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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Minister of Environment and Natural Resources
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Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Finance
Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, March 3, 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, 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 Environment and Natural Resources.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 323-19(2):
CARIBOU: TAKE ACTION TODAY FOR THE
FUTURE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, caribou have sustained Northerners and communities across the Northwest Territories for generations. Today, caribou herds face pressure from a wide range of natural factors and human activities throughout their range, including the impact of climate change. We all want to see healthy caribou herds that can sustain harvest and cultural traditions for generations to come. With the winter's harvest underway and weather getting warmer, I would like to speak today on respectful harvesting, why it is important, and what our government is doing to encourage safe, legal, and respectful harvesting.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with our co-management partners to strengthen awareness and support for the conservation of caribou. Our focus on promoting respectful harvesting is meant to remind everyone that their individual choices make an important difference. To that end, our government has worked with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and respected harvesters to build a communications campaign based on traditional values. The campaign will focus on key messages grounded on what we have heard working with co-management partners and respected harvesters:

- Harvest respectfully, guided by traditional practices of take only what you need;

- Don't leave anything behind;
- Share what you have when you get back; and,
- learn from your elders.

Mr. Speaker, this is timeless advice and the good news is that almost everyone out there is following it. Unfortunately, there are still those hunting illegally in the Bathurst mobile zone, which was put in place through legislation to protect the herd based on agreements between co-management partners. There are still caribou being wounded, wasted, and left behind. We heard from elders and respected harvesters that some people are hunting without respect for the caribou or the people and communities that rely on them.

Mr. Speaker, the stakes are high. Indigenous leaders, elders, and respected harvesters continue to tell us that they are concerned for the future of caribou in the NWT. That message is being shared for good reason. The Bathurst herd has declined nearly 99 percent in number since 1986. Despite this drastic decline and increasingly urgent messages from leaders, we are still seeing some cases of illegal harvesting of this critically low herd. That is why today the herd is protected by our own territorial collaboratively developed laws, herd management plans, and local community caribou stewardship plans that all reflect an agreement to not harvest from the Bathurst herd.

Mr. Speaker, in January 2022 I met with Indigenous leaders from communities on the Bathurst herd range to discuss the recommendations of a respected harvesters meeting. We all agreed that harvest needs being done in a safe, legal, and respectful manner, and in a way that supports our shared conservation goals. These goals are undermined by illegal harvesting and wastage and are not consistent with traditional and cultural harvesting practices. Every time people take more than they need, they put more strain on the herds that are already under pressure.

We applaud the vast majority of hunters that are harvesting in a safe, legal, and respectful way, and support all of our co-management partners in protecting caribou. We call on everyone to follow these examples and act now. Harvest with respect today so that there will be healthy caribou herds supporting our communities tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Justice.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 324-19(2):
CHILD SUPPORT RECALCULATION
SERVICE LAUNCH

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, families encounter the family law system in some of life's most difficult moments, and the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to improving our family law processes to ensure we support families through these hard times. Today I am pleased to announce the launch of the NWT Child Support Recalculation Service.

This new service can, in eligible circumstances, recalculate child support amounts on an annual basis based on the parent's income without having to go through the courts. This service is intended to reduce the time, expense, and stress that can result from parents relying upon the court process when the amount of child support needs to be changed due to a change in income.

The Child Support Recalculation Service aims to ensure fairness to both the payer and recipient at no charge. Instead of returning to court when a parent's income changes, this service will allow for the automatic recalculation of child support amounts on an annual basis for eligible orders and agreements that have been registered with the service.

In order to be eligible, child support orders and agreements must meet the requirements as per the territorial Children's Law Act or the federal Divorce Act. Once enrolled, the service automatically recalculates support amounts using the child support guidelines and a person's latest assessment from the Canada Revenue Agency.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Child Support Recalculation Service required legislative changes to the territorial Children's Law Act and the development of subsequent regulations as well as the establishment of an agreement with the federal government to allow for the recalculation of orders made under the federal Divorce Act.

In the spring of 2022, the GNWT invited residents, experts, and stakeholders to share their thoughts and suggestions with respect to the proposed regulations for the Child Support Recalculation Service. This public engagement process took place between June 6th and July 5th and provided insightful feedback that helped shape the regulations.

The department is communicating information about the new service to parents through legal aid offices, maintenance enforcement case workers, the Law Society of the NWT, and other appropriate channels. Information is currently available on the Department of Justice website. Parties to any new orders will now receive information about the program along with their court order. This new service is provided to NWT families through the Department of Justice and has been established with financial support from the federal Canadian Family Justice Fund.

Mr. Speaker, going through a separation or divorce is difficult for families. Providing this service will relieve some of the pressure on parents by alleviating the need to return to court and allowing them to focus more on the well-being of their children and themselves. It is also expected to ease some demand on our court resources.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committed to helping Northerners navigate the family law system. The new Child Support Recalculation Service helps families with child support orders and agreements ensure that a fair level of support is maintained for their children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 325-19(2):
INVESTING IN NWT PARKS

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, it is a sure sign that spring is just around the corner. The draw for extended-stay campsites at the Prelude and Reid Lake campgrounds will be held this Sunday in Yellowknife. These popular campgrounds, Mr. Speaker, are just two of the 17 facilities that are managed and maintained by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment across our territory. For summer visitors, the Northwest Territories camping experience is a key element of our competitive tourism product. Northwest Territories parks offer a spectacular staging point from which to enjoy our unique natural environment as well as our communities, events, celebrations and activities.

Last summer, with the easing of travel restrictions, Canadians and international travelers flocked to Northwest Territories parks in large numbers. Seven of the Northwest Territories' 17 parks recorded all-time visitation highs in the 2022 season. For example, the number of overnight visitors in the Beaufort Delta region was four times higher than it had been in 2021. Overall, more than 17,000 overnight visits were registered by individuals from outside of the Northwest Territories, representing a full rebound to pre-pandemic levels.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of this demand, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment will invest close to \$2 million this summer in the ongoing maintenance and improvements of our territory's parks and campgrounds.

In the Inuvik region, a new deck and performance area is being constructed at Gwich'in Park that will feature tiered seating. Meanwhile, at Happy Valley Park, ITI will be increasing the capacity of the park's shower and washroom facilities. The Fort Providence campground will be getting a new adventure themed playground this year while the Sambaa Deh Falls Territorial Park will be getting an upgrade to the shower building with new mechanical infrastructure and improving its wheelchair accessibility. A new change room and concession are slated for construction at the beach at the Hay River Territorial Park. Shower buildings and laundry facilities are being added to NWT Parks facilities at the 60th Parallel and Little Buffalo River Crossing. A manager's residence is being constructed at the Queen Elizabeth Park in Fort Smith and the visitor information centre at Blackstone Park is being renovated to better display the centre's interpretive components and cultural displays.

Mr. Speaker, as ITI prepares for the upcoming parks season, amendments to the territorial parks regulations made last year are also coming into force. And, Mr. Speaker, this year, the GNWT's online reservation site will open the week of April 4th for the 2023 season and campgrounds across the territory open their gates beginning May 15th. As residents and visitors alike enjoy Northwest Territories parks and campgrounds this summer, the Department of ITI will be working to keep those parks running safely and smoothly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1416-19(2) CABIN LOTTERY LEASES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a dream that one day I can leave this place, maybe go into the woods, build a little cabin, live there, and not think about politics. Perhaps I could run a little tourism business on the side, maybe have a garden, and if I'm lucky enough maybe one day pass that home on to my children and just generally be left alone, Mr. Speaker. But Mr. Speaker, the Department of Lands has killed my dream and the dreams of so many others because, first, in order to build that cabin you got to win a lottery, Mr. Speaker.

And even if you win the long-shot bet on that lottery, they won't let you legally live there full-time, Mr. Speaker. And even if you skirt that rule, they certainly won't let you run any sort of business out of that home. And then one day Mr. Speaker, a lands inspector is going to show up and tell you that your greenhouse is too close to your tool shed and that your lease is going to be out of compliance so you can't transfer it to anyone, you can't get a mortgage, can't leave it in your will. And so I am going to have questions for the Minister of Lands on when are we going to review these policies and make some changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1417-19(2): WOOD BUFFALO FROLICS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, next weekend from March 9th to 12th, Fort Smith will be hosting the annual winter carnival, Wood Buffalo Frolics. This year will mark the first time since 2019 that Fort Smith's beloved carnival will be taking place. It was cancelled twice because of the pandemic and once more due to organizer and volunteer fatigue. Fortunately, this year has many volunteers who stepped up to help with planning and will help with all of the events over the next weekend.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Wood Buffalo Frolics weekend will coincide with sled dog races from the Thebacha Dog Mushers Association, as well as a snowboarding event hosted by the Slide Zone Shredders. Among the other events that will take place includes northern games, a bingo tournament, the Mad Trappers Ball, and a talent show. A hockey tournament and the Frolics Prince and Princess Pageant.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Thebacha, I would like to thank all the volunteers and organizers who came forward to help make the Wood Buffalo Frolics possible this year.

I would like to give a special thank you to Dana Ferguson who has been leading the organizing this year, along with Jenny Shaeffer Cumming for helping with the cultural events. I hope all residents will take the opportunity to go out and have some fun in next week's festivities.

With that, I would like to thank the amazing constituents of Thebacha along with my husband Peter, my sons Mickey and Jerry and my dog Rambo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1418-19(2):
GIANT MINE REMEDIATION

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rambo may very well be the most famous dog in this House.

Mr. Speaker, last year the projected cost of the Giant Mine cleanup jumped from 1 to \$4.38 billion. While this project is being overseen by the federal government, the GNWT is still a co-proponent. It is still in our back yard and it still carries with it high expectations for NWT benefit retention.

Remediating the mine involves things like building a water treatment plant, filling pits, taking down buildings, and containing arsenic dust underground. Accomplishing this will put high demand on industries like waste disposal, construction, mining services, scientific services, transportation logistics, accommodation and food services, and medical services; industries that, to some extent, exist here in the NWT already. But today the demand on these industries is already high so for large contracts, local companies need time to prepare.

The Giant Mine Remediation Project reports that Northerners work roughly 45 percent of the total labour hours worked and Indigenous employees work 21 percent. This is shy of 55 to 70 percent for targeted work hours for Northerners and the 25 to 30 percent for Indigenous workers.

Mr. Speaker, these targets aren't high enough, but we aren't even meeting them to begin with. This project needs ambitious goals, paired with proactive benefit retention and this doesn't

require big dollar investments - maybe just a little more effort and certainty.

The oversight board estimates the remediation project will spend around \$240 million annually in the next 15 years. That's a huge investment into our economy, and northern businesses need information to be ready to bid on this work. Currently, the project's annual budgets provide an idea of work categories and timing, but this information isn't detailed enough to determine the size, scale, and scope of work potentially being tendered. This month is a great example.

Right now, the federal government is accepting bids on a water treatment plant that was originally intended to be tendered next year. Once the bid came out, it became clear the size and scope of the project was much larger than expected by some proponents. The uncertainty in details and change in timing means local proponents may not be able to prepare and participate.

Building the capacity for benefit retention needs certainty and that certainty comes from information sharing between governments and the industry that it ultimately wants to participate.

Mr. Speaker, we only get one shot at benefit retention from Giant Mine remediation. We can't afford to fail. We need jobs, we need apprenticeships, and as a mineral-rich territory we need to grow our remediation economy but the key to this is information. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1419-19(2):
WOOD BUFFALO FROLICS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am doing a eulogy for the late Carmelle Rose Landry from Fort Resolution.

Carmelle Rose Landry was born in Hay River on May 10th, 1975 to her parents Angelina and Howard. She grew up with her mom Angelina and dad Howard. Carmelle lived in various communities throughout her life until she decided to reside and build her home in Edmonton with her beautiful children Breanna Rose, Caitlin Dawn, and Shayden Lawrence Henry.

Carmelle was a homemaker. She loved her children dearly and ensured they had a happy life with her and strong traditional values. Carmelle honoured her family and friends with the utmost respect and dignity. She did everything from her heart and soul. Though

never aiming to be the centre of attention, Carmelle's smile and contagious laughter naturally drew people to her and engulfed those around her. All those who knew Carmelle, I know that she always made sure that everything was comfortable and loved. Carmelle's calming presence and loving aura made sure those around her were comfortable and all taken care of.

Shayden is Carmelle's one and only son. She enjoyed showing him how to cook and bake, teaching him in confidence and self-esteem so he can learn how to do things on his own. Carmelle and Shayden had a special connection like she did with all her children, and they always had a good laugh with one another.

Carmelle always spoke highly of her children, specifically about her baby girl Caitlin. Carmelle was always so impressed with Caitlin when she was afraid to try new things to pursue her goals. Carmelle was always proud of Caitlin's amazing accomplishments and made sure everyone knew that. Carmelle and Caitlin had their ups and downs but their connection to one another was unbreakable.

Breanna, Carmelle's first born, is Carmelle's heart and their relationship was unique. They spent many hours watching movies, hanging out and enjoying each other's company. It didn't matter if Breanna and Carmelle were talking or simply just sitting in silence, they shared a special bond with each other that no one else could understand.

When Carmelle was sitting with her mother Angie, she told her mom when you get old, I'll take care of you. Angie replied, "awwe thank you, my girl." Carmelle, being cheeky, replied, "you will be in a wheelchair and I will push you behind the house to the old folk's home and you can hang out there." Angie told her, "you're supposed to take care of me."

Carmelle's stunning light in our lives who has a beautiful touch on an entire community. She lives on through her lights of her life, Breanna, Caitlin, and Shayden, and she will forever be missed. Her beautiful presence will leave a gap that we will all slowly heal from together, filling with happiness and most importantly laughter that Carmelle always wanted to share. We love of you, Carmelle. May your spirit journey safely and your infectious joy shine on. With that, I would like to thank the Fabian and Landry family. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community.

Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1420-19(2):
CHILD AND YOUTH CARE COUNSELLOR
PROGRAM IN TLICHO REGION**

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one year ago, I asked the Government of the Northwest Territories to transfer child and youth care counsellors to the Tlicho government without restriction. I asked this because the child and youth care counsellors in the Tlicho region are not working but we know how important these positions are to our youth, which is why the Tlicho want to take ownership of these positions to make sure they are culturally appropriate.

We know in our region that families are stressed due to the housing crisis. This has an effect on their mental well-being. Our youth see and hear everything that happens in the home and when there is not enough housing or repairs are not being addressed or parents are stressed due to pay their bills or get out of housing arrears, this also causes stress on our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the government to transfer over child and youth care counsellors to the Tlicho government in our region and the Minister could not commit to doing this. But now the Government of the Northwest Territories is undergoing an evaluation of this program.

Mr. Speaker, we watch the GNWT review programs, evaluate programs, creating plans about plans, but where is the action? There is a solution to the child and youth care counselling program in the Tlicho region - Transfer this to the Tlicho government.

Why does the government need to do an evaluation of this program first? The Tlicho government has a plan to better life -- I'm sorry about that. Our language, culture, and a way of life and a plan to build strong healthy communities. Offering culturally appropriate child and youth care counsellors to our young ones with elders and knowledge-keepers from our communities is the solution. It is a win-win for both government and Tlicho. When can we move forward with this? I will have questions for the Minister of health. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1421-19(2):
KAMBA CARNIVAL**

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to congratulate my niece Ava Walsh on being crowned K'amba Carnival Queen. I also

congratulate all those persons that put their names forward and raised money to support K'amba Carnival.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Town of Hay River for declaring a half-day civic holiday for K'amba Carnival, and I do encourage all people in Hay River to take advantage of this half-day and get out, participate, and support the events taking place and enjoy those great bannock burgers which I am sure are being served up and which I have been dreaming about for the last week. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1422-19(2):
EULOGY FOR WILLIAM GILBERT
VILLENEUVE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform you that on February 13th, the community of Fort Simpson lost a respected elder. William Gilbert Villeneuve, commonly known as Billy V - a friend, a father, uncle, and respected elder passed away.

Mr. Speaker, it is rare to find a friend/relative who's always there, is nonjudgmental, a good listener, someone who cares and loved you regardless. That's who Billy was, regardless if he was an uncle, cousin or just a friend. It didn't matter as everyone knew that he cared about them. Mr. Speaker, in speaking with his family, they said he was an interesting father who loved his children in his own way and as he was dealing with his own challenges.

Billy was born and raised in Liidlii Kue First Nation. He went to school in Fort Simpson, Fort Providence and Yellowknife. Upon finishing with school, he went to work all over the North. Billy was not afraid of work. He worked as a labourer, heavy equipment operator, and a taxi driver. Billy was a very determined man. Once he made up his mind, he would set it as a goal. A perfect example was when he had a stroke, among other health issues. He decided he was going to be able to walk and be mobile again. He did this through exercise and determination to get to be able to operate and use his three-wheeler bike with a basket. I can tell you Billy drove around the community on his bike regardless of how cold it was outside. I have seen him bike around when the weather has been -40 with a smile on his face.

Mr. Speaker, he also found a purpose and that was to pick up and sell recyclables so he could donate that money towards the building of the

new Sacred Heart Church. After the church was up and operational, he would go by it and he could be heard saying "oh wow" with the biggest smile on his face. The same could be said, when he talked about the church.

Mr. Speaker, like most people, Billy had his own personal challenges and struggles. He would fall but he laboured to get up and was successful. He would dust himself off, smile, and keep move forward. He did this for 79 years.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you he will be missed by his family, coffee shop, church, and everyday friends who he laughed with, cried with, and encouraged. He will be sadly missed. 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. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1423-19(2):
NATIONAL ENGINEERING MONTH

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, March is National Engineering Month in Canada, and it is our largest celebration of engineering excellence. An annual national campaign, National Engineering Month celebrates engineers, our work, and the important role we play in society.

Spearheaded by Engineers Canada, National Engineering Month this year is guided by the theme "There's a place for you in engineering" which celebrates the diversity of thought, opportunities, and people that make up the engineering profession. In some provinces, you will find geoscientists joining in as part of National Engineering and Geoscience Month.

National Engineering Month is a forum for engineering students, engineers-in-training (or EITs), and early-career engineers to have conversations about their profession and the role that engineers play in society. It gives them an opportunity to network with others that may share the same struggles or concerns in their career. It also gives those newer to the profession a chance to connect with intermediate and senior engineers that can provide valuable mentorship and guidance - a key pillar of engineering.

Events during National Engineering Month will empower and inspire all engineers to consider important questions as they embark and continue with their careers.

- What is our role as engineers in society?

- What will my impact be as an engineer?
- How can we use engineering to contribute solutions to today's biggest challenges?
- What do we want our profession to look like?

National Engineering Month will also allow for NWT youth to be exposed to engineers and what we do, possibly opening the door for more NWT children to consider the profession.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear that residents here do not have the capacity to play a significant role in northern projects. It's through advocacy like National Engineering Month that we can ignite a spark in the youth that will lead to an educated northern workforce so that we not only work on northern projects, but we are actually leading them therefore controlling our own future and retaining economic benefits.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before in this Chamber, engineering has been around since the first humans began altering their physical environment to improve their comfort, safety, and food supply. It is one of the oldest professions in the world, and I am proud to call myself a professional engineer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1424-19(2): NUNAKPUT COURT TRAVEL

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the court circuit in Nunakput riding. The Department of Justice and Government of Canada will often complete court circuits throughout the territory. This is a travelling court circuit that aims to provide services to small communities that look to support our residents without removing them from their homes. However, Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that the communication of the government and our communities can be clear and timely.

These people are using services that are not -- it's not a big secret in the communities when the court circuit is coming to town. When there's a shift in timing or cancellation or a charter, that's the aircraft's being held, and the court party's not staying in the community, especially for the community of Tuk, Mr. Speaker, that we do have a road now but they still tend to use aircraft, and they're holding up aircraft that could be utilized for serving my smaller communities in Nunakput riding. I think, Mr. Speaker, that we do have a road to Tuk. They should be using the road. I don't have a

problem, no choice to fly into the communities of Sachs, Ulu, and Paulatuk in regards to servicing them for court services but there I could see both -- all three communities have hotels or B&B that are capable enough to holding the court party. Why is the court party still holding aircraft all day? The cost of that on the taxpayer and not able to stay in the community to help local businesses, especially in the smaller communities of Paulatuk and Ulu, because they do have hotels. Why is the court party not staying there to provide their service, instead of holding a plane at probably \$2,000 an hour at 12 hours probably the day, their duty day; it's not right. They should be sharing the wealth instead of just flying back to Inuvik every night for servicing.

Mr. Speaker, I think our Justice Minister -- I did ask him. I had this brought up to me to my attention again because there was an aircraft, delay of having one aircraft down, another -- or sorry, on maintenance and other communities being held up to travel back home. And I don't think that's fair. I think if the court party's travelling to the communities, they should be dropped off and picked up. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize our two young girls, pages, Gabrielle Nitsiza and Keira Franki of Whati. They're both attending Menzi Community School, and their chaperone, KerryAnne Franki, and Calvin and Suzie Franki. So I would like to welcome and acknowledge them. And I would like to acknowledge all the interpreters that are here from the regions. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome from Helen Kalvik School in Ulukhaktok, Kaden Okheena and Tobin Klengenber and chaperone Greg Dunn, and thank the pages for all their hard work they did this week and thank them again for coming down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my page, Paige Hawthorne, who has joined us here in the House this week from Kam Lake and thank her for all of her hard work. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I would like to recognize Greg Dunn from Ulu. I became friends with him just by talking to him every day as I was leaving the building and coming in, and I wish him well in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Oh sorry, Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Wrong end of the room. I would like to welcome Natalie Pressman with the CBC that has joined us. It's always nice to have media here. And I can imagine it gets to be quite a long day at times listening to us here. So I appreciate she comes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: And also very exciting I'm sure.

I too would like to recognize Grant Dunn who is a former teacher in Tsiigehtchic and now in Ulu. And just to let you know, we still miss you in Tsiigehtchic. He had a great basketball program with the students there, and I'm sure he's doing the same in Ulukhaktok.

If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to see people in the gallery. Mahsi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1423-19(2): NUNAKPUT COURT TRAVEL

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today, Mr. Speaker, was the aircraft being held up for the court parties.

Would the Minister just I guess clarify in regards to why are we still holding aircraft in Tuk when we do have a road and places to stay in the community? And why is that -- why are we still holding aircraft because we do need that aircraft for others, to service other communities

because we're kind of in a shortage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I recognize the Member's concerns. Unfortunately, I don't have that level of detail about the operations of the courts. The travel schedule and those logistical pieces are the decisions of the courts so it's not my decision to make. But I can look into it and get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister convey to the court parties I guess in the territory that just to make sure that proper planning, if not using aircraft that's holding up in the communities to provide service, if he could just let them know that in the communities, every community that they're going to they do have a hotel. Paulatuk has a hotel, Ulukhaktok has a hotel, Tuk has B and Bs and a road, and cost savings for that it would save them money. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that these times I think we should be looking at something like that to be more cost effective across the board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make sure that we convey the entirety of this conversation to the courts. We'll provide them with the transcript, and we can have a discussion with them. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1424-19(2): CHILD & YOUTH CARE TRANSFER TO TLICHO GOVERNMENT

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not asking for the Government of the Northwest Territories to allow the Tlicho government to apply on funds for child and youth care counselling. I want to see the government work government to government and transfer child and youth care counsellor positions.

Will the Minister commit to meet with the Tlicho government to develop a timeline for transferring over the child and youth care counsellors to the Tlicho government? Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Education, Culture and

Employment Minister and I, as the Ministers responsible for this joint initiative, have met with education leaders and we have heard firsthand their concerns with the CYCC program. That program is now being evaluated on an expedited basis, meaning that we will act on results as they come in. An example I'll give you of that is changing the job description. Now the job description is oriented to significant post-secondary education. But what we've heard is that people would like more flexibility in the qualifications of the counsellors they're hiring. And so that's an example of the change we've already made. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Yeah, Mr. Speaker, Tlicho government want our children and youth to be counselled, mentored, and supported by Tlicho people. It is critical that children and youth receive the support from their own people.

Will the Minister of health agree with me that Tlicho children and youth should be counselled by Tlicho people? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we use the standard government hiring process to hire counsellors. There's a job description. The position is advertised. There's an interview and scoring and so on and that's how we come up with the qualifications.

I would like the Member to know that the highest use of the CYCC program is in fact in her region. So students are using the existing program. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know GNWT struggles to fill positions in Tlicho region. So why does the government -- GNWT need to keep control over positions they cannot fill? Can the Minister review all the unfilled position in the Tlicho region and work with the Tlicho government to transfer over positions that Tlicho government is ready to take on? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the CYCC initiative started to roll out before the beginning of this Assembly, and it was in a phased process over four years. In the course of that four years, we have learned more about what is effective and isn't effective. So we're now leading a comprehensive evaluation of the program and that will, of course, include looking at vacancy rates, why they are so high. I know that they're not only high in the Tlicho region for health and social services in general but that there are significant vacancies all around the territory, which has forced us to pivot and to become more flexible offering online and virtual, phone and so on

options, so that students get the help they need. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1425-19(2):
GIANT MINE REMEDIATION

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of ENR. Mr. Speaker, within the work hours currently going to southern workers, I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not there are trends in the type of work hours that are going to southern workers over northern workers? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ITI completed an analysis of the GMRP arson contract in June of 2022. The results showed 68 percent total spending had gone to NWT Indigenous businesses and that is on par with the diamond mines. Categories of spending that has gone to southern businesses include construction, air quality monitoring programs, medical sampling and analysis, minerals such as lime, sulfate and dust suppression, drilling and installation specialized equipment, specialized water pumps, and pylons I think -- I guess I got that one wrong. This helped us identify opportunities for the GNWT and NWT business to help build capacity in these areas, but it is important to note much of the work is specialized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy that the Minister was able to read my mind because I just realized I gave him zero context about what we're speaking about. So just for Hansard, we're talking about Giant Mine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister can provide some clarity as to what rate these work hours are going to southern workers because of available northern workers are either being underbid versus there being no NWT bidders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ITI analysis showed that the reason contractors went south included not receiving the highest score on the contract evaluation, no northern companies submitted a bid, non-competitive processes work, technical capacity is absent in northern firms. These contracts were limited to the specialized

equipment items. Through Indigenous Opportunities Consideration, or IOC, the Giant Mine project aims to provide benefits for all work packages to the Indigenous community in the area of the contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I spoke about how it can be difficult for local proponents to be able to bid on the large scale of work that is happening out at Giant Mine, and this can be because there's just not the required clarity around the size, scale, scope, and timelines associated with some of the bidding that's happening out there. So I'm wondering will the Minister push the federal government to provide a more detailed budget and timeline so that local proponents can properly prepare and bid on this work? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ENR along with ITI and ECE participated in the socio-economic working group and the socio-economic advisory body group. These groups provided the Giant Mine project with specific geo-economic advice and input. ECE, with the support from ENR, has developed the North Slave regional training hub to support trainers and funding responses to large scale projects. Canada and Yellowknife Dene First Nation are in the process of finalizing a procurement framework agreement which will finalize Canada's commitment to providing socio-economic benefits to the Yellowknife Dene, by confirming the procurement approaches that will be used for the project, giving the Yellowknife Dene First Nation a role in the decision-making process by reviewing and commenting on planning procurement methods before they are implemented and creating a mechanism way for projects to monitor and report to the Yellowknife Dene socio-economic process. The project is currently in discussion with the Tlicho government and the North Slave Metis on similar agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I was furiously writing and so I am going to have to go back through Hansard as well. And I appreciate that the government is working with YKDFN on a socio-economic agreement. One of the things that I am hearing, and that I'm talking about right now, is that there's not really a clear understanding of whether or not a project is going to be \$1 million, if it's going to come out and be a \$100 million, and the capacity of northern businesses

to be able to kind of play ball in those ball fields is much different, right? If you need a team of five people versus a team of 50 people, well, you're talking about much different projects there.

And so what industry is looking for in the territory is a better idea of what is coming down the pipe - what is showing up at the doorstep and coming out in tendering processes so that they can actively be part of that. And so I'm wondering and asking the Minister if he will be an advocate for northern industry and advocate to the federal government for more clarity on the size, scale, scope, and timelines associated with the projects so that Northerners can participate in the remediation of the mine? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is part of the Giant Mine Remediation Project team and is involved in all work planning, including consideration of timelines. The GMRP timeline has recently been lengthened to maximize Indigenous and northern business opportunities. The GNWT will continue to pursue opportunities associated with the Giant Mine Remediation Project that will create opportunities for Indigenous and northern businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1426-19(2):
NATIONAL ENGINEERING MONTH

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. Can the Minister tell me if she's aware of, and what they are, the activities that her department is doing to celebrate Engineering Month this month given that all of the NWT or the GNWT's engineers typically reside in the Department of Infrastructure? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm doing a Minister's statement next week to acknowledge all the engineers so I'm very proud to be able to do that. In terms of what the department's doing, we've got a number of things happening I'd be quite happy to share with the Member. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate that, but I'm disappointed the Minister can't tell the public right now what they are.

Another issue within engineering is that there are only about 13 percent of engineers in Canada who are women, and this is a very stagnant number. When we look at the Department of Infrastructure, it does counter a lot of the other GNWT departments in that it is not a department that has a lot of women and particularly not a lot of women that are in technical roles.

Can the Minister speak to how the department is working to increase the diversity of the workforce, particularly around gender and non-gender conforming people, in the department? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do recognize within the Department of Infrastructure that it is, you know, predominantly one gender positions and, you know, we are as a department looking out -- reaching out to try and get a more balanced equity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the events that NAPEG, which is the regulator here in the Northwest Territories for engineers and geoscientists, puts on during Engineering Month is the popsicle bridge building contest.

Will the Minister commit to taking part in the popsicle bridge building contest and constructing her own popsicle bridge for demolition during NAPEG's event week? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to have a chat with the Member just to understand what this popsicle event is because I'm -- off the top of my head, I'm not familiar with it. I'd like to understand a little more of it before I commit to doing this because -- yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to tell the Minister about what the popsicle bridge building contest is. So for years now the engineers have been sending out to all out of the communities, all the school groups, if they would like to participate a set and series of popsicle sticks and through that they have to construct a bridge. They are provided with the means to transport the bridges back to Yellowknife if they themselves cannot come to the event. I think Canadian North is usually a sponsor of that shipping. And then they bring them here and we use a machine and we crush them, and we see which bridge withstands the most pressure in the crushing. So this is a great way and a very easy way for children and youth of the Northwest Territories to be exposed to what engineering is and to really put their minds

to how buildings and structures are constructed. So I think it would be a wonderful opportunity for the Minister to show her department that she is involved with this and is committed to it. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Member's description of what this means. It sounds like fun. It sounds like something I should be a little more proactive in. You know, building bridges in the Northwest Territories falls within my department so I'd be quite happy to build with popsicle sticks. Perhaps when we get to actually building bridges, it's not with popsicle sticks. We'd rather do it with steel, which is going to cost money and so on, but I'd be quite happy to do this activity and, you know, invite anyone else who wants to build popsicle bridges with me, I'd be quite okay with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1427-19(2):
CABIN LAND LEASES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order for my dream to come true I actually got to get ahold of a piece of land, which is not an easy task. You know, there was a cabin lottery, after decades, in 2015 and it was a real long shot whether you could actually win one.

So my first question for the Minister of Lands, does he have any update to this House on whether there will be another cabin lottery? Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It's Friday, and I feel like I'm crushing dreams here, so I apologize to the Member. I'm aware of strong interests for new recreational lease opportunities. The Member has brought this up to the House a number of times. Now opportunities need to be carefully planned and that's what we're going through. We also have to reach out to our Indigenous governments, and that's what we're doing. We're working with our Indigenous governments, doing section 35, to be able to do this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope there can be buy-in from our Indigenous governments and we can all find a path to move forward on this. I think there are a number of options.

My next question is, you know, even if you get one of those leases you can't live in them; you can't get a real mortgage. There's a lot of kind of limitations. I think the easiest solution here is that for long-term leaseholders that we create some sort of policy that allows them to get title in appropriate circumstances. Is there any path forward for long-term leaseholders to get fee simple title? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is aware, we are wrapping up the review of the land lease-only policy, and I committed to providing the results prior to the end of this sitting. However, we are aware that land resources and self-government agreements are under negotiations, and we continue to work to ensure that land is managed appropriately under these agreements that are under negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current process of new leases seems to be recreational leases, and I'm not really sure where that stems from. I know many people live illegally in their recreational leases. They use them as residential leases. Is there any path forward to if we're not going to get title and we're not going to have new leases, allowing a mechanism where a recreational lease can become a residential lease? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Lands recognized there may be lessees who have utilized their cabin or dwelling as a residence. There has been longstanding discussion with recreational lessees regarding what restrictions may be in place regarding their occupancy. Issues related to increased waste and fuel storage when people occupy these dwellings on an increased or full-time basis needs to be considered. The department is working to address lease conditions that allow for permanent residency within certain leases under the Public Lands Act and regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the other frustrations I've heard is from the people who aren't allowed to live in their leases is they're also not allowed to run any sort of business activity out of them; you know, whether that's as simple as making wood stoves or doing wood haul or it's something like renting out your cabin from time to time. I know there's kind of an insatiable demand for cabin rentals but it's not currently legal under the leases. Is there any path to

allow some sort of home-based or commercial business activity in leases? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Member for the question. Current provisions for recreational or residential leases does not allow for commercial activities such as an Airbnb. Having a home business or a B and B is considered a commercial endeavour. In most jurisdictions, it requires a commercial lease as well as business license. Commercial leases are available to the public now in appropriate zoned areas. If this is a desire, lessees should reach out to the department to discuss the parameters for changing the use of their lease and potential issues that may need to be considered regarding regulations to address this. 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. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 870-19(2):
ANNUAL REPORTS FOR THE EDUCATION
BODIES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES FOR THE 2021-2022
SCHOOL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Annual Reports for the Education Bodies of the Northwest Territories for the 2021-2022 School Year, ending June 30th, 2022, volumes 1 and 2. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 871-19(2):
SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENT
PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 872-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM
2023/24 MARKETING PLAN

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're thin but they're still important. I wish to table the following two documents: Socio-economic Agreement Program Review Summary Report; and,

Northwest Territories Tourism 2023/24 Marketing Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 873-19(2):
NWT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES 2021-2022 ANNUAL
REPORT

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services 2021-2022 Annual Report. 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, 60, 61, 63, 66, and 67, Committee Report 40-19(2), Committee Report 43-19(2), Committee Report 44-19(2), Committee Report 45-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), 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 Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Madam Chair, your committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates, Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will proceed with the first item. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, do you have witnesses?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, I do.

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

Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I have Mr. John MacDonald, the deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment. As well as Mr. Mike Saturnino, the assistant deputy minister of labour and income security. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Welcome. Committee, we are going to be continuing on with Department of Education, Culture and Employment. And we are on the section labour development and advanced education, beginning on page 57 with information items on page 58 and 59. Are there questions from committee? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am seeing a significant decrease in the top line item of advanced education and strategic initiatives. And I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to why we're seeing such a huge gap between the revised estimates for 2022-2023 and the main estimates for 2023-2024. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. That represents an influx of cash that we received from the federal government as part of their contribution to the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university, and it was not recorded in this year because we received it last year. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, given that the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic is far from anywhere near done, are we expecting additional influxes in cash flow from the federal government for the purposes of that work? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I sure hope so. We have been engaging extensively with the federal government. As I've stated, the Premier has spoken directly to the prime minister about the importance of this initiative and the need for federal support, and I've engaged with a number of my federal counterparts as well. So we are very hopeful. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I hope so as well because I've noted on the next page as well that the -- under contributions that it is marked as zero there and that's a big concern to me because that can be a very expensive venture.

Madam Chair, my next question is in regards to the apprenticeship and occupational certification. I'm wondering how many apprentices does this budget serve? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. We are supporting about 300 apprentices right now. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Given that the goal is always to increase the number of apprentices and given that also Housing is taking on a bigger role in ensuring that apprentices are present on all of their contracts for their builds. There's also been asks in the House for apprentices to be included on more government contracts and for Infrastructure to look at also building that into their contracts, I'm wondering why this line item isn't increasing given the increase in demand and the different avenues that Members are asking for the government to increase the number of apprentices across the territory? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we haven't been expending all of those funds and so what we've actually done, in the last fiscal year, was increase the amounts and increase the eligibility that -- increase the number of people who are eligible to receive funding. So we are taking steps to spend the money we have and if we need more money, you know, there's always opportunities to go back to the feds. So, again, these are great problems to have when we're running out of money to support apprentices and trades people. So if we get to that point then we will ensure that we have the funds to support them because it is -- you know, obviously it's a priority here in the Northwest Territories. We need trades people. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering

how many apprentices can this budget support at \$2.249 million?

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you. Mr. Saturnino.

MR. SATURNINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$2.2 million includes departmental salaries and O and M costs as well, as well as funds that we use to pay for technical training seats. And there is a separate line in here for the wage subsidies themselves, which makes up about half of that amount, and the wage subsidies could fund probably about one-third of the apprentices that we presently have. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering if the SNAP apprentices also come out of here?

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

MR. SATURNINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. If they are SNAP apprentices, they would come out of this budget. If they are SNAP students, they may be eligible to receive funding through the labour market program's line instead. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I should get started at ten minutes, not seven; I was hoping you wouldn't notice that.

My next question is in regards to the wage subsidies for SNAP students and apprentices. Are the wage subsidies for SNAP and apprentice students the same? And there's also been talk of wanting to see SNAP students expanded into all the communities in the Northwest Territories. And is this budget built to actually support that type of increase in SNAP students across the territory, or is this budget actually built to support a certain number of SNAP students in the territory? Thank you.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Saturnino.

MR. SATURNINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. The budget is intended to support apprentices more broadly, not specific to SNAP students. SNAP students receive the same subsidy as other apprentices with the exception of -- across the board, if you're a female apprentice working in a nontraditional trade, there's additional supports there. But generally speaking, they would fall under the same pot of funding. And in past years, we had not fully expended that amount. We're now coming close to spending all of it and if we were to exceed the amount we have, then that would become a different conversation at that point. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I wanted to ask now about some funding that's been moved around, and I just was wondering if the Minister can help me understand it.

But the Labour Market Development Agreement has moved from fund one to fund three, and I'm unsure what this means and so I'm wondering if the Minister can explain this to me? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the Office of the Auditor General, they look at, you know, our financials and they recommended that we make that adjustment. So we are moving that contribution from work performed on behalf of others to operations to more accurately reflect how it is used. So it's an accounting thing to make sure that we're more transparent and more clear. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will pass the floor over to another colleague.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to go back to trades and occupations. Is that program, is it fully subscribed or is there still funds lapsing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. It's not quite fully subscribed but it's not like there's no uptake at all. So we are getting close to the maximum there. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And the Minister had mentioned that there was I think approximately 300 recipients of that program right now. Can the Minister tell me, I guess the success, like what's the retention, I guess, rate and seeing some of the apprentices get through and how many are we losing, and why? Thank you.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Saturnino.

MR. SATURNINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. So in the past, we did have some challenges in -- apprentices definitely had some challenges in completing the programs after they were registered. We continue to work on that. We've introduced a number of supports in the last year, such as the virtual learning strategist and the build your skills. Those are intended to help apprentices get through their technical training. And that seems to be the area where they struggle if they're going to. And generally we're still seeing good numbers as far as completions, and we're still certifying year over year many of our apprentices that we are registering. But there are a few that are struggling and so that's why we've of course been looking at supports for them. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, we hear, I guess, constantly from contractors that, you know, they have trouble hiring people with skills and more so trades people. Is there any special initiatives, I guess, that you're looking -- the government's looking at, the department's looking at, to encourage, I guess, more basic training and also trying to get more people into the trades? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So as part of the transformation of Aurora College, we are trying to expand access to training and education. A lot of those issues that the

Members are talking about are, you know, issues that need to be addressed before someone really moves into the academic part of apprenticeships. As Mr. Saturnino mentioned, there are some new programs as well to help apprentices get the skills they need to make their way through the program. And from what I've heard directly from the people who have been engaged in those, they've been very, very valuable. So I encourage anyone who might be struggling to access those. Perhaps I can hand it to the deputy minister for some more detail. Thank you.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Madam Chair. ECE has also applied to and received funding from the federal Department of Employment and Social Development Canada for what's called Skills 4 Success Funding Program. And this funding has been in turn transferred to Aurora College and in another instance to the literacy council for programs such as what the Member mentioned. So in the case of Aurora College, it's really to develop curriculum and the mechanisms to be able to support apprenticeships. So that's exactly what that is intended to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know in the past, I guess I'm thinking about DJ, a school in Hay River, where I guess through the shop program they would -- you know, they built small tiny homes or houses. I guess they weren't really small but, you know, they might have been single-bedrooms. But is that something that -- I don't see it happening anymore so is that something that the schools may be looking at or something the department is encouraging schools to look at, you know, in a way to encourage students to take up trades as, you know, way of life I guess? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So that's a program that a school can run if it wishes to. They have that flexibility. One of the biggest barriers to programs like that are having teachers who also happen to be, say, journey persons. So they are in short demand; you know, skilled labour and skilled labour who are also teachers. It's a rare combination so that really is the biggest barrier. But if a school board has -- you know, they want to do that, they can do it if they can get the teaching resources. 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, you know -- you know, we got Building Skills 4 Success, we've got Skills Canada, we've got Small Community Employment Workforce Development Agreement. Like, is most -- is all that money being spent and how much is actually going -- or an approximate, I guess, amount actually going to businesses on the ground to support them in training and hiring apprentices, hiring, you know, labour? Thank you.

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

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

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

MR. SATURNINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member referenced a number of different programs, perhaps I'll just quickly touch on each.

So the Building Skills 4 Success is the initiative that DM MacDonald spoke of, which is the funding for the literacy council and the college. So that's been provided to those organizations.

The Workforce Development Agreement is a funding agreement that we use to fund employers and clients and as well as community organizations. It is in -- for example, if we're looking at 2021-2022, we spent about 90 percent of that budget and we carried over the remainder. So those funds are being provided. And we do have employer programs for wage subsidy and training. As well as small communities, we've expended the majority of those funds as well. So working very closely with our organizations and communities. And I believe we have almost all of our designated community authorities that are administering those funds on behalf of ECE. So a lot of these funds are going toward employers and if they're not, they're going to individual clients. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to go to career development and training. So can the Minister just, I guess, give me some background on that because, you know, like I've dealt with, I guess, a number of people who have, I guess, worked for me in the past and some of the things that, you know, that I found was that, you know, sometimes it

worked out for somebody and sometimes it just wasn't the right place or the right type of job for them. Is that something this career development looks at? Thank you.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Saturnino.

MR. SATURNINO: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, we do have career development officers that are throughout all of the regions. So they're on the ground working with clients, working with employers, working with community partners and so they do provide those career development services to the general public. And we do have a career development and training line in the budget here, which is \$30,000, and that's really intended to be used for projects, career development projects. So in the past, we've used that for projects and programs administered by the Mine Training Society. We've used it for other purposes. But, essentially, it's a little bit of a pot of funding that we can use if we have a project in particular that would support skills development in the NWT. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One thing I find is that, you know, with career development offices and that, they got a lot of paperwork to do, a lot of administration to do, and I know before I used to get them out into the work site and give them an idea of what they were spending money on and what they were approving. Is that something that's being done more so now or encouraged? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, absolutely. And as I travel around the territory to the different regions, I speak to the career development officers and they talk about their on-the-ground engagement with industry and with Indigenous governments as well. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Well, I'll just sit silent here for the next 27 seconds. That's all.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister provide an update on when we anticipate the new board for Aurora College being instated? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I expect an announcement next week and all of the instruments to establish the board to all be completed this month. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Awesome, very happy to hear that stuff is being caught up. I was very excited to see the announcement of the return of the social work/teacher program as well as kind of some work for a general arts and science program. Do we have an estimated cost for reinstating those programs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Part of the work to transform the college is ensuring that there is a funding formula in place so that these types of programs are costed. Right now that isn't in place although there is a budget for the programs, and it's the same budget that has existed since the programs were in existence. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Do we know where on which of the three campuses each of those programs is planning to be located? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So with a new board of governors in place, they will be making those types of decisions along with the college administration. So I know that Members have been accustomed to asking those questions of the Minister but with the change in relationship and with the establishment of the board, things are going to operate differently now. So I can't comment on future decisions of the board. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you. I know right now the nursing program in Yellowknife is, you know, by most measures a success. I know

many of the people who have taken that program or are taking it presently. But I believe there's some limitations on the space to expand that program, especially in the housing. I've heard from people that, you know, didn't get into that program -- or chose not to take that program because they couldn't get student housing. So, you know, even in the world where Yellowknife gets another program, I'm not convinced its current space requirements will allow that, especially on the housing front. Before we give all of the decisions to this board, are there any plans to kind of increase the space needs in Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So this House did pass the amendments to the Aurora College Act, so that decision has been made. So we're past the before part. But as the Member's aware, we have a facilities master plan that sets out, you know, potential infrastructure investments and the college and the government are well aware of the space limitations, and along with the residents in Fort Smith, addressing those limitations are the top priorities for new infrastructure for the college. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to switch gears a bit on the trades front. What I've been seeing lately is a lot of great announcements coming out of the federal government and directly to Indigenous governments. You know, I think we saw the Tlicho get, I believe, it was 30 apprentices paid for. I know Fort Good Hope has some federal funding to build a trades centre, which is all great work. There's other examples going on. I'm just hoping the Minister can speak to the extent we are kind of aware of that tracking it or offering partnership. I think, you know, the Fort Good Hope, for example we -- committee met with them, and it seems clear they will need some sort of apprentice building support and perhaps we have to tailor our programs to build that cooperation. I'm just wondering if the Minister can speak to whether we're kind of aware of this and reaching out as more and more of that federal money goes directly to Indigenous governments. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So we have, as I stated earlier, career development officers in the different regions of the Northwest Territories, and they are attuned to what is

happening in their regions. There are often if not formalized relationships at least informal relationships among the different organizations, so Indigenous governments, ECE, businesses. And so I can say that, yes, the department is aware and always open to working whichever way works best for everyone involved. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to just talk a little bit -- actually a lot of my colleagues have asked some of my questions already, and I appreciate the information. But I always have to get a plug in for Skills Canada. Their funding has stayed fairly stagnant over the last while. And, really, for my own personal history and experience with the program, it's a really, really good program. We do well at it, I think, and as far as the competition piece when we send people. I'm sure there's other pots of funding; however, during the pandemic, it was very difficult for them to sort of continue on and there was a discussion around sort of pivoting to more virtual types of sort of trade programs or training. And so I'm just curious to know, like to me, I think this is a great place where with we can invest a lot of money. It's a lot of young people. So I think the youth gravitate more towards it than maybe some of the other types of funding or programs we have.

So can the Minister speak about whether or not we're going to fund Skills Canada NWT a bit more, how are we going to transition or help them transition to a more -- or an ability to be more virtual and reach more community members? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And so we do have the \$70,000 in here. On the line item, there's another \$85,000 the department contributes out of the Labour Market Development Agreement. Perhaps I can hand it to the deputy minister for some more succinct comments on the Member's question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister MacDonald.

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Madam Chair. And the Minister's numbers are correct. Those are funding contributions from ECE. Their primary funder is Employment and Social Development Canada so that's where they tend to get most of their revenue. But they may be able to fund other partnerships with individual

education bodies across the territory as that's their direct link into schools. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And, you know, I understand that the federal government has its own sort of relationships with different organizations but as the Minister's aware, and I've recently become aware, you know, with the way that the federal government awards its funding at times there's often a lag in that funding, or if they decide to delay the announcement, and with so many of our NGOs operating on very shoestring budgets and, you know, sort of I want to -- where residents are living paycheque to paycheque but NGOs are living project funding to project funding, and it's not sustainable; we talk about it a lot. So is there a plan in place then or I guess is there a review maybe going on of some of these NGOs that are offering the programming for the department, or we're funding, to see and ensure that they have financial stability in planning so that they're not dependent on every month or every couple months waiting for a big project to get announced that has very specific ways of dictating how it's spent? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And we're always happy to move to multiyear funding agreements whenever we can. I understand the Member's concerns. I know that NGOs don't have the bridge funding that governments have. The federal funding received by Skills Canada is a little less volatile than some of the other pots, but I'm sure there are instances where they run into issues. We're always happy to meet with Skills Canada if they -- you know, if they have a proposal, if they want to request more funds, I mean we can have those discussions, so I'm definitely always open to that. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. And I play soccer so if I ever get back to that with one of the people that work there, I will let them know that they should maybe schedule a meeting with the Minister and have a chat.

You know, I look at some of these line items and I recognize that there's been some influx of money, as mentioned to my colleague, for the Aurora College; however, given that we had the recent conversation with Giant Mine and the different proponents, I won't rehash all of that

but, you know, I think this is an area where it's a good place again to get money, training, skills, and capacity into the communities outside of Yellowknife. And so I guess I just want to ask the Minister are we going to -- to me, this seems like an area we need some significant investments in. And is there a plan to start bringing more money here and really developing some of these programs instead of having them just be these little, sort of one-offs that offer a training course here and there? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And, yes, we do receive significant funds from the federal government, and they provide those funds to all the provinces and territories and I am currently working with the other ministers of the provinces and territories to begin the negotiations of the future agreements. And I can say that we are putting a lot of effort into that. There are meetings coming up this spring or summer, and we are -- everyone is united in the call for more funding because everyone recognizes the labour shortage, the need for skilled labour, and especially the type of skilled labour we support through this. So hopefully in the next year or the year after, we have -- we'll see some bumps in these line items. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I also hope that we will be seeing bumps in these line items.

I think another piece that I became live to as an engineer and to my statement, when I was consulting, is really the lack of the intermediate age group in many professions. So in Canada with the Baby Boomers starting to retire, we have, you know, younger people coming in, but we're really missing that intermediate senior level of professional which we can see by all of the, you know, vacancies that we're looking for in the various industries.

So I guess with that in mind, how does the department help with sort of that broader succession planning, I guess for lack of a better way to call it, through some of our trade and industries? I hear the Minister mentioning that it's tough to find those trainers that have the actual skill sets. So what is the department doing to be creative to, like, ensure that we are going to have people at all levels of experience and training and ability to continue training them in the future? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And as everyone's aware, over the past few years it's become very evident that, you know, the labour shortage that they've warned us about for years with Baby Boomers retiring, it's happening now. And we can no longer just continue doing the things the way we've done it for decades, really, because the market has changed so significantly. So we are looking at collecting data, looking at labour market trends, looking at demographics, so we can be creative, so we can get a handle on the situation and how we might be able to address it, so. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Anyways, I'm just -- in regards to Aurora College, I'm just looking under the organization structure. So under the structure, you have the Education Act that more or less created the Department of Education, Culture and Employment office. And then under that office, then you have regional DEAs and they have their own boards and there's agreements in place and they administer their own education at the local level, etcetera. So then in terms of communications, so mostly like the chairman of those DEAs will respond or report to the Minister or vice versa type of thing. So I need clarification on that because I'm assuming that's on that part. But in regards to Aurora College, now that they have their own Education Act, how does that Education Act fall under? Does that fall under the Education Act? Is that under that Act, or does that give way to create Aurora College -- sorry, Aurora College Act? I just need you to help clarify that.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And so we have a few pieces of legislation that are fundamental to the education system in the Northwest Territories. We have the Education Act, which is primarily focused on JK to 12, but there is some -- it does reach out to post-secondary and other areas. We now have the Post-Secondary Education Act, which is something we have not had before, and it is the act that really regulates post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. And other jurisdictions have it as well. We are the regulators of that sector. And then we have the Aurora College Act, which we recently amended to provide -- or to make the college truly arm's length. So that's the situation there. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thank you, Minister, for that clarification. So essentially, so the chairman for the Aurora College now will be communicating with you and the office vice versa so it's no different than the regional DEAs and chairmans etcetera. So having said that though, as you know, in the Northwest Territories and from our experience and it's coming up in a lot of meetings I attended, even when I was a chief and attending the Tlicho assemblies, the Dene Nation assemblies, the AFN assemblies, etcetera, even at the national level, there's always been a big gap in education. Even though we get people that graduate from high school, you know, there are huge gaps. You know, they -- or I think my colleague talks about passive -- passing the guys along without just the -- without action of diploma, etcetera. So there's a big gap in education. So even though they got grade 12 and we let them out the door, technically they're in grade 10 or grade 9 level. So, you know, we know that's a problem in our communities, and I think you explained it in the past what are the problems are too as well because I heard it from the House.

Having said that though, Madam Chair, is that in the community in Lutselk'e, we have a problem there too as well because we have a position called community learning support coordinator, and that position hasn't been filled. So usually if you had somebody like that in the community, these are the people that really do the legwork at the local level to help bridge that gap of the students that are falling through the cracks and actually want to bring their levels up so they can go into trades, colleges and universities, etcetera.

So I just want to know if there's a way we could get that filled right away because I understand that there was a problem where, you know, a position was identified -- sorry, not position -- but somebody applied on that position, the position was ready to be filled, and all of a sudden there's an issue on housing. I just want to know it's been almost -- well, I guess June of last year it's been sitting empty but yet our students, our community, really need help. And so I just want to see what we can do to get that position filled right away and so that we could continue to bridge that gap. I think our colleague over here said they were going to build a bridge for us. So if we could do that, I think that would be great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I'll address a few things here.

So the relationship with the college board will be between the Minister and the chair, as the Member stated. The college is actually going to be more autonomous than education bodies so it's a bit of a different relationship, but that's how it will work.

We are looking at a new program, or exploring the possibility of a new program, to work with adults, you know, who they've gone through the JK to 12 system and maybe they don't have the skills that they need to move on to trades or post-secondary. And that is a -- that's a group -- a segment of the population that perhaps could be in the workforce but just needs a bit more support to get there. So we are focusing on that to address some of the Member's concerns. We also made the changes to the student financial assistance so that if a student needs more semesters -- or we're proposing to make them. So if a student needs more semesters, they can do that as well. And I'm sorry if I missed anything but I'll hand it over. Thanks.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you for that, Madam Chairman. I guess the Minister maybe could convey my issue or concerns to the president of the Aurora College and let them know that if we could get this position filled right away, and it's important that -- and, again, the people in the community in my riding are saying that well, you know, geesh, we got issues in education, concerns, etcetera, but they don't know who to call. They're phoning me and saying well, when's the position going to be filled, etcetera. So if I could get you to maybe communicate that to the Department of Aurora College and their people and maybe -- and also if you don't mind getting back to me on that, a follow-up maybe on their next plan on that. Mahsi.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And the Member has raised the position in Lutselk'e with me, and I've committed to convey that either through the department to the college, because we do still have a relationship at the officials level as we work through the transformation. But it's also -- I can -- it's also something that I can raise with the new chair once they are instated. So I can't staff those positions. I'm legally barred from interfering with the operations of the college but when an MLA brings concerns, I bring those concerns to the college. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I want to thank the Minister for paying a visit to the future headquarters of the polytechnic university in Fort Smith in January. It was a really incredible visit. It was on -- it was a very cold day that day. And we went to each classroom, and all the trades were in session. And, you know, as I went through the building, I did not realize myself how important it is to hire local. Mostly all the trades are done by local -- the training is done by local Indigenous personnel who care for these students in a really incredible way. And even the trades head, the head of trades, is a local boy, Duane Macdonald, you know. And as we went through the building, it was very inviting. They were happy to see the Minister on such a personal basis. And I'm very proud to say that, you know, it'll be nice to fill all the other classrooms in that building, because it hasn't been filled since before the pandemic. And, you know, one of the things that I wanted to ask was the -- how many accredited apprenticeships still go south for their training because, you know, there's -- there was a lot of people there, and all those classrooms were all filled. And we have some unique courses there right now. One of them is the new aviation program. And the other one, of course, is the one that -- there's only one school in Canada for NAFTA, and it's in the Fort Smith campus. Those are really specialized areas.

And the only thing that I wanted to mention is that, you know, I want to make sure that we are supporting our own apprenticeships to go to the Fort Smith campus and not sending them to NAIT anymore. I wonder how we can achieve that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So if someone needs to or wants to take their apprenticeship courses and they're offered at the college, we will support them to go to the college. If they would like to take a program that's not offered by the college, then we'll support them to go elsewhere. But, you know, if they would just prefer to go to somewhere in Alberta for a program that is being offered at the college, we -- unless there is a -- I mean, there may be exceptions but generally the rule is that if a program is offered at the college, we support them to go to the college only. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: On page 60, where it has the labour development and advanced education active positions, under headquarters and North Slave, which those two should be together. You know, they're always -- I don't know who separates these but there's 33 positions there, and the rest is 26. So I'm just wondering, you know, you have an increase of four positions in headquarters and another three in North Slave. Can you tell me what those positions are? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the reason it's separated is because we have regional offices that deliver services directly to the public and we have those in each of the regions, including the North Slave. Separate from that is the headquarters office, and they do the headquarters work. So the same way that our CDOs, or career development officers in Hay River and Fort Smith, they're in Yellowknife. And that's the recognition of that.

The increase in positions is a -- and, you know, I'll hand it over. It's a bit of an adjustment based on some previous changes. So I think it's more technical than anything else, so I'll hand it to the deputy minister. Thank you.

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

MR. MacDONALD: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister mentioned earlier, I think, when responding to a previous question, the GNWT has determined that it needed to reclassify this funding. So previously it would have been categorized as funds or funding carried -- or programming carried on behalf of others, in this case the federal government. That's now been shifted into operations. So that's why these positions are showing up now in a different way where they wouldn't have been as visible before because it would have been federal funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I'm very, very proud that we have this, the polytechnic headquarters in Fort Smith but I would -- you know, there's two positions. We talk about decentralization, and we have two borrowed positions that are here in Yellowknife from the polytechnic headquarters. And as the community of Fort Smith, including the leadership, has spoken to the Minister, we would like those two positions returned to Fort Smith and that senior management. I know that the board will -- he won't be able to do it but, you know, it's -- I want

to bring it up here for clarity and for -- to be on the record that they should be returned to Fort Smith. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And as the Member knows -- or as the Member stated, that I can't make that commitment obviously on behalf of the college but it is on the record. It's on the record from this conversation and many letters and many other discussions we've had in the House. So the position of the Member and Fort Smith leadership is well known. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have anything further, Member for Thebacha?

MS. MARTSELOS: My last statement that I want to make is that I'm very happy that the board will be named next week. I look forward to a board of governors for the college. Long overdue. And I will support them in any way I can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Well, one of the questions I was going to ask was the position increase for headquarter and three in North Slave, and that's all in Yellowknife. And I have four communities. There's Aurora College campus or office or building in Whati. They don't have their office -- they don't have a building of their own, but. So there's Whati and Behchoko but there's nothing in Gameti and Wekweeti. And there's, like, 4,000 of Tlicho -- or close to 4,000 people living Tlicho region. And we have a lot -- we have the highest unemployment rate in the NWT. And I'm very grateful for the recent announcement that Tlicho government just made with the federal government. And in the past, I know that we didn't use it because of lack of trades program or, you know, the apprenticeship. We've been using a lot of southern workers with the trades program so I'm happy for that, you know. So hopefully we're not going to use those people anymore, but.

So I am very supportive of community-based program. So I was hoping that this -- you know, this North Slave -- because nothing mentioned about Tlicho in here so I was hoping that there was going to be more positions going into Tlicho region because of -- with the, sorry, due to the recent announcement as well, you know, with the federal government. So I just wanted to ask if there's -- if there's going to any more position going to Tlicho region any time soon?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So what we're proposing here is this upcoming fiscal year. So this is the next year. So there are no additional positions in this area being proposed for the Tlicho region. The Member can stay tuned for perhaps some other positions in some other areas in the Tlicho region that she might be seeing sometime soon though. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Well, I would like to see something, you know, like, because I'm sure the people would like to see something because there's a lot of young people that don't want to leave their community. They don't want to -- because with a housing shortage, people don't want to leave, you know, because if they leave then they're going to lose their housing, especially with the public units and leaving their family, their language, their culture behind is -- it's hard on some people, some of the young people, so they would rather do a lot of the training. And if we had more of that in small communities, there would be -- we can train more people from our regions, from our communities. It's not just my region that I'm talking about.

It's for other regions as well, you know. And just like Fort Smith, our colleague said that there's a lot of trades people there and if we have, you know, a program like that in each region, I'm sure we could graduate lots of the apprenticeship -- trades people in our regions. So that's why I'm just -- is there any -- I just wanted to ask about the community-based program. Is there any plan of introducing or having any of some of these apprenticeship programs offered in the small communities?

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the financial supports that the department offers, they're available to any apprentices or employers -- you know, eligible employers anywhere. In terms of the programming being based in communities, part of the transformation of the college, you know, involves ensuring there is a presence in every community in the territory. What that presence will look like will be different elsewhere, but the idea is to make access to training more accessible in communities. So one of the central features of this transformation into a polytechnic is what the Member is talking about. We want to give more training opportunities to people in communities. Thank you.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: No. No, I think I just -- well, I'm more interested in the community-based programs so I just -- I would like to see more of that in small communities, so. And if there's, you know, a plan on doing something about it, you know, that's good. Then I guess we will just wait and see what kind of plan they have in place. Yeah, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any final comments, Minister?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes. And as part of that work that I talked about, there will be a contractor going out and engaging with communities to talk about the community learning centres and the types of programming that they might have. So the Member can -- well, that will be happening as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you. Okay. Members, if there's no further questions, please turn to page 57.

Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and advanced education, operations expenditure summary, Main Estimates 2023-2024, \$60,106,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, there are additional information items on page 61 to 67. Do Members have any specific questions to these items? Seeing none, we will now return to the departmental summary found on page 30. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I just wanted to make some closing comments while we're here.

I appreciate all of the comments from committee. We've made some significant changes in this department and that's because of the support of my Cabinet colleagues and the Regular Members. I do listen when they speak and I have tried to -- you know, to put forward initiatives that I feel would be supported by all the Members of the House based on the needs in their regions.

I also want to say that I have tasked this department with some monumental initiatives this term. I probably wouldn't have done that had I known how the departments operate and this type of labour challenges we've been facing, but I really want to thank the department as well. The staff have been working

themselves to the bone for a number of years now. And I apologize to the Department of Justice. I should have made the same comments with them. But I just wanted to say that since this is my last appearance here for me. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. All right. So we will now return to the departmental summary found on page 29. I think I said 30. 29, and revenue summary page on page 30. Oh, I already said that. Sorry, no further questions.

Committee, I will now call the departmental summary. Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, \$382,280,000. Member for Kam Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 369-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 813-19(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – EDUCATION,
CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT –
DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT (PAGE 29),
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. 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. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will be deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Member for Kam Lake, what is the wish of committee?

MS. CLEVELAND: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

---SHORT RECESS

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates, and I would like to report progress with one motion carried. 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 Yellowknife Centre. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Orders of the day for Monday, March 6th, 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
15. Notice of Motions
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
- Bill 72, Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act
 - Bill 73, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 4
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 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum products and Carbon Tax 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
 - Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Child Day Care 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
 - Tabled Document 694-19(2), Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
 - Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 6th, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. Enjoy your weekend.
- ADJOURNMENT
- The House adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

