446,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Now we will move to services to the public beginning on page 322, with information items on page 323. Questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. The rental office just, you know, there's actually been a decrease over the last couple years in their funding, and I just continue to get some complaints from constituents about

sometimes -- well, both on the rent -- you know, the tenant side but also on the people that own residents or are leasing about how sometimes it takes quite a bit of time for a decision. So do we conduct any kind of regular surveys of wait lists or times for processing applications to the rental office in time, and how long it takes them to render a decision and so on? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Yes, the Office of the Rental Officer produces an annual report every year, and there are wait times in there. The last report that I reviewed stated that the time from an application to a conclusion can -- the timeline can't be shrunk any further because of the timelines that are required for parties to provide documentation and things like that. So unless we reduce the amount of time that people have to respond and thereby perhaps impacting the -- you know, the administrative fairness, those times won't be reduced. We have seen a significant decline in the amount of time people are waiting since the last government because in the last government there really was a bit of a crisis, but now things are running as quickly as they can while still being fair. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, no, thanks for that. I want to go on to integrated case management. And I know that this was the program where they had that return on investment work. And I remarked earlier about how I thought that was a really good study and certainly showed the value of this. But where are we at with expanding this beyond Yellowknife? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So what the Member I believe is referencing is the integrated case management program. I couldn't recall if he said ISD or ICM. But integrated service delivery is an approach to delivering services. Integrative case management is supposed to be an integrated way to work with people who are accessing a number of different government services. It has essentially turned into a siloed program on its own, not necessarily integrated with the other programs -- or other services. And so we are working with other departments, having some high-level discussions about what we want to do going forward, because this approach, while the ICM team does great work and they are

really -- you know, we know they're saving the government money by helping these people they're working with, it's not necessarily what I would call integrated service delivery. So we're looking at how we can take an all-of-government approach on that. And so it's a bit of a -- I would characterize it as a bit of a reset. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks for that. Is part of that review going to look at expanding this function of integrated case management outside of Yellowknife? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So you know, what might happen in the future I can't say. While I'm not necessarily supportive of the idea of taking a siloed program, replicating it elsewhere and saying we're expanding, you know, integrated service delivery, so in that sense I would say no, we're not looking to duplicate this. However, there is a recognition that people do need that sort of one window access. And I've heard a lot about it, I've talked a lot about it, and so we are examining ways that we can make that happen outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks for that. And, yeah, for anyone who's listening or reads this, I really encourage them to look at the return on social investment study that was done. There's come great quotes in there from clients that have been assisted and turned their lives around and so on. And I guess it'll be one more matter for the transition report. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions from -- no, nothing? Okay. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And, Madam Chair, I wanted to talk about integrated case management as well. And I appreciate that my colleague to my left asked some of the questions that I had as well. But it actually led to a little bit of confusion for me.

So I get that ICM is kind of a team of pathfinders that then go and take people kind of from door to door of government departments to help them access all the services they might need whereas integrated service delivery doesn't use pathfinders because the whole idea there is breaking down the silos between departments

so that you don't need pathfinders; you actually have government able to work to together. I get that. But in the questions that my colleague just asked, he asked what's the plan for the future and he was told there is no plan, and then in a subsequent question was told that the department is currently looking at ways to expand. And so there isn't a plan but there is a plan. And so I'm wondering if the Minister can clarify what actually is the intended future of integrated case management versus integrated service delivery? Because over the last four years, we've had integrated case management. People in this room have said hey, what about my community? People in my community are also struggling and falling through the gaps within the departments and trying to access services, and we have not seen any on the ground change in the last four years. And while we've kind of been trying to push integrated service delivery and trusting the government to be doing this work, on the flip side we're not seeing any change on the ground.

And so my question to the Minister is what is the plan, because while I appreciate the Minister says I can't say what's going to happen in the future but that's why you have a plan, so that you can say what's going to happen in the future. So that's my question, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. The current plan is to look at other demonstration sites that we call ICM; in Yellowknife, a demonstration site. Looking at ways to create demonstration sites in other communities. However, I would say that there are other initiatives that might overtake this and perhaps change that plan going forward. So, yes, there's a plan. I'm not confident that that plan is the actual path forward. And I'm sorry if that's cryptic but this is -- we are going through, you know, some discussions and some soul searching about what we want to do in terms of integrated service delivery. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we have a plan, but we might not use that plan, is what I'm now hearing.

So if we have a plan but we might not use that plan, I'm guessing that some soul searching has already happened in order to kind of get to the point where we can say yes, we have a plan but we might not use that plan. And so I'm wondering if it is the intent of this Minister to kind of share with this House what lessons have

been learned in the course of the last almost four years as this department has very much worked hard towards integrated service delivery and I have nothing but good things to say about ICM and integrated case management. I've had the opportunity to work with them with constituents. They've been nothing but amazing and helpful. But this is definitely something that needs to expand outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I would love to see this in every single community in the Northwest Territories. I think that would be great if we had people that could, you know, assist clients in need everywhere. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have further questions? Okay. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in regards to the work that needs to be done to do this soul searching on this plan that might not be used, is there a staff member dedicated to this work, or staff members dedicated to this work, and if so, where within the main estimates do they live? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So one of the issues here is that this budget is this budget. In this budget, there is not funds to expand integrated case management to other jurisdictions or other areas in the territory. So I can't speak for what the next government will do so that is why I say there's a plan. Will it happen? I'm not sure. If I was around, I think I might go in a different direction. I can get the deputy minister to expand on the Member's question, though. Thank you.

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

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there is one person, territorial director dedicated to integrated service delivery. That is cost shared between the seven social enveloped departments. This person recently did some engagement with Indigenous governments in January and early February on, you know, whether there is intent to partner and establish regional integrated service delivery sites to integrate services both offered by GNWT and our partners. So this is something we're engaging with and we're looking to have

a report available later in April. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you so much, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, the director, are they in directorate? Are they in community justice? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Directorate. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you so much. I really appreciate that. And my next question is this work and this position best placed within the Department of Justice, or would it make more sense for this position and this work to be placed within EIA if it is -- if the intent is an all-of-government approach that needs some teeth in order to move people in that direction? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And I've had a number of conversations with the Member about this. You know, I think that integrated service delivery is something that needs to be -- I guess be dictated from the top down. So I think that under the Premier's office would, you know, be a fine location for that. However, integrated case management is with Justice and the staff know how to operate that program. They've been doing a great job. And so that is why it is continuing to be in the -- in Justice in this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. No further questions from you? Okay. Are there -- I just want to before -- because we have -- we have to sit past the hour if we want to get finished. So I just want to see how many people left want to speak to this item and so that way if we don't have to make the motion to sit past and then the staff, we can finish up this item and they don't have to come back tomorrow. Unless you want to do the motion now and then get it over and done with and we don't sit, we don't sit. Okay. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Pursuant to rule 2.2(3), I move that committee continues sitting beyond the hour of daily adjournment to conclude the item under consideration. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will sit beyond 6:00 p.m. to conclude this item.

---Carried

And I'll give it to Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The integrated case management -- so you have \$830,000. How many clients is that? How many clients are included in that that is being seen for that amount of money.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So far there have been 691 referrals to the program, and there are 98 active clients. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: So, Madam Chair, so how many staff are actually working within that integrated case management office?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So in addition to the director, we have four pathfinders and I believe there's also an intern so that would be five. Thanks.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Okay. I like the term that was used by the Minister when he was referring to the rental office, "administrative fairness." That's a really incredible term. Administrative fairness is -- with the rental office it's mostly private people that are being told that they have to keep people in their homes over a certain period of time even though it's their home or their rental facility but yet we, as a government, don't follow that whole situation when it comes to NWT Housing. If someone is going to be thrown out, it's thrown out that day, close all the windows and put them on the street and they don't have no home to go to. So where is the administrative fairness when it comes to rental office when it comes to our own government? I want to ask the Minister that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the Residential Tenancies Act dictates the rights and obligations of the different parties involved.

I understand there are different provisions for the housing corporation than from private entities. I'm not sure if this is the appropriate time to speak to that legislation; we're not amending the legislation. There's no recommendations in front of me to amend it. So we're talking about the operations of the rental office but as to the value of the act, the efficacy of the act, I am not in a position to speak to it right now. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I think, Madam Chair, in the future that we have to look at this as a government because, you know, it's our own people that are being thrown out on the street just before Christmas. You know, and I had a case like that where there was a mother and a young girl, and they're couch surfing now. All the windows and everything in that house is all boarded up. No one's going near there. And there's no administrative fairness there. Administrative fairness means administrative fairness for everybody treated equally when it comes to rental or anything else in the territory. And until we come to that point with this government and making sure that our own people are looked after properly, we're not doing our job. Thank you, Madam Chair. That's just a comment. I don't expect the Minister to answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Any other further questions from Members under services to the public? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a quick question on the rental office. I guess I'm just trying to gauge their workload and how much of that workload is dedicated to dealing with the NWT Housing Corporation or Housing NWT Corporation clients versus private sector? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I believe the last report I reviewed stated about 60 percent of the workload was related to the housing corporation. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm trying -- you know, I'm thinking about, you know, the amount of work that goes into I guess trying to evict somebody. And if the rental officer is putting a lot of time into the housing side of things and nobody's

getting -- or nobody's getting evicted or they're -- it drags on forever, I'm just thinking either somehow we've got to make sure that, you know, we're putting the resources where it's actually, you know, resulting in something and whether that's on the private side, make sure that they're looked after first, I guess, and the housing corporation, second, if they're not evicting, then -- and the private sector needs a little bit more, you know, more time, I would like to see, you know -- see that happen. And that's just a comment I guess. I just see a waste of time if we're giving out orders and nothing's being done. And if we're giving out orders to the private sector and they're -- and sometimes that private sector might be an elderly couple who own a house and they have to, you know, they've got somebody in there for, you know, three, four, five, six months; they're waiting for, you know, an order to come down because the rental officer's dealing with maybe housing corporation tenants instead. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. Are there any further questions under services to the public? Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: With reference to rental office, I do have some constituents where some other people have been coming to me and saying that they -- their arrears were garnished. But they haven't received any up to date information about how much they still owe. And they said they don't get nothing. They don't know, and they're still being garnished. And they don't -- a lot of these people -- they said they want to know how much they still owe but there's no -- there's no communication coming from the rental office or whoever was supposed to be communicating with them. So I just wanted to know, like, what else is there -- like, how can people who are affected by this get some information?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: So if the Member's talking about public housing, then I would reserve that question for the housing corporation because the rental office I don't think they deal with those types of issues. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you. Okay, thank you. Yes, it's mostly housing that they're being garnished. And even that office is not telling my constituents how much they still owe. And this is where they are left in the dark, that, you know, they want to know

because it has an impact on them financially. You know, they want to move forward; they want to do things but, you know, nobody's telling them nothing. But it all comes down to the -- it comes from here, from the rental office, so I just wanted to know whose responsibility it is to let these people know. So now that you're saying, you know, NWTHC.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): That's not for this department. I think that's housing corporation. They don't deal with arrears or anything like that. It's the rental office. Like, it's the operations of the rental office under Justice but it's not -- I'll give it to the Minister to explain.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So, yes, that is not something I can comment on. That is not something in the purview of the rental office. If someone owes money to Housing NWT and they go through the courts to get their wages garnished, that does not involve the rental office so I can't answer these questions. It would be better posed to the Minister of housing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Okay, thank you. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay, sorry about that. Yes, thank you for the information. You know, like -- I mean, I'm -- it's good to know that so I can pass on the information and then hopefully the Minister of housing is hearing this and will let my constituents know how much they still owe, you know, like, so they can move on with their life.

Another one too is that -- I don't know if somebody asked this already. Coroner office. There's an increase, and I just wanted to ask how many coroners do we have in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): (audio).

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we have the chief coroner. We have a deputy coroner. And then we have 18 regional coroners. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: No, I just wanted to ask about that because I know we do have one in Behchoko, and it's good that there's 18 but it's such a huge increase. So there must be a lot of activities that's happening and it's -- I mean, it's a high need, you know, to have that much -- it's a huge budget increase. So I just wanted to ask about that. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So that increase is due to bringing the coroners into the public service. Previously coroners were contracted. And so that increase is due to the cost associated with that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Any further questions, Member for Monfwi?

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: No, that's good. I just wanted to know. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. So if there are no further questions to the services to the public, please turn to page 322. Justice, service to the public, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$5,859,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. There are additional information items from page 324 to 326. Any questions? Thank you, Members.

Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 293 with the revenue summary information on page 294. Any questions? No further questions.

Committee, I will now call the departmental summary. Justice, operations expenditures, total department, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$145,613,000. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 368-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 813-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – JUSTICE –
DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT (PAGE 2913),
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Justice at this time. Mahsi, 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? The motion is carried. Consideration of Department of Justice, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, operating expenditures, total department, is deferred.

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Mr. O'Reilly, what is the wish of committee?

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): There's a motion on the floor and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I 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 813-19(2) and would like to report progress, with one motion adopted. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Sahtu. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 56:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION,
CARRIED

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The Minister's requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): 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 Hay River South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote: 15 in favour, one opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 56 has had third reading.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Orders of the day for Thursday, March 2nd, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1343-19(2), Impacts of COVID-19 on Education
 - Oral Question 1404-19(2), Child Care Funding Supports for Teen Parents
 - Oral Question 1411-19(2), Renewable Energy
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

14. Tabling of Documents - Tabled Document 694-19(2), Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
15. Notice of Motions
16. Motions - Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
- Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3
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 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
 - Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act
 - Bill 66, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act
 - Bill 67, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act
 - Committee Report 40-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 61: An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
 - Committee Report 43-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 63: An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act
 - Committee Report 44-19(2), Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs Final Report: A Northwest Territories Approach to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Negotiating Agreements
 - Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
 - 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
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Colleagues, before we begin I just want to say good job, everyone.
- This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 2nd, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.
- ADJOURNMENT
- The House adjourned at 6:04 p.m.