



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Day 153**

**19<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Thursday, March 30, 2023**

Pages 6089 - 6140

**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

---

**Hon. Diane Archie**

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

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

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

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**

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

**Mr. Richard Edjericon**

(Tu Nedhe-Willideh)

**Hon. Julie Green**

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

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

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

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendah)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**

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

**Ms. Jane Weyallon Armstrong**

(Monfwi)

---

### Officers

**Clerk of the Legislative Assembly**

Mr. Tim Mercer

**Deputy Clerks**

Mr. Glen Rutland  
Ms. Kim Wickens

**Committee Clerks**

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

**Law Clerks**

Ms. Sheila MacPherson  
Mr. Toby Kruger

---

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>6089</b>
<b>MINISTER'S STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>6089</b>
Draft Homelessness Strategy (Cochrane) .....	6089
Combined Mental Wellness and Addictions Fund (Green) .....	6090
Review of Land Lease-Only Policy (Thompson).....	6090
Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (Wawzonek) .....	6091
<b>MEMBER'S STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>6092</b>
Impacts of Carbon Taxation on the Northwest Territories (Simpson) .....	6092
Unauthorized Occupancy and Indigenous Rights (Johnson).....	6092
Reflection on Return of Spring (Nokleby).....	6093
Regional Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Funding (Weyallon Armstrong).....	6093
Pace of Government Business and Intention to Seek Re-election (Martselos) .....	6094
Bison Jamboree in Fort Providence (Bonnetrouge).....	6094
Repudiation of Doctrine of Discovery and Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (Edjericon).....	6095
Inuvik Muskrat Jamboree (Semmler) .....	6095
Engagement of Youth with Standing Committee on Social Development (Cleveland).....	6096
Order of the Northwest Territories Recipient Joanne Deneron (Thompson).....	6096
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>6097, 6110</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>6098</b>
<b>REPLIES TO THE COMMISSIONER'S ADDRESS</b> .....	<b>6111</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>6112</b>
<b>MOTIONS</b> .....	<b>6113</b>
Motion 78-19(2) – Extended Adjournment of the House to May 23, 2023 .....	6113
Motion 79-19(2) – Expression of Gratitude to Clerk, Tim Mercer, for Dedicated and Exemplary Service .....	6113
<b>SECOND READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>6121</b>
Bill 80 – Dental Hygienists Profession Statute Act.....	6121
Bill 81 – An Act to Amend the Education Act, No.2.....	6123
Bill 82 – Legal Profession Act .....	6124

Bill 83 – Liquor Act .....	6124
Bill 84 – An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation.....	6125
Bill 85 – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act .....	6125
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS.....</b>	<b>6126</b>
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.....</b>	<b>6136</b>
<b>THIRD READING OF BILLS .....</b>	<b>6136</b>
Bill 68 – An Act to Amend the Child Day Care Act .....	6136
<b>ASSENT TO BILLS .....</b>	<b>6138</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>	<b>6139</b>

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, March 30, 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. 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 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):**  
Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 347-19(2):  
DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, homelessness is a reality that far too many people experience. The factors that contribute to homelessness are complex and unique to each individual who experiences it. The challenges and solutions vary by community and differ in the Northwest Territories compared to urban centres in the South. That is why we need an all-of-government strategy to address homelessness in the Northwest Territories.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, or even a suite of approaches that work for every individual and family. Multifaceted, person-centered approaches, sustained effort, and collaboration among governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector are all required to address the needs of individuals and families living without a stable, safe, and appropriate place to call home.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will table a draft of A Way Home: A Comprehensive Strategy to Address Homelessness in the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories' homelessness strategy is being released as a draft so we can continue to incorporate meaningful input from stakeholders prior to finalization. The proposed actions focus on individuals and families who are chronically homeless however the actions lend themselves to prevention wherever possible therefore residents in precarious living situations will also benefit from this strategy.

The homelessness strategy identifies nine areas of action and puts forward the ambitious goal to achieve functional zero homelessness. A functional zero target recognizes that homelessness will never be eradicated completely but that action can be taken to prevent it wherever possible, and homelessness can be brief, rare, and non-recurring.

The strategy recognizes the crucial role frontline service providers, both within Government of the Northwest Territories and community partners, serve in supporting vulnerable community members and the need for ongoing, solutions-oriented conversations, and actions. We recognize the need to ensure shelter services have appropriate resources, reflect the needs of their users, and identify potential solutions such as multi-year and better coordinated funding, on-going training, and Government of the Northwest Territories support.

We know there is a need for wraparound services and this strategy aims to improve access and use of culturally safe mental health and addictions services for residents, especially those experiencing chronic homelessness. This strategy also identifies the need for transitional housing and supported living arrangements as well as other actions that are already underway in this area.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that we need to do a better job at coordinating the delivery of our programs and services aimed at addressing homelessness. This strategy is intended to create an environment for positive change and a shift in organizational culture towards more person-centered services and improved collaboration between the Government of the Northwest Territories and service providers. We want to ensure that our actions to address homelessness align with the needs of communities and Indigenous governments. Individual communities and regions may have their own solutions and the Government of the Northwest Territories has a role in supporting those initiatives. As well, we must review our own programs and policies,

and the renewal of Housing Northwest Territories, as well as the review of the Government of the Northwest Territories Income Assistance Program are examples that promise to contribute to the desired outcomes of this strategy.

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize the need for better data collection, respectful information-sharing, and evaluated results. This strategy incorporates regular meetings with community partners and will be subject to periodic review and updating starting three years after its implementation.

Mr. Speaker, over the coming weeks, we will further engage with Indigenous governments, community governments, non-profits, researchers and academics, those with lived experiences, and the broader public, to seek their input and suggestions. Before the end of this government, we are aiming to finalize a strategy that reflects the wisdom and sets out the direction for community members who are experiencing homelessness to find a way home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. Colleagues, before we continue, I'd like to recognize Mr. Robert C. McLeod, former Member of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Assemblies, former Minister and deputy premier. Welcome back to the Chamber. Also his wife Judy, welcome. And also Mr. David Brock, the NWT's former chief electoral officer, welcome.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 348-19(2):  
COMBINED MENTAL WELLNESS AND  
ADDICTIONS FUND**

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At a recent Council of Leaders meeting on mental health and addictions, I heard from Indigenous governments about what is working well in their communities as well as some of the challenges. There are many successes, and it is truly inspiring to hear about the programs and initiatives going forward in communities across the NWT.

One of the challenges leaders identified was the administrative burden of applying for multiple funding pots for mental wellness and addictions recovery funding. In response to this feedback, I am pleased to advise that the department will be combining the On the Land Healing Fund, the Addictions Recovery and Aftercare Fund, and the Addictions Recovery Peer Support Fund, into one fund called Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Fund.

This combined fund will continue to prioritize Indigenous governments and will help reduce the burden of compiling and completing multiple applications and reports. Bundling the funds will also provide Indigenous governments with greater autonomy over the kinds of mental wellness and addictions recovery projects they offer and how funding is allocated. This change will take effect on April 1st at the start of the new fiscal year.

In addition to the proposed combining of funds, the department will be revising the application process in 2024-2025. Applications will be accepted prior to the start of the next fiscal year so Indigenous governments can receive early confirmation of funding which will support program planning, provide stability, and enable funds to be spent earlier.

Mr. Speaker, this is a positive step forward in our ongoing partnership with Indigenous governments, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with them to meet the mental wellness and addictions needs of NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 349-19(2):  
REVIEW OF LAND LEASE-ONLY POLICY**

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on the ministerial mandate and commitments to review the Government of the Northwest Territories Land Lease-Only Policy.

Mr. Speaker, the Land Lease-Only Policy was initially established in 1987 to ensure ongoing Aboriginal rights agreement negotiations were not impacted through the sale of land. Since then, our territory has changed in many ways. Our population and economy have grown, our communities are more developed, and the GNWT is responsible for most of the land and resources. While this progress is welcome, this growth comes with an increased need for land for housing, businesses, and community development, including in areas with ongoing Aboriginal rights agreement negotiations.

Despite these changes in our territory, the Land Lease-Only Policy has not been updated since the mid-1990s. The recent review of the policy concluded that the policy prevented the GNWT from meeting the land needs for housing, business, and community growth.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure everyone in this House would agree that government policies should be dynamic and responsive to the needs of all our territory. I share this belief.

Following the initial review, the Department of Lands engaged with the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat, Indigenous governments, and standing committee to resolve issues found during the review. I thank everybody who participated for providing valuable feedback. I can confirm that the department has reviewed all the feedback and completed updated that necessary all views and needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that effective April 1st, the Land Lease-Only Policy will be replaced with the Limitation of Land Sales Policy. This new policy will continue to meet the intended goals of restricting the sale of the most vacant land within and outside communities in the areas with continuing Aboriginal rights agreement negotiations. It will also support other policy goals of the GNWT related to housing, business, and community growth by changing the outdated conditions for titled land. Going forward, I am confident the new Limitation of Land Sales Policy reflects feedback received through the engagement process. The revised policy will also meet the needs of many of our residents and communities now and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 347-19(2):  
SUSTAINABLE CANADIAN AGRICULTURE  
PARTNERSHIP

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, the availability of healthy, affordable food is a fundamental requirement for a good quality of life and a strong, healthy territory. The Government of the Northwest Territories mandate reflects this and commits to addressing food security while also investing in Northwest Territories agriculture as a growing sector of our economy.

Since 2003, the GNWT has partnered with the federal government to provide financial resources and cross-jurisdictional supports to encourage the growth and sustainability of the agricultural and agri-food sector in the Northwest Territories. A succession of formal five-year agreements has resulted in renewed agriculture development in the Northwest Territories, evidenced by the growth and diversity of producers and processors, and a rise in local production and sales.

On April 1st, the fifth such bilateral agreement will come into effect, titled the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, or the Sustainable-CAP. The Sustainable-CAP will

see an investment of \$7.6 million in the Northwest Territories agriculture and agri-food sector over the next five years. Canada will provide 60 percent of this funding annually with the GNWT making up the rest. Overall, the new agreement represents a 25 percent increase in the government's investment in agriculture across Canada, with funding organized in five priority areas:

- Climate Change and Environment;
- Market Development and Trade;
- Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness;
- Resiliency and Public Trust; and,
- Science, Research, and Innovation.

The Sustainable-CAP emphasizes a commitment to strengthening relationships and increasing Indigenous participation in the sector while improving access to funding. As with previous multilateral agriculture partnerships, the Sustainable-CAP confirms the exemption of the Northwest Territories from requirements of proportionate spending and from the accounting of federal attributed funding, where required.

Mr. Speaker, the summer flooding of 2022 was devastating for many residents in the South Slave and Deh Cho regions and, among them, members of our territory's agriculture sector. With that in mind, and in response to what we heard from engagements with the Northwest Territories agriculture community last year, the GNWT, with this new agreement, will leverage its participation in the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership to provide access for Northwest Territories producers to two key business risk management programs.

- AgriStability is a whole-farm margin-based income stabilization program that aims to protect producers against large declines in farming income due to production loss from unpredictable weather, crop or animal disease, poor yields, increased costs, or adverse market conditions.
- AgriInvest is a self-managed producer-government savings account designed to help manage small income declines and make investments to manage risk and improve market income.

Coming out of last year's tragedy, Mr. Speaker, we hope that the addition of the AgriStability and AgriInvest programs will serve to increase

the confidence of Northwest Territories producers and agri-food businesses as they look to rebuild what was lost.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT's support for regional agriculture programs is doing more than encouraging local food production. It is promoting economic development and diversity and, in time, will help us to address food security especially in our small and remote communities. The sustainable agriculture partnership will help us realize this vision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1500-19(2): IMPACTS OF CARBON TAXATION ON THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we voted to continue collection and administration of the carbon tax on behalf of the federal government. Although it divided this House, I believe we are all in agreement that the tax itself is bad for the NWT and should be eliminated or an exemption provided.

Mr. Speaker, we heard a passionate plea from the Member of Nunakput who's constituents, and who I believe are the most impacted by this tax - a tax that only increases the cost of living for residents and drives away development. The people who live in and make the northernmost communities home, have been forced to rely heavily on both this and the federal government just to survive. This tax pushes residents' reliance on government even further and as the cost of living increases, many are forced to go without.

Mr. Speaker, our reliance on fossil fuels continues and will continue well into the future while this tax continues to punish a limited population who have limited to no immediate choice for cheaper green energy. As the carbon tax increases, it only works to strand an important resource which is northern oil and gas. This tax, coupled with the moratorium placed on northern oil and gas development, is only strangling any opportunity northern residents have for employment or business opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, this government cannot sit by and watch the unfairness unfold without our own backstop to assist the most vulnerable who will feel the greatest impact. We may not be able to

change the tax itself, however, we do need to change the mindset of those in Ottawa when it comes to the reality of living in the North. Southern and federal politicians need to realize that our presence in the North has value.

When one talks about Arctic Sovereignty, we are talking about residents who are on the frontline. When we talk about the untapped resources, we are talking about potential benefits for all Canadians. When we talk about Indigenous people, we are talking their homeland.

Mr. Speaker, stranded resources not used should be recognized as keeping our carbon footprint in check. Our forests and peat lands capture more carbon than we produce. So when the government discusses targets and carbon tax with the federal government, they must consider natural carbon capture and by not using stranded oil and gas in the Beaufort Sea, we are not adding to carbon increases. And this should be enough to eliminate or reduce the carbon tax for NWT residents - otherwise we may have to wait for the Conservatives to axe the tax.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1501-19(2): UNAUTHORIZED OCCUPANCY AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Department of Lands set out on their unauthorized occupancy quest, we were told that anyone with an Indigenous right would be put in a separate category and dealt with later. And, Mr. Speaker, recently one of my constituents, who is an Indigenous fisherman, was kicked off of public land. And I'm trying to understand why this happened. I don't want to get into specifics of this one case, but I would like the Department of Lands to give us some guidance here. And, Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I think we all have to recognize how complicated Indigenous rights are. This case raises a lot of questions. It raises questions such as when does an Indigenous right end? Does it end when there's commercial activity? Does it end when there's a cabin built and it becomes a permanent structure? Do the Metis have rights on this side of the lake? Do the YKDFN have rights on that side of the lake? These are messy questions, Mr. Speaker, and they're questions best left to the courts and land claim processes. They are questions that the Department of Lands said they would not be answering and should not be answering, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have questions for the



Department of Lands on what exactly they are using as a test for Indigenous rights to harvest on Great Slave Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1502-19(2):  
REFLECTION ON RETURN OF SPRING

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring has sprung. According to some calendars, spring arrived last week however to those of us living in the North, it usually waits a little bit longer. We are blessed with the return of longer days, and spring is a beautiful yet challenging at this time of year. As the snow melts on the streets and in our yards, on community trails and on ice roads, it reveals how we weathered the winter season.

Spring can be a metaphor of the past season. Potholes are a given. It is a right of passage of living here however as the snow slowly melts away, we see our beautiful Mother Earth littered with garbage and illegal dumping in the night that is akin to the illicit drugs that are after our most vulnerable. Abandoned items lean against garbage bins like the unkept promises to those suffering from trauma, addiction, and homelessness. Fast food containers and plastics are strewn about like the unhealed careless comments to family and friends and the endless trail of broken glass, cigarette butts, and dog waste, like the demands, wants, and needs of the entitled and privileged.

In the past few months concerns of the pandemic have taken a back seat to the challenges of debt, finances, cost of living, employment, addictions, mental health, housing, homelessness, violence, and premature death. Once again, we will spring clean as we always do. We will continue to take care of ourselves, our families, our communities, and our Mother Earth the best we can. We will discard that which is no longer useful and donate that which others can use. We will encourage that which will bring us together, to watch out for each other, to listen and be kind if that is all we can offer. We know that what we do to each other, we do to ourselves.

The opportunity is ours in this new season, to get out of our own way and create more meaningful relationships with each other, to engage in mindful and respectful dialogue. We can make the foundation, the ground, clean again as we intentionally prepare for the planting of seeds, seeds of growth and change. Our collective consciousness, connected like a

dream catcher or a spider web, will set in motion how this upcoming season will be for everyone in our communities. How we choose to do this will be evident in the new growth that comes with the melting of next spring's snow. I wish everyone the best in this changing of the seasons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1503-19(2):  
REGIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AND  
MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about trust. We are in a mental health crisis. The NWT has some of the highest rates of substance abuse and intimate partner violence in Canada. Young people are losing their lives to suicide.

In October of last year, we passed a motion on suicide prevention, asking for each region to have \$250,000. This is \$1.75 million for our youth, families, and communities. This represents seven regions, including Tlicho. It is upsetting because this government said no and decided to ignore the motions to provide additional support for our young people. Their life is priceless, and they are our future generations. We are the people of this land, and this is what we have asked for. When we say no to support, we are saying no to our youth. They already have limited resources in the communities. It is very sad we are losing young people to addictions and suicide.

This motion would have helped our young people. A regional fund would have given each region the power to make their own decisions on how the money should be spent and where it should focus. The Government of the Northwest Territories is supposed to be a consensus government. The Cabinet needs to listen and work with us, not against us. We all have common interests serving the people of the NWT and in our regions. When we, the majority of the MLA, vote in favour of something, we are representing the view of the people. It should be respected and acted on. This is how consensus government works. It works together in collaboration.

Mr. Speaker, we are elected into being an MLA to serve our people. Our people want funding at the regional level to provide mental health support and prevent losing our youth. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Why does the Government of the Northwest Territories keep preventing this? Whenever we ask for this funding, the Financial Administration Act, legislation and policies, are always referred to as why we can't. We have to answer to the people, not to the bureaucrats, and find ways we can work to make this happen. This can happen. The Government of the Northwest Territories just has to do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1504-19(2):  
PACE OF GOVERNMENT AND INTENTION  
TO SEEK RE-ELECTION

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of the many things I've discovered as a Member of this House, there's one thing that sticks out to me all the time, which is the slow pace of conducting government business. It takes so much time to simply make a decision about anything and to get things done in this building, which can be frustrating at times because I'm a very busy MLA and I'm used to getting things done at a faster pace. But regardless, I persevere, and I continue to press forward because I know that the work we do here is important and it does impact the people of the NWT, whom we represent.

Partially for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I feel that my work here at the Legislative Assembly is not yet complete, which is why I will take this opportunity to publicly announce my intention to run for re-election as the MLA for Thebacha in the 2023 territorial election. Mr. Speaker, if I have the privilege to be re-elected as the MLA in the 20th Assembly, I will continue to work hard, as I always do, for the constituents of Fort Smith, as well as all the people of the NWT. I take my oath of loyalty very seriously. So as a Member of this Assembly, I will always be loyal to the people of the NWT, and I'll always honour and respect the treaties and land claims signed with Indigenous peoples.

Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of the 19th Assembly, I want to take a moment to thank all my colleagues in this House, both on the Regular side and on the Cabinet side for all the work we are able to do throughout this term. It was difficult at times; there's no doubt about that. But we were still able to get many things done for the people of the NWT, which is a very good thing. I want to wish all my colleagues good luck in their re-election efforts this fall. However, for those not seeking re-election, I want to thank each of you for your service in this House, and I wish you all well in your future

endeavours. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement

---Unanimous consent granted

Also, Mr. Speaker, today this Assembly is going to lose a very special person. Today marks the last day of employment of our long-time clerk, Mr. Tim Mercer, who after today will be retiring from the Legislative Assembly. I want to thank Mr. Mercer for all his 20 years serving this House. His presence will most certainly be missed in this building. I wish him all the best with whatever life brings him next.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all my amazing constituents of Thebacha for their continued support. I also want to thank all the Indigenous leaders throughout the NWT for their continued support in me and for them always reaching out to me to share their concerns. And lastly, I would like to thank my family for always supporting me in my work, which includes my husband Peter, my two sons Jerry and Mickey, and my dog Rambo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1505-19(2):  
BISON JAMBOREE IN FORT PROVIDENCE

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, spring is in the air, the sun is out in full force. Well if it isn't, it will be once I part the clouds. It won't be long before we have to don our Comashores, the old gumboots, as we traverse the many potholes.

Mr. Speaker, the Fort Providence Bison Jamboree is in full force and has been running all week filled with daily activities to welcome the spring. This yearly carnival gets everyone out of the house, and people are encouraged to participate in any event of their choice. There's three-on-three basketball, three-on-three volleyball, poker rally, and everyone's favourite cribbage tournament. Mr. Speaker, there are events for toddlers and tots at the school gym, youth movie nights, and youth outdoor events. Of course, all this activity brings on hunger pains so they will host a hot dog eating contest. If that is not enough to settle down the tapeworms, then check out the outdoor barbecues throughout the weekend along with the pancake breakfasts.

Mr. Speaker, this year they will introduce the Ultimate Bush Person contest, which is a traditional carnival event in which contestants will have to saw a log, haul and split the wood,

and boil the tea. The winner will be crowned the 2023 Ultimate Bush Person.

No carnival is complete without an adult talent show and dry dance. So pull out your favorite uptown shoes and jig like your life depended upon it. Mr. Speaker, I'm all tuckered out and I haven't even entered an event yet. So come on by, don't be shy, make new friends, buy arts and crafts on Saturday, try out the three-on-three hockey out on the river, and there's something for everyone. So be sure to check out the Bison Jamboree at Fort Providence. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. And I'm sure you'll get some very nice pictures over the weekend. Mahsi.

Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1506-19(2):  
 REPUDIATION OF DOCTRINE OF  
 DISCOVERY AND TRUTH AND  
 RECONCILIATION COMMISSION CALLS TO  
 ACTION

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today the Vatican development and education office released a statement formally repudiating the doctrine of discovery. These theories, backed by 15th century Papal Bulls, legitimize colonial era seizure of Indigenous lands and formed the jurisdiction for the forceful disposition of sovereign Indigenous nations from their territories. The doctrine of discovery interbills are based on the presumed racial superiority of European Christians people and has been used for the -- to dehumanize, exploit, and subject Indigenous people and dispose Indigenous peoples of their land and rights for over 500 years. This statement said was right to recognize these errors and acknowledge the long-lasting effects of colonial era and assimilation of policies of Indigenous people and asked for their forgiveness. This statement recognizes at least these Papal Bulls or decrees did not adequately reflect the equal dignity and rights of the Indigenous people and that the documents had been manipulated for political purposes of colonial powers to justify immoral acts against Indigenous people that were carried out at the time without opposition of -- from ancestral authorities.

The Catholic Church therefore repudiates in these concepts that fail to recognize the inherent right of human rights of Indigenous people. In reviewing this release, this is not quite the level of relocation of the doctrine of discovery that was requested by the survivors during the Papal visit in 2002, visit to Canada, during

which he apologized to Indigenous people for the church's role in the residential school system. Of course, the path of reconciliation is long and winding, and this is just one small step. However, this is without a doubt a breath of fresh air for over 500 years that's overdue. Our people have experienced relentless and deliberate attempts of colonization over hundreds of years, the intergenerational impacts of our brothers and sisters, our parents, and our children are significant and long lasting. But together we can make a rapid stride towards addressing historical injustice and moving forward in meaningful truth and reconciliation. While we cannot change the past, we will live in present; we must look forward to creating a future for our children and that will walk that we can all look forward to. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. We will continue to call on the Government of Canada to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 94 Calls to Action in order to redress the legacy of residential school and advances the process of Canadian reconciliation. We must be steadfast in confronting these truths in order to find a better way forward. In the words of the Dene National Chief, Gerald Antoine, who is the AFN national portfolio holder for the residential school, family, like a branch on a tree, we all grow in different direction, yet our root remains the same. Let us find comfort and strength and shared values, nourish and strengthen our root and reconnect with energy and determination to this critical work. I would have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1507-19(2):  
 INUVIK MUSKRAT JAMBOREE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, as this is our last day of this sitting, it's been a long two months. We'll be back in the May-June sitting, but I hope all my colleagues get a good couple days of rest before you get back to all the other work that you do as MLAs and Ministers.

I want to end this session on a good note. So this weekend is the beginning of many communities' spring celebrations in my region, and I would like to point out that in my community of Inuvik, we'll be celebrating the 65th Inuvik Muskrat Jamboree on April 21st to

24th, 2023. And I hope that we have some beautiful weather and that everybody enjoys their time visiting friends, family, taking part in all the community events. And I thank at the volunteers that make this happen every year.

I also want to wish those heading out to their camps for the annual spring hunt over the next two months, safe travels to them and their families.

I'd like to thank my CA Brenda Bernhardt for holding down the fort over the last two months and the reminder to my constituents that the coffee is always on. And, Mr. Speaker, I too want to wish Mr. Clerk, Mr. Tim Mercer, on your retirement, and it was great work working with you; it was great to meet you, to know you, and I wish you'd come back to visit us before the end of our term, and I wish you nothing but the best. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1508-19(2):  
ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH WITH  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, anybody that was either present or listening to Committee of the Whole yesterday may have noticed that it was basically an extension of a Standing Committee on Social Development meeting here for most of the day. And two of the things that we covered in Committee of the Whole yesterday were reports that were done by the standing committee, but those reports could not have been in the way that they were done without the participation of the residents of the Northwest Territories. They really are the voices of the residents of the Northwest Territories. And one of the things that we have tried to do different this term in the Standing Committee of Social Development is ensure that we really elevate the voices of youth from around the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we've done in order to do that work through our priorities with the youth of the Northwest Territories is to step outside of this building and to meet youth in spaces that they find or feel are safe for them. So the work that we have largely done with youth has not happened in the Legislative Assembly. It has happened in places like a youth centre. Those are places that youth have identified are more comfortable for them. So it found committee members sitting on couches, eating doughnuts, drinking hot chocolate, and

being able to hear true, valid, lived experiences from youth from across the territory, not just youth from Yellowknife.

The reason that committee has done this is to capture voices that are incredibly powerful to the work that we do and incredibly insightful and important to the work that is done by our committee.

Mr. Speaker, the voices of youth give our work more strength and more depth and the stories and lived experiences that they have so bravely shared with committee members have truly captivated committee members because they have been honest, and they have been brave. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the youth who have shared their stories and lived experiences with committee members in the work that we have done, but I also want to extend a huge thank you to the staff and the executive director of the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories and Home Base YK. Those staff members have created a lot of those safe spaces through their existing relationships with youth from across the territory. And I'd like to thank youth for participating and look forward to one day seeing them sitting in these seats here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1509-19(2):  
ORDER OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RECIPIENT JOANNE  
DENERON

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to recognize and share some, I repeat some, amazing things about Ms. Joanne Deneron during her public life. I can say I have the pleasure of knowing her and have had some very amazing conversations with her since moving to Fort Simpson in 1992.

Mr. Speaker, Joanne is a resident of Fort Liard, is nominated for work and community leadership. Joanne has been selected for or elected to many positions in the community of Fort Liard where she served with distinction and gained recognition for her community, whether it was on the band or hamlet council, or local DEA. For an NWT perspective, Joanne has served and held many board and community positions. These include chairperson of the Aurora College, chairperson of the Workman's Compensation Board, board Member of the NWT Science Institution, board Member of the Canadian Polar Commission, president of the Literacy Council of the NWT, board Member of

the Business Development Investment Corporation, executive Member of the Deh Cho First Nation, and board Member of the Development Bank. Currently, Joanne is on the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, serving her third term as a chairperson.

Mr. Speaker, when you ask Joanne why she took on these roles throughout her life, she explained it was about wanting to learn good new things, meet new people, and have the desire to make her home a community region and the NWT a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, Joanne has been and always will be a very dedicated and humble person. When she heard that she won the award, her first thought was they must be talking about somebody else; they can't be talking about me. Well, Joanne, they were talking about you.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Joanne is known throughout the NWT for -- or Northwest Territories -- North, for her strong commitment to her family. Just ask her kids, who had the opportunity to make a number of those trips with her throughout the years so she could attend and be with them.

To her community and to the NWT and Nunavut, I can tell you that Joanne's contributions have been recognized by the Government of the Northwest Territories, First Nations governments, and related organizations who continue to request her participation at high level boards and committees.

Mr. Speaker, when you ask what message she would like the next generation on why it's important to get involved, she would say it's about making a difference in the community, improving the life of your family, friends and residents. It is also a great time to get to know the issues and meet new people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the nominators and the committee for selecting and honouring her as part of the Order of the Northwest Territories. She is a well-deserving recipient of this award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the former Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes Mr. R.C. McLeod as well as his wife

Judy, and they are now constituents of mine in Inuvik Boot Lake. I'm told it's his first time back in this building since he ran screaming out of here almost four years ago. Mahsi, quyananni, welcome back. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take this opportunity now to also recognize our Inuvialuktun interpreters Lillian Elias and Valerie Steffanson. Quyananni, thank you for all the work that you do for us. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. That was actually Mr. McLeod's chair in the last Assembly, same seat.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to take a moment to recognize Mr. R.C. McLeod. He foolishly took on in the last Assembly trying to be my mentor, realized I was the wild child, and still kept trying. I have a lot of respect for the Member; couldn't have done it without him. But I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, behind every good man is a good partner. So I also want to recognize his wife Judy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Yeah, it wouldn't be proper of me if I didn't recognize my predecessor, past honourable R.C. McLeod, and welcome you back, and to his wife Judy. I used to work with Judy. We ran all of the health centres and the hospital nurses. We were pretty busy back then. She kept herself busy while Robert was down here working. So I'd like to welcome them here.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you. I guess I'm going to jump on the bandwagon and recognize my former boss. He was my Minister when I worked for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. And his great leadership for the stuff that we're able to do during that time working from them. And as an advisor and -- I say somebody that would be able to give you sound advice throughout the time of my first four years as a Member, and his wife for putting up with him being gone for so long, Judy; thank you for much for being here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oh since it's his first time back, we'll do this again. I'd like to welcome back Robert C.

McLeod, former Member of the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th Assemblies, former Minister and deputy premier, also his wife Judy. Thank you for all the support you've given Robert over the years. I know he needed it, kind of a stressful job at times and, you know, it's always good to have somebody to talk to and thank you for all our service, Robert. You're greatly missed here, and I know you're enjoying retirement. I see all the pictures building cabins and on the land. Never seen you smile so much I always tell myself. I hope you enjoy your retirement and, you know, like I said, thank you very much.

And also Mr. David Brock. I haven't seen him for a number of years. He was the chief electoral officer at the time when I ran. Welcome back to Northwest Territories, or the Chamber anyway. And I hope all is well.

If we've missed anybody in the gallery today, I'd like to welcome everyone and hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Today is day last, as Doug Schauerte would say.

Okay, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 1494-19(2): INDIGENOUS HARVESTING RIGHTS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my statement, it was my understanding that as we proceed on unauthorized rights, it was essentially if it was an Indigenous person and there was a potential rights case, we weren't going to evaluate it; we were just going to put it in a box and to the side. I've recently learned that that is not the case and there are cases where we will go forward with eviction for Indigenous peoples unauthorized using public land.

My question is for the Minister of Lands. Can he just tell me what exactly is the test being used? Are there some sort of hard limits here for when we are using a test for when an Indigenous person has a right to be on public land? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is not taking enforcement actions on potential rights-based cabins at this time. The department is working with Indigenous governments on an approach to manage rights-based cabins on public land. The

department won't be defining Aboriginal rights through this process.

Mr. Speaker, it's about also self-identifying. The individuals need to self-identify. There was a process that's explained on the post, please come into the office and self-identify. If they don't do that, then we do not know if it's a rights-based cabin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think that may be where this problem lies in that there's a lack of trust and some people are not talking into a Department of Lands office any time soon, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister tell me whether Indigenous fishermen have a right to set up harvesting camps on the shores of Great Slave Lake, and what exactly that right would look like? Is there a limit to it? Are they allowed to set up a fish harvesting camp, but they're not allowed to do any commercial activity? Are they allowed to set up a fish harvesting camp, but they can't leave an ice shack there over time? Can the Minister tell me what the department's current interpretation of that right is? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, if the individuals do not want to talk to us and come into our lands, they can go in, talk to the Indigenous governments, and they can reach out to us. So we do have a process there.

In regards to his question, commercial operators occupying public land are required to have tenders. So they need to apply through a process. The department currently approached our -- the department's current approach to managing rights-based cabins is not considering commercial harvesting or operations. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would really encourage the department to take a look at that. I think our Indigenous harvesters have a right to commit some sort of commercial activity on the lake. I know that's a complicated question, but I think it's a very kind of similar case to Miqmaq fishers with the lobster fishery, where the Supreme Court gave them essentially a moderate livelihood test. They were allowed to go out and do as was their tradition. I've spoken to many fishers on the lake. They will get licensed, they will go through the commercial applications, but they do view it as their rights.

Mr. Speaker, a couple years ago, the Department of Lands kicked commercial fishermen's boats off of the Giant Mine dock as being remediated but now there are commercial fishers who have nowhere to store

their boats. And these aren't small boats, Mr. Speaker, they're 40-foot boats. Can the Department of Lands look for somewhere that commercial fishermen can store their boats legally in Yellowknife? You know, I note on this side of the lake we don't have a fishermen's wharf; we don't have a fish plant -- well, we have a fish plant but it's a houseboat, Mr. Speaker. So my question is can we find somewhere for the commercial fishermen to legally store their boats in Yellowknife, which is pretty essential to make sure the fishery survives on this side of the lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I can honestly say we've had this conversation with the Member, and I greatly appreciate him asking this question in the House.

All available public land can be viewed on Atlas, the department website management system. If that's a problem, they can go into the department and talk to the staff there and check the website itself and we are more than willing to help there. Commercial operations interested in public lands may work with land administration to determine the land availability as well. An application may submit lease applications for any available land to, you know, if it's available in the lease. But also what we need to be aware that we still have to go through the review and consultation process that we follow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1495-19(2):  
CARBON TAX

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance confirm if she plans to meet with the federal government to relay this government's opposition and concerns around the carbon tax. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've already conveyed that message today to one minister, Minister Vandal. I intend to convey that message to Minister Guilbeault. I will hopefully convey that message to Minister Wilkinson. And it's my hope that it's not only about the opposition; it's time for them to help us find solutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister also relay to the

federal government the negative impact the carbon tax has on all residents and businesses in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'll be doing that as well. But more than that, Mr. Speaker, it's about the fact that there are a total lack of alternatives to fossil fuel use here in the Northwest Territories, and if this is how the federal government wants to respond is through a carbon tax, then they need to help us find the alternatives to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Finance also relay to the federal government the value that the Northwest Territories adds to Canada? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, in my view the value we add can only grow. If the Northwest Territories, a remote region, rural High Arctic, if this is a place that the Canadian can come and make us a shining example of how to get off of fossil fuel use, then they can stand up internationally and truly be a star. So they should come here, and we should be the shining example of how to get off of fossil fuels. I think we add a tremendous value to the Government of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister also ask the federal government to consider exempting residents and businesses of the Northwest Territories from carbon tax? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, this one we've tried. We've tried. I've tried. Other jurisdictions facing similar situations have tried. Other territories have tried. And we haven't gotten very far. Mr. Speaker, I want to look forward, and I want to find solutions that's going to reduce our carbon tax costs in the North because we have less reliance on fossil fuel use. And that's the point of the carbon tax, is to get people off of fossil fuels. We don't have alternatives in the Northwest Territories. But if that's the federal government's goal, then the federal government needs to help us get off of fossil fuel use, provide reliable and responsible alternatives to fossil fuels here in the North. It will dramatically change our energy situation. And if this is the situation we face ourselves in now with the carbon tax, it's time for them to come here and help us get there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1496-19(2):  
DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to the Premier for not getting my questions to you a little bit earlier. Since the Vatican announced -- announcement, I only found out this morning of this announcement. Today the Vatican development and education office released a statement formally reputing, or in other words to reject or untrue or unjust, the doctrine of discovery.

Going forward, Mr. Speaker -- and I'm sure the GNWT Premier and the federal Government of Canada will need time to review the Vatican's announcement to reputing the doctrine of discovery and how this announcement will have significant impacts on the Government of the Northwest Territories and Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories as well.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, you know, this thing is long outstanding, and my question is what -- you know, what took so long? It's more than a little rich for the Vatican to insert now that the Papal Bulls were manipulated for political purposes by competing colonial powers. The Catholic Church and the federal government have known for hundreds of years the extensive and negative long-lasting impacts of these doctrines.

Instead of waiting for this repudiation to come from the Vatican, what have the federal government and the territorial government done to denounce the doctrine and introduce legislation specifically reputing the doctrine and committing to the abandoning of and opposing all policies based on the doctrine? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple questions in there. What took so long, that I can't speak for. I can't speak for the Catholic Church and I can't speak for the federal government, although I'd like to sometimes. But I can say that the Northwest Territories, what we're doing is I think that in the Northwest Territories, we're one of the most progressive jurisdictions in working with Indigenous governments and, honestly, in all the whole of Canada. We were one of the first, I believe, to accept the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2016. We're very ahead of the game when we're

working with self-governments and land claim agreements. We did devolution where Indigenous governments get a say with that. We have the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework that we sat together and identified our chapters and our needs. This government brought forward the Council of Leaders where we share the chair. And just recently, as Members know, today I'll be tabling -- or doing the second reading of the bill for the United Nations Declaration for Indigenous People. So, again, Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for the federal government or the churches, but I can say that the Northwest Territories recognizes the impact that colonization has had on Indigenous people, and we're doing whatever we can to support our people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Premier. Yeah, this is -- it's a very tough subject to talk about but at the same time it's really a big topic because I know when -- even as the Premier going to continue to work with your colleagues and also the chiefs and leaders in the Northwest Territories, it's going to come up now. And those are some of the questions. But some of the questions that may come is -- come up is what will the GNWT do to identify and remove policies and procedures which are influenced by the doctrine? So they're going to be a lot of questions like that, so I just want to just throw that out there and put that to you as Premier. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Member for giving me a heads up that there will be questions, and I don't blame them. There should be questions. There was a lot of harm done. Again, I can't speak for the churches but what I can say is hopefully those days are done in the Northwest Territories. The United Nations Declaration for Indigenous People, the active past in this government, will make things different. No longer will the GNWT get to define what's best for people. It'll be working together with the Indigenous governments hand-in-hand to actually define what our Acts look like, our programs and our policies. I know, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to happen overnight; it's going to take years. But we're starting the process. And I believe in my heart, Mr. Speaker, that is the right way. So like I said, I can't speak for the churches but I can say that the implementation of the United Nations Declaration for Indigenous People with Indigenous governments is the one thing that will change the dynamics of politics in the Northwest Territories for decades to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Premier. You know, I, you know, we're getting land claims done here in the North, across Canada and, you know, a lot of this is based on treaties and, you know, took a long time to get to that point. Especially here in the Northwest Territories, now they're coming together. But this recent announcement now that just came out, you know, I know for sure it's going to get talked about. It's going to be talked about in days to come. And I just want to know how we're going to probably -- with the help of the GNWT, what can you do to pressure the Catholic Church and authorities to return the lands of -- and sacred belongings to Indigenous people here and First Nations and treaty people in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member kind of identified it. We're not -- I'm not going to wait. Indigenous people have been waiting way too long to get apologies from the Catholic Church, from federal governments, etcetera. I think that land claims is the way to go. I think that does give the land to Indigenous governments and so we're continuing with that process as well. I do know, Mr. Speaker, that the Dene Nation is all over this and working with them. We're there to support them. And contact me, I'm more than willing to support them.

But I guess, Mr. Speaker, I do know that the federal government listens when we mention their name. I'm not sure if the Catholic Church does. But I'd say the same thing to the Catholic Church as I would to the federal government. It's do the right thing. You recognize the harm, you see the impacts of the harm, do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. Final short supplementary. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, I'll try to make it short. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What will the GNWT do to help survivors, including intergenerational survivors, to ensure that they are able to access resources and compensation and assistance they deserve and are entitled to? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you (audio).

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a few things. Like I said, there's many survivors and people think that it's only the survivors that were impacted back in the day or people that went to residential school. But we see the effects in generation after generation, and I still see them in my own family even. And so, you know, I think that we do have to do what we can. That's why the GNWT, we have the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission that was set up to guide the work aimed at this very issue. And we'll continue to advance that work as we go forward. We're working with the Calls for Justice, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous National Inquiry. And the big thing, Mr. Speaker, again, is the United Nations Declaration for Indigenous People. I think that we're trying to give as much support as we can. We've -- I know Education, Culture and Employment has worked to provide a list of residential schools, support people whenever possible. We're always reminding the federal government of the seriousness of what's going on in the North and for Indigenous people. We're working with Indigenous governments as closely as possible to address their health, their social, their economic needs. And, again, I think that the work, again, that we will be taking forward, in governments to come around the United Nations Declaration, is one of the most progressive things that we could have done and the right thing to do. Like I say, do the right thing, and I think we're trying to do the right thing. But it's not going to happen overnight. It's going to take years but we're on the right path. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1497-19(2):  
TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No way I'm letting 42 minutes left on the clock.

Yesterday in the House, I asked the Minister of Infrastructure to provide an update on how much we estimate Taltson to cost and she refused to do that. And my concern here, Mr. Speaker, is the last cost estimate we have is \$1.2 billion from 2013. I think it's fairly safe to say that in the last nine years, construction costs have increased. And I am really worried that this project is going to have a bit of sticker shock. It's going to be similar to Giant Mine which we were all talking about costing a billion dollars which became \$4.38 billion. So, I think that we have right to know in this House how much we currently expect this project to cost. Is it \$1 billion, \$2 billion, 3, 4, 5? I really have no sense of how much this has increased since 2013. So can the Minister of Infrastructure provide us a rough estimate of how much the current Taltson Expansion is going to cost. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have got -- our

Minister Vandal just walked in the door there so I'm really happy to hear that he's able to join us. So I do want to say the future spend will depend, again, on how commercial negotiation advance between the parties, including the Government of Canada, the Canadian Infrastructure Bank, and our Indigenous partners, as the work we define, the project footprint, our progress will also depend on any issues that emerge during the regulatory approval process. So Mr. Speaker, the Member is wanting to get a number out. I just can't do that right now. I did commit yesterday to looking at a business case and be able to work with the Member, so. He wants me to say a number, I just can't say it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a point to know that yesterday the Minister committed to a non-public business case. Mr. Speaker, there's a public debate that needs to happen here of whether we are spending billions of dollars. I actually have no sense of how much this project is going to cost. Can the Minister give us a timeline of when an updated figure can be provided? I just think it is inappropriate for us to be using 2013 figures and keep saying this is a \$1 billion project when we all know it isn't anymore. When can we see that? Certainly if you go through the environmental regulatory process, that's going to come out. You are going to have pretty detailed applications once you initiate that process. So when can we expect to see an updated figure? I am not looking for complete details on everything that we are going to tender, I am just trying to figure out whether we're at \$1 billion or \$5 billion or somewhere in between. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The business case is on track for completion within the life of this government. I said that yesterday, and I will say that again today. We are in progress of updating a number of things. Our capital costs, examining some of our routing options, the updating some of our project revenues. Advancing commercial discussions between partners, investors, in preparation for this regulatory application for the whole project. So we are looking at the life of this government to be able to share, not publicly, but share with the Members the business case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For change of protocol a little bit, I would like to -- I'd seek unanimous consent to return to item number 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, the Premier is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5. Are there any nays?

Sorry, Premier, it's nayed.

Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1498-19(2):  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY PROCESS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To clarify, once oral questions is concluded, I am more than happy to go back to anything but returning now ends the time on the clock and I am going to use it.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for Minister of ITI. We have been waiting years for a new procurement policy that will finally give us a new definition of northern business and hopefully that definition you will remove Walmart from BIP. When are we going to see that definition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question this session already. It's part of the work that's underway right now. I can already say to the Member that we do already now have unified policies and objectives for procurement. That's a huge step forward. That is certainly a good starting place. There's a lot of information on the websites right now. New manufacturing guidelines, new manufacturing policy, new guidelines under BIP. And the definition right now, part of the delay there, is we are also working on an Indigenous procurement process with Indigenous partners. That work is still underway. We are not going to wait entirely for that finish before finishing the northern definition, and that will be worked on right now in the life of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1499-19(2):  
CARBON TAX INCREASE

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question for the Minister of Finance. What in the federal budget will support an offset for the added cost of the carbon tax increase? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not my place necessarily to speak to what is or is not in the federal budget. What I can say, Mr. Speaker, having spent a lot more time studying in depth what was in Budget 2022 of the federal government is that there is still opportunities to use that money towards addressing the fact of the carbon tax. In addition to which is they're only just starting to roll out what's happening in Budget 2023. We want to strike while we can, Mr. Speaker. I am glad there's a minister in the House from the federal government. We want to use all of the resources of the federal government 2022-2023, and we want to get the North off of fossil fuels. This is our opportunity, and I'm glad they're here to hear it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to hear that there's a minister -- a federal minister in the gallery. I didn't even know that.

Mr. Speaker, residents and businesses in the NWT are struggling. How does this government expect to provide immediate support while we are waiting on this cheap green energy that's supposed to show up at some point? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There continues to be, Mr. Speaker, a number of different initiatives -- well, before I go any further, I want to give a shout out to the Arctic Energy Alliance. They do a lot of work in this space, and they receive a lot of funding from our government to continue the work that they do in this space in terms of energy audits and ensuring that there's alternatives and paths forward and to help chart those paths forward. So I'd certainly encourage everyone to reach out to them. There are also funds within our government, again, to help support businesses in their changeovers. And, Mr. Speaker, as we've always done, and as we continue to do, ITI, there's a lot of supports in the business space through SEED in terms of helping businesses to grow their capacity. If they're growing their capacity, if they're growing their business, then they certainly will have more funds available to them. The COLO payment that we have, Mr. Speaker, built in purchasing power for residents so that they can help address the fact that they may be facing higher costs from businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I'm going to ask this question again, and there's something wrong with my earpiece so I didn't hear the answer.

Will the Minister ask the federal government to consider exempting residents and businesses of the Northwest Territories from carbon tax, because I understand the agricultural sector is looking for that in southern Canada. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me sneak this one in first and just say that there is the GHG grant program for buildings and industry that does give a 25 percent eligible project cost for business and industry applicants. I want to sneak it in so that the business community does hear that and does access those funds.

Mr. Speaker, we've asked, other governments have asked, a number of Ministers have asked, hasn't gotten us very far in terms of being exempted from the carbon tax. So the Minister here has heard it himself. What I'd like to do, though, moving forward, let's get ourselves off fossil fuel, let's have more reliable energy, let's have energy alternatives. We can't do that alone. We're working off of old infrastructure. We're working in communities that don't have road access. These are things that are going to take serious dollars; they're going to take federal dollars. And if that's a commitment of the federal government, we've heard it again in this budget, they need to come to the North, they need to see the realities of the North. We are more than prepared to work with them. We're more than prepared to help communities with the federal government. And we can then be leaders in Canada and stand up and say that we've got these communities off fossil fuels. It's time to make that change, Mr. Speaker. We're here to help out. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One other question that I had trouble hearing as well. Will the Minister relay to the federal government the negative impact the carbon tax has on all residents and businesses in the Northwest Territories, because people are suffering right now, especially in the northern part of the territory and we need some type of support. Like, I know that green energy is the way of the future. That's what we're looking for. But it's not going to be here today; it's not going to be here tomorrow, it's going to take a while. And so I'm hoping that, you know, federal government hears the needs that we have and the urgency of it and that, you know, we need to do something and I'm hoping that this government relays that message and makes it a strong message. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly be carrying the

message of the North forward as we do, as all my colleagues as Ministers do. We want to see the North prosper. We want to see businesses prosper. We want to have residents to have -- be able to put food on their tables. In the context of the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, I realize it creates a burden and it's creating a burden at a time where times are already tight, inflation is high, interests rates are high. We're all seeing it in the North. And we want ministers to come from Ottawa and actually see it themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be, along with my colleagues, extending invitations out to the ministers who have their hands on, whether it's carbon tax dollars, environment dollars, energy dollars, we want to bring them here, have them in these communities so they can actually see the realities of a large proportion of Canada's -- 40 percent of Canada's land mass in fact, here in the North across three territories. Let's bring them to the North, and I'm going to make that commitment. We're going to make those offers and try to get them here so that they can see it themselves and we can then all work together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1500-19(2):  
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY REPAIR

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. I raised this numerous times in the House on the Dempster Highway and I want to know where is this Minister at with discussions with the Yukon about improving the Dempster Highway. This is the vital link to our region. We need to ensure that this goat trail is corrected, and we don't have the money on this side so it's on the Yukon side. So where is the Minister in this discussions on getting this money? Thank you.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned that the Minister Vandal is here because now everyone's hands are going up.

Mr. Speaker, the Member from Inuvik -- and, you know, I'm a Member from Inuvik Boot Lake and we both have an interest. So do yourself, Mr. Speaker. The Dempster Highway is a critical -- I won't call it goat path, but it's a -- goat trail. I won't call it that. But other than to say that we have invested money on the NWT side.

I made a commitment to the Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes that I would meet with the Minister, Minister Nils Clarke, which I did. We had discussions on perhaps partnering to look at joint proposals going forward to work on perhaps some of the things on the Yukon side. So we had that discussion, and we will further that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Well, I'm glad to hear that. And I'm just wondering if there's -- is there any plans on a joint submission because there's not just the road that needs to be repaired. There's two bridges. There's the wooden bridge, there's the small bridge that's -- like, you can't get wide loads up that highway. We have a housing crisis, we can't get anything wider than 14 foot 5 inches up that highway because of that wooden bridge in the Yukon. Those are all in the Yukon. And I need this Minister to advocate so that we can get more in our region. Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been having this discussions with the Yukon. You know, we did talk about having -- continue to make the case with the federal government for the Dempster Highway. It is important to a number of things. Canadian security, sovereignty. We need to invest in this on a national basis. Mr. Speaker, my mandate right now is the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I'm trying to do both, but there's only so much that we can do. I'm all about the Dempster Highway as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the Member had brought up the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Like, I'm sitting here and I'm asking the Member over and over again about dollars to fix a road that, you know, we have a plan to go down the Northwest Territories. So is the reason because we want this money in the Northwest Territories for the Mackenzie Valley versus the Yukon? So is that the reason why we're not getting any agreements? Can the Minister explain. Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's both discussions going on. I am meeting with the Yukon government and having discussions on some of the work for the Dempster Highway as well as, you know, we're expecting that this mandate of the 19th Assembly is to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway. It's not going to happen overnight. Perhaps it's not going to happen in five years. It's going to take time. But for now if we can have this discussion with the Yukon to be able to look at some of the things we can do on the Dempster Highway.

I also want to mention that I had an opportunity to speak with parliamentary committee just a couple weeks ago. I brought that up to the committee. The Yukon has -- you know, that was one of my discussions with the parliamentary committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know in the same discussion that we were having with the Dempster Highway and the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Minister committed that we would be having an assessment for how much it was going to cost to get the road from Inuvik down into the Sahtu. And is that work being done and if there's money, have you requested for that work to be done? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity in February, during our break, to drive the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Fort Simpson to Norman Wells. And, you know, it was great to see a lot of work happening on the Norman Wells side with the Prohibition Creek Access -- Prohibition Creek Road. So I mean, there were a lot of people, businesses. There were workers from the Sahtu, small communities. It was really great to see some that work being done. It is being advanced. We're also having discussions with some of the Indigenous group that are along the alignment, such as the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation as well as, you know, Tulita. So we are furthering that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1501-19(2):  
REQUEST A NEW SCHOOL FOR  
BEHCHOKO

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the Frank Channel Bridge moving forward, which is an important piece of infrastructure for the NWT. We all know that that infrastructure is over 50 years old and liability is great. Our young people from Behchoko and Edzo travel on that bridge every day to attend Chief Jimmy Bruneau school in Edzo, which is over 50 years old as well, and our day care in Behchoko. Therefore, will the Minister of education commit to ask the federal minister of infrastructure commit to billion a new school in Behchoko as soon as possible, maybe within the next fiscal year. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so as the House is aware, we have committed to working with the Tlicho government on procuring a new school for Behchoko. The federal government does not billion schools generally and so in our discussions with the Tlicho government, it's been determined that they would be the best to approach the federal government. And we are fully supporting them once they do that. Thank you.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, where does this government get their money from? From the federal government. So therefore he can ask the federal government, probably not this one or whoever, but to commit that if we can -- if they can billion or help us billion a school. So I'm just asking the federal -- the Minister of education, wherever they're getting their money from, to ask those government to help us billion a school in Behchoko. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been a plan in place for quite some time now to approach the federal government, ask them for money to billion a new school in Behchoko. As the Member is aware, it was the federal government who built this school outside of the community many years ago because it was cheaper. But obviously that is not in the spirit of reconciliation. So we have committed to working with the Tlicho government on approaching the federal government hoping that they will be supportive and that they will rectify, really, the mistake that they made 50 some years ago. Thank you.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is good. I know that when the school was first built in 1969, you know, and it opened in 1972, that was not the will of the people, of my people. It was the will of the government of the day, which is that two government: The territorial government and the federal government, they thought it was -- because of the infrastructure and, you know, whatever of the -- the government decided to do at the day and they're trying to move people away, they thought that, you know, that they can do better, that our life was going to improve better than in Behchoko at that time. So that was their will, not our will. So I'm just making a statement because I don't have any questions, and he already said it and so they admit that there is a problem, and it was not our will to billion the school in Edzo as well. So thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Taken as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1502-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, I'm glad the Minister's here; we're all going to take advantage of that.

Mr. Speaker, like, I mentioned this year I've been trying to get a winter road to my communities but, again, it just still goes to show that, you know, we got winter roads to Colville Lake, Deline, Gameti, Nahanni Butte, Norman Wells, Somba K'e, Tulita, Wekweeti, Whati, Wrigley. And then we got ice roads. We got Aklavik ice road, Dettah ice road. Ice crossings. Liard crossing, Mackenzie River crossing, Peel River crossing. And then we got a road to Tibbitt Lake. And this year I asked for help to get a winter road built to my community of Lutselk'e. We have the high cost of living there. To bring in a vehicle is crazy, to bring in material, homes into the community, just really, really at a very high cost. So and, again, I was told that it's going to cost about \$2 million to put a road in on an annual basis. So I'd like to take this opportunity to direct my question to the GNWT Infrastructure Minister, Diane Archie, to see if we could work with the Government of Canada to help find \$2 million a year just for the winter road on an annual basis, plus additional barging that we could do to provide services to the community of Lutselk'e so that we could help reduce the cost of living in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member and I have had discussions in the past on the Lutselk'e ice road request. We did look into it. The Member's correct, it was going to cost about \$2 million annually to have a look. And with that, there was a number of things. You know there's a short window. There's a number of risks going across that lake. And, you know, we will continue to discuss. I know the Member's wanting to have further discussions with perhaps the federal ministers on how we can work together, perhaps find some funding, to be able to look at, you know, other ways to get -- get the road done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And my invitation to all the Ministers and

Premier still stands to coming to the community of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution and Dettah and N'dilo. I think we had some kind of commitments in April and May so we look forward to that. But when you come to the community of Lutselk'e, again, the issue of winter road is still going to be there. The high cost of living, like I said, to bring a bed frame into the community costs \$600. Things we take for granted living in a community like Yellowknife or in places where they have winter road, ice road, all-season roads, there's good. But, again, people in Lutselk'e are very concerned about the high cost of living. So I'm hoping that when we go to the community, we're going to be talking about that. But at the same time, I encourage you to continue to lobby on behalf of my community and the people in my community to the Government of Canada to see if they could get them on board to help start planning, do the feasibility study, and then start looking at putting an all-season -- I mean, a winter road, ice road, and also look at barging. We only get one barge a year, but we need probably a couple more. Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. We do have the communities currently serviced by marine transportation services for the annual supply of fuel, construction, marine, and dry goods. Trucking fuel on the ice road over the Great Slave creates significant environmental risk, which would increase cost of fuel. So there are technical challenges, Mr. Speaker, of building an ice road across the lake. As I mentioned earlier, I understand where the Member's coming from and wanting to look at, you know, future development -- future road into the community. You know, we do have capital processes that we do as a government. So I hear where the Member's coming from. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the Minister. And I look forward to working with you and also with the federal counterparts to, again, find money for our community. And the sooner the better. And I think when we come to the community of Lutselk'e, we're going to have that discussion. And there's other opportunities. Like, you said as well is that there's housing; there's materials in the community, the Co-Op, and everybody could all have a hand, including the parks. So I think if you all got together and had that discussion, I'm sure we could reduce that cost as well. But, again, we just got to do that homework and I look forward to sitting down with you. And that was just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Taken as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 1503-19(2):  
HAY RIVER HARBOUR REMEDIATION

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that what happened last year in Hay River. There was flooding, major flooding. And we're looking at a cost of probably \$175 plus million. And another issue that we seen happen last year was supplies not getting into northern communities and part of it, I think, was because of, you know, the harbour -- access to the harbour in Hay River, and the problems with the coast guard grounding and other boats as well. So even though I didn't get these questions in advance to the Minister of Infrastructure, she's answered them prior anyways, so. I would like to ask the Minister of Infrastructure if she can confirm if there was any funding for harbour remediation for Hay River in the federal budget. Thank you.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I was in Hay River in the fall, we had a community meeting. We talked about harbour restoration, otherwise known as dredging, but I'm not going to say that today. I'm going to call harbour restoration just for sake of having our Minister here. We did send -- we did some work, Mr. Speaker. We had money. We had bathymetric studies done. We spent over \$150,000 to get some of this work done, mostly because it helps us set a business case to put towards the ocean protection plan. So I'm going to just stop right there in case the Member has more questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I appreciate what the Minister and her department have done. They've done a lot more than we've seen in the past and I think we're on the right track. And I guess I'd have to ask what is the status of this business case submitted to the federal government, and where are we with it? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, everybody was tuned in on Tuesday to the federal budget. And I was very happy to see a number of things mentioned, more specifically the Taltson, which I was excited to see, but we did put in a funding proposal under the Ocean Protection Plan. You know, I met with Minister Alghabra when I was in Ottawa for FPT. We had one-on-one

discussions on, you know, the need to have the Hay River harbour restoration completed so that we can get our tugs all the way up the valley into Nunakput. You know, we had struggles this year. We were late. We had, you know, a number of issues trying to get our supplies of fuel, equipment, into the communities. That's important for us. We put this proposal together. Going back to the budget, I was really excited to see that Mackenzie River was on one of the -- one of the listed projects for the budget. So I'm hoping that's what that is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm hoping the dollars for the Mackenzie River included Hay River. And I'm just expecting that, you know, since the people doing the budget are from southern Canada, they may not know kind of where the Mackenzie River is and where the Hay River is. They may be mixing them up and I'm hoping that's what's happening.

I'd asked the Minister what is the status on the permitting which will allow work to happen on the channel where coast guard has repeatedly been grounded? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we have the proposal in under the Ocean Protection Plan. We had a lot of community support up the valley, all the way from Aklavik. So I mean, this is a priority. Once we get a response on the funding, then we will start some of the work that's much needed to complete the harbour restoration as well as, you know, in our funding proposal, we asked for some money for double haul barges. We asked for four years of funding for the Hay River restoration. So, I mean, once we get that approval, that sets the stages on how we proceed with this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that how important that harbour is to Hay River, how important MTS is to Hay River, how important coast guard is to Hay River. You know, if we happen to lose those, basically Hay River's going to slowly disappear. And I think, you know -- and also the service that it offers to northern communities for supply, to northern businesses, to mining companies, it's very important. So we have to ensure that that harbour is in good shape. And I know that in the past there when the dredging ceased, I think it was because they went to a, you know,

a user pay system. But we can't afford to pay that in the Northwest Territories.

So I guess what I'm looking for is what's the realistic timeline for start of remediation for the channel coming into the Hay River? And if we don't get federal dollars, we have to get this done. It has to get done this year. And if it's not this summer, which I hope it is, and then it's going to have to be off the ice in the winter. Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is my hope too, and that is why I continue to have this conversation with the federal minister to perhaps give us a response. Once we get the response, then we're able to set timelines. I know we talked about perhaps starting this summer to be able to get some of the work done.

I do want to highlight, Mr. Speaker, that we've been working -- we did this bathymetric study. We're currently looking at some of the data, the water elevation information indicate we have 200,000 cubic metres of sediment that has to be removed to be able to have normal navigation of that harbour. It's extreme, Mr. Speaker. You know, we recognize that once we get the funding, we will be able to start some of the work, get the regulatory permits in place, get federal -- our licenses. There are a number of things that we have to do. But I understand the Member's concern about how immediate this is for not only the community in Hay River, but for the communities up the valley. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1504-19(2):  
REQUEST FOR NEW SCHOOL FOR  
DETTAH

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to -- I got nine minutes. I just got one -- I mean, a question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Simpson.

Now that we have the federal minister here for infrastructure, I just thought maybe I'll take this opportunity to remind you if we could work together trying to get a new school for Dettah. And it's been the 1970s when that school was there. And it needs to complete the school in Dettah. They've been asking and asked that question this year. So I just thought maybe if we could work together in trying to get the Government of Canada to buy into this so that we could try to get some money to start looking at building a new school in Dettah. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just to clarify what I said earlier, education is in the purview of the province and the territories and when there is a sort of this constitutional split of responsibilities, we try to stick as closely as we can do that split and so the provinces and territories are generally responsible to billion education infrastructure. That being said, as I stated earlier in my comments to the Member from Monfwi, if there's an Indigenous group that feels like these types of initiatives are part of reconciliation, then that's something we can work on. So I'd be happy to work perhaps with the Member and leadership in his community if that is their interest. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1505-19(2):  
HAY RIVER AREA FLOOD MITIGATION  
MEASURES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions will be for the Minister of MACA. Mr. Speaker, again, the flooding in Hay River, you know, it was devastating, and it's going to take a few years to recuperate. And so far, you know, I think that this government and the federal government has stepped up. They provided funds. They've done a good job. You know, it takes time. You know, we lack -- you know, we lack, you know, the contractors in the community to do all the work all at once. And, you know, and then the supply chain, that's still a problem. So there's a few issues.

But one real issue is in areas such as Paradise Valley and there's another location where they had seven to eight feet of water. And for them to mitigate damage, they've got to billion a -- say, a pad probably ten feet in the air, or they've got to put their houses up ten feet in the air with, you know, on steel piling. So one of the options within the DFFA -- or DFAA, was properties -- or was property acquisitions, which would allow this government or the community government to buy back properties where building should not be put on. So I'm just wondering -- I'd asked the Minister has his department considered this. Thank you.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I got six minutes and 28 seconds, so



I'm going to take the time to answer this question.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member talks about maybe putting houses up eight to ten feet, I can tell you right now in other communities that had the same flooding the previous year in 2021, that's what we had to do. We had to put homes up eight to ten feet. In my riding, in Jean Marie River, we had to actually do that.

In regards to the question that the Member has asked, he's asked this numerous times in this House, we're looking at the various options available for the residents and we're working with the federal government on how we can move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I left five minutes and 40 seconds on the clock.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister giving me a little more time here. And, you know, when I talk about putting those houses up, but these are properties primarily where there's agriculture going on, where this government has supported them through ITI and all of a sudden they're going to have to move, or something's going to have to happen. They've got greenhouses. And I don't expect those greenhouses to be 10 feet in the air. And so it's a bit of a different -- different than just putting somebody's House in the air. So I think that that's got to be given some consideration.

The area is mitigation. You know, what happened last year was an anomaly I guess, because I never thought it was going to happen and I've lived there for my whole life, 32 years -- oh sorry, 66. So anyways, like mitigation, we've got to look at doing something. And so I'd ask the Minister what mitigation measures are we looking at that will be supported by the federal government? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I live down the street from the Member so I guess I've been there for 32 years too. So I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, we've been working with the federal government to come up with what mitigations are available. The Member needs to understand, and as I said this previously in conversations with other residents, and Pathfinders have talked to residents, if it's not impacted, the disaster did not impact them, ie the roads and stuff like that, the disaster assistance policy doesn't work for that. So as for the mitigation, we've reached out to them. We've had conversations. And each individual has a different situation. So they work on that. When he talks about agricultural land, we have in -- coming in April, ITI and Municipal and

Community Affairs staff will be reaching out to those impacted so we need to work with them on that. The other challenges that we need to understand, though, is in Hay River and on the reserve, we don't have as much land available. We have, the KFN and the Metis trying to get their land in negotiations, so withdrawn lands. We have that impact. So we are working with them. The mitigation part is -- again, it's very specific to each individual. So we need to work with each individual to have that opportunity to help them move forward on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I understand, you know, what's required for mitigation in Hay River. And it's a very -- variety of things. For instance in one area, which is known as Cranberry Crescent, they -- there's houses there, and they're pretty expensive houses and they've all got basements. And they got flooded. Yet, there's no way they're going to lose their basements and raise their houses up. So what they need is a berm and raising the road. So in that sense, what is the government doing to ensure that's done? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Cranberry Crescent, so when we talk about mitigation, sometimes it's not about the berms; sometimes it's about the ability to move the furnace or the boiler up on to the next floor there on that. So we're working on that.

In regards to the question that the Member has asked, because the road wasn't impacted by the flood, we are now working with the community. We are actually doing a survey on that road and seeing how we can work with the federal government on other programs that are available. If we're able to access that funding, then we're going to be able to work on that road. It's not -- we're not going to be building a berm. We're going to be looking at enhancing that road, making it bigger, taller, whatever, wider, whichever you want. And it's going to be a little bit longer because right now people are heard saying it's only needs it for, you know, a kilometre. It actually -- if you look at it, it actually goes down to the pump House station. So it goes that far so we need to look at building that road. And we're working with the Infrastructure on this to get this job done. So, again, it's a collaborative approach. We are working with -- our staff are working with the Town of Hay River. But we're also working with Infrastructure because that's the department that's working on that road there so we are working with them on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, mitigation. Like, you know I understand that there's -- you know, for private homes, raising the furnace, okay, that's fine, that's easy enough to do. And, you know, there's some other things they can do. It's mitigation for places like Cranberry, like the road. That's great. But we're coming into a season where breakup's going to happen here at the end of next month and we have done limited work within the town. If the same thing happened, people who had fixed up their houses are going to be in the same -- basically, you know, in the same position. So, you know, what is the timing to actually look at kind of an overall mitigation plan for Hay River? And I know you've got to work with the town, and you've got to work with K'atlodeeche as well, and I think it's important that, you know, it's got to be collaborative. But, you know, we need some type of timeline because we don't really hear -- get the information back. So can you provide that. Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we been working with the Town of Hay River and K'atlodeeche First Nation on things moving forward. In regards to mitigation, as long as there's a plan in place, then we're able to use our disaster assistance policy if the situation happens. The old adage is prepare for the worst and hope for the best. So we are working on that. The timeline, we're working with the town and the reserve, and it's with them. We have to be able to work with them to come up with a timeline. That's on their speed. We're not going to rush and do it wrong. As the Member said, we're getting close to breakup, but we are working on it, and I've had the opportunity to be in Hay River as they're prepared for their flood preparation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try one more time. I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery with unanimous consent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. The Premier's seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5. Are there any nays? There are no nays.

Madam Premier.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** That was a long wait, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by recognizing one of my favourite federal ministers. It's true. It is true. Minister Dan Vandal is the Minister of Northern Affairs. He's the Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and the Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development in Canada. Minister Vandal is not from the Northwest Territories but he's an Indigenous man, and he, like grand chief once told me, he not only listens, he hears our needs. And so he's always welcome to the Northwest Territories, and we'd love for you to move here if -- any time you want. We need the income from the capita.

I also want to recognize some of the staff that came with him, the director of communications, Mr. Ryan Potter, excuse me if I say that wrong. Senior policy advisor Anna Bodnar. And the MLA who nayed me I believe, this guest here is not from -- I don't think he lives here but he owns a house in the MLA's riding, Mr. Matt Spence, the regional director general, is with us today.

I made a commitment, I believe it was yesterday or the day before, that I would bring to the attention that MLAs did want to meet with ministers. I followed through with that commitment this morning. I did ask him after what he just experienced being nayed in the House and being slaughtered -- I'm not sure if he'll take them up on it anymore, but I did fulfill my commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for coming to the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome, federal minister, Mr. Vandal. It's always good to have ministers -- federal ministers in the House. It's probably the first time I think in our Assembly here. So welcome, and I hope you're enjoying your visit to Yellowknife and you're welcome any time.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to say the same thing as the Premier, welcome everybody from the -- the Minister and all his colleagues and staff here to the House. And I'm glad that they were able to listen to what we have to say in our riding. And it's very important. Also I just want to say that, you

know, you come out to Dettah this coming weekend and enjoy your time out there. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Minister Vandal to the House. And just to acknowledge that the two oldest federal day schools that are left standing in the Northwest Territories are both from my riding. One is 64 years old and the other one is 60 years old. And they were connected to the residential school situation. But just for acknowledgement that, you know, we talk about all these things, but I always do it through process. You know, I want to -- there's processes that we have to follow here, and I adhere to that, and I want to just thank him for coming to visit Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. Thank you so much.

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

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Minister Vandal. And I'm sure he -- I know he has -- they have a good working relationship with the Tlicho government. And I just want to acknowledge him that he is here in Denendeh and that I want to ask -- just let him know that we do -- you know, like, one of the questions that I was going to ask was that, okay, we have a lot of aging infrastructure in Tlicho region as well. We need a new school and a water and sewer line. I'm sure he probably heard from the community government of Behchoko. So I just wanted to, you know, to say that. But I would like to welcome him. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Written questions. Returns to written questions.

Colleagues, we will return after a short recess. Order.

---SHORT RECESS

Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Replies to the Commissioner's Address

#### MR. JOHNSON'S REPLY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Technically there is no time limit on the reply to the Commissioner's address. My life is in your hands, but I will try to keep this brief.

Mr. Speaker, as March madness comes to an end, and we have passed our last budget, it is time to celebrate fiscal new year's, when all those lovely program budgets get replenished. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to use my reply to the Commissioner's address to state that that will be my last budget as I will not be running again in the upcoming general election. And before I leave, Mr. Speaker, I will try to impart some wisdom on the priorities for future Assemblies and the remaining 150 days or so we have left.

Mr. Speaker, you may assume I'm not running because I am fed up with the GNWT and frustrated at how hard it is to get things done but, in fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm not running because I'm really starting to understand and appreciate the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, as we saw yesterday with the carbon tax vote, I'm now voting with Cabinet. Mr. Speaker, I think it's time to get out of here. Mr. Speaker, I'm worried if I stay any longer, they might make me a Minister and then I'll be saying things like, well, first we need to complete a review, a "what we heard" report, four strategies and an action plan before I can make a decision on that. Jokes aside, Mr. Speaker, I remain radically optimistic about politics in this territory, and I believe consensus government has never been stronger. This Assembly has navigated conflict - COVID, floods, and record inflation - and the system held up pretty well, Mr. Speaker. Consensus government ensures that Ministers continue to have individual responsibility in their portfolios, something that is being eroded in party systems as premier's offices and prime minister's office centralize power.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Cabinet that works with Regular MLAs, something that is almost nonexistent in opposition parties down south. Mr. Speaker, even when our system wasn't pretty, it held strong and proved that the way we govern here is better than party politics and all Members have a voice. Now, certainly, Mr. Speaker, this is a lot we can improve about the system and I will speak to those things another day. But let us all remember that it's far more important than the system of governments is the people in the system. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe this House's priorities are in the right place.

Mr. Speaker, the key example is housing. This Assembly, with help of the federal government, has done more for housing than any other. I am

truly proud of the pressure and nonstop advocacy to house our most vulnerable. It was the theme of this Assembly, and that can't stop, Mr. Speaker. It needs to be the top priority in the next Assembly, and the next, and the next. We got the ball rolling, but it needs to build momentum and it requires relentless advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that many of the great work of this Assembly is in driving a culture change in the GNWT. Not an easy task, but I believe we in this House are all genuinely committed to ending a culture of backroom contracts being awarded to friends and to actually think about in how we review our policies and legislation using evidence and data. I believe we in this House are committed to budgeting in a coherent and sustainable manner. The non-glorious work that is at the heart of good governance has been strengthened by us all, and we must let it continue.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, all of the great staff, and my constituents. And before I go, Mr. Speaker, I would like to finish my priorities for the last 150 days by describing what my ideal fall looks like.

First, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go to Walmart and I'm going to smile knowing that they are no longer a BIP'd company. And then I'm going to walk up to that cashier, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to feel great that they have five guaranteed paid sick days, Mr. Speaker. And then, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to do some winter camping, ideally at a leased cabin that the Department of Lands lets people AirBnB now. And then, Mr. Speaker, in the fall, miraculously, nothing is going to happen to the clocks. The time change will not happen at all. And then, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go to the DMV on a Saturday and finally renew my license after four years. And after I walk out with my new license, I'm going to look up at the Yellowknife skyline and take comfort in the fact that it is not all owned by one company because the GNWT has stopped giving so much money to Northview. Those are my priorities. That is my dream for the next 150 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, all.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. 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 917-19(2):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 81:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EDUCATION ACT,  
NO. 2

TABLED DOCUMENT 918-19(2):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 82:  
LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 919-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 1402-19(2): COOPERATION  
BETWEEN INCOME SUPPORT AND CHILD  
AND FAMILY SERVICES

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 81, An Act to Amend the Education Act, No. 2; Plain Language Summary for Bill 82, Legal Profession Act; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1402-19(2), Cooperation Between Income Support and Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Minister responsible for Finance. Oh sorry, tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 920-19(2):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 83:  
LIQUOR ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 921-19(2):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 84:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 922-19(2):  
2022 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENT:  
SOCIAL DATA REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 923-19(2):  
LET'S TALK AGRICULTURE: HAVE YOUR  
SAY ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not answering any more questions today; I'm done.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 83, Liquor Act; Plain Language Summary for Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, 2022 Socio-Economic Agreement: Social Data Report; and, Let's Talk Agriculture: Have Your

Say Online Survey Results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Honourable Premier.

TABLED DOCUMENT 924-19(2):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 85:  
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE  
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
IMPLEMENTATION ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 925-19(2):  
A WAY HOME: A COMPREHENSIVE  
STRATEGY TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, MLA Johnson spoke about his accomplishments, what he was proud of this Assembly, I am really proud to table the following two documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 85, United Nations Declaration on the Rights Of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act; and, A Way Home: A Comprehensive Strategy to Address Homelessness in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 926-19(2):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR  
THE PERIOD OCTOBER 13, 2022 -  
FEBRUARY 6, 2023

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. Tabling of documents.

Colleagues, pursuant to section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowances, and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the summary of Member's absences for the period October 13th, 2022 to February 6th, 2023.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Member for Hay River South.

### Motions

MOTION 78-19(2):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE TO MAY 23, 2023,  
CARRIED

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 30th, 2023, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 25th, 2023;

AND FURTHER, that at any time prior to May 25th, 2023, if the Speaker is satisfied, after

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Motions. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION 79-19(2):  
EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO CLERK,  
TIM MERCER, FOR DEDICATED AND  
EXEMPLARY SERVICE,  
CARRIED

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an expression of gratitude to clerk Tim Mercer for dedicated and exemplary service.

WHEREAS Tim Mercer was appointed Clerk of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly in August, 2003;

AND WHEREAS Mr. Mercer has provided devoted and outstanding public service to the Legislative Assembly and its Members for 20 years;

AND WHEREAS during Mr. Mercer's tenure as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly he was a strong advocate for Indigenous peoples, languages, and culture;

AND WHEREAS during Mr. Mercer's tenure as Clerk, the Legislative Assembly has undergone rapid and significant change;

AND WHEREAS Mr. Mercer will retire as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on March 31, 2023;

AND WHEREAS it is customary for Legislative Assemblies to recognize and express their gratitude for such long and distinguished service.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, second by the Honourable Member for Hay River North, that the Legislative Assembly expresses its sincere

gratitude to Mr. Tim Mercer for his dedicated and exemplary service to this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker -- oh, I didn't see the back, sorry.

AND FURTHER, that the Legislative Assembly designate Mr. Tim Mercer as an honorary officer of this Legislative Assembly with an entree to the Chamber and a seat at the table.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the motion. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I need my glasses, sorry.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mr. Tim Mercer, who is retiring from his role as the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly after serving our territory with distinction and dedication for almost two decades. Today marks his last day in the House with us in that capacity, and it's an honour to acknowledge his significant contributions to our parliamentary institution.

Throughout his 20-year tenure, Mr. Mercer has overseen and facilitated several significant improvements and modernization efforts for the Legislative Assembly, including adapting to the pandemic-related challenges. His leadership and guidance have been instrumental ensuring a team of impartial and professional staff who provide outstanding service to both Members of the Legislative Assembly and the broader parliamentary institution, ensuring that the voice of the people is heard loud and clear.

Recently, Mr. Mercer led the development with the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat members of a consensus government process convention that guides how land and resources legislation, drafted collaboratively with Indigenous governments, will be introduced, considered, and enacted in the legislature. This is a huge accomplishment. This process convention completes the process of collaborative drafting and ensures it applies to all phases of the legislation. This process convention is unique and historic and will remain a significant accomplishment.

Mr. Mercer's professionalism and dedication to duty have earned him respect and admiration. He's been a role model for many and set a high bar for those who will come after him.

On behalf of the government and the people of this territory, I'd like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Mercer for his years of service. We recognize and appreciate his dedication to ensuring that the business of the Legislature is conducted with the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I never had to use Mr. Mercer's services a lot because I was always a Minister and the Premier but when I did, he was always honest and sincere in his answers. I may not have always liked the answers, but he was always honest and sincere. We wish him well in his retirement and hope he will enjoy this new chapter in his life. Thank you. Mr. Mercer, Tim, thank you for your service to our territory, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. To the motion. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join my colleagues in acknowledging the service of Mr. Tim Mercer to this institution and Members of the Legislative Assembly, past and present. When I first met Mr. Mercer, as a newly elected MLA three and a half years ago, whereupon he tried to jam 500 years of western parliamentary procedures and 60 years of NWT Legislative Assembly procedures into my brain over a course of a week, my brain still hurts, Mr. Speaker. Sitting on Board of Management, I saw firsthand the quality of work that Mr. Mercer and his staff produce for our consideration, and I always saw his advice as sound and reasoned, even when I didn't necessarily agree with the proposed course of action.

Politics -- Mr. Speaker, politics is a contact sport. Bruised egos, hurt feelings abound. Mr. Mercer acted as a father confessor, as an impartial referee, and a procedural guide to all of us either at one point or another and while keeping in the best interests of the institution and this consensus government in the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, it is clear that Mr. Mercer, the Assembly's respected gratitude and admiration for an excellent job as clerk over the past 20 years. Personally, I would like to wish Tim all the best in any future endeavours and thank him for his service. Quyananni. Mahsi cho, Tim.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As is the case with the Member for Boot Lake and for all of us here, the first -- probably one of the first people we met was Tim, and one of the first things we did was look inside the sausage maker that is politics and try and understand how we fit into this very process-oriented and pretty rigid institution. As a person who has a brand-new job, a very responsible job, having just been elected by the voters, it is truly

daunting to come through the door and to try and understand which way is up. And so, you know, some of us were here in the 18th Assembly, and Mr. Mercer coached us through some of our learning curve.

I'm going to tell a story on Minister Thompson, has a lot of logo clothing from sports competitions and was always trying to sort of get away with wearing it by wearing a longer thing over it and being told no, that's not what we're looking for.

Soon after I started this job, I unfortunately had a huge burn and I had to spend weeks in bed. I had to spend weeks in recovery, and I couldn't have asked for a more compassionate and accommodating person than Tim to help me through that period. It was just such a difficult time of my life. I had just started this job, and then I was almost immediately out of action. And it turned out that that compassion was really a hallmark of the way that he treated Members and staff, you know, the -- we all lived through the death of Haylee Carlson. I saw great compassion in that and in other instances that were not as high profile. And I think that we've all benefitted from his generosity.

Certainly, as the Member for Boot Lake said, politics can be very rough and tumble and sometimes having a place to vent and trying to figure how to go for a different outcome is a very valuable thing, and Tim has always provided that for me and along with a lot of advice and guidance, which I truly appreciate and which I've benefitted from tremendously.

As far as I'm concerned, his greatest accomplishment was the assistance he gave the special committee on increasing the representation of women. It was he and the Speaker at the time who had gone to the commonwealth conference, had looked to the Samoan model for guaranteed seats for women and launched us on this process of how we could increase the representation of women, hopefully voluntarily, but if not voluntarily then with quotas. And then there were many iterations of that. There was a motion. There was an interim report. A final report. And I think that he deserves a lot of credit for the fact that we were able to really attract, through our efforts as the standing committee, a number of women to run in the last election who were successful and who are here today.

I also want to say that both of us are big fans of Arctic and Antarctic exploration, and that's been really fun to exchange articles and ideas about that, especially the infamous Sir Ernest Shackleton who went to the Antarctic, lost his boat, and came out alive, which is a pretty amazing story in itself.

I want to just note a few good changes. It's true that the focus on Indigenous languages, culture, and representation has really been heightened in Tim's time, and those are all very positive changes from my point of view when I see all the people in the interpretation booths. I'm very grateful that people throughout the territory have the opportunity to hear what we're saying in their own language.

I've also known him to provide opportunities for people to shine. He has been able to coach them to better things, to opportunities to attend conferences, training, to try new jobs, and to explore new boundaries and new successes.

And finally, I think we have with Tim our most foremost champion of consensus government, someone who understands it, somebody who's lived it, somebody who can explain it, somebody who doesn't give up on it when the going gets rough, which it certainly does from time to time. So I think that Tim's leadership here has really been transformative, and I would like to say how much I appreciate that. And I would also like to add that if Kevin were here today, I think he would say some of the same things, but he would argue with others. And he would want me, on his behalf as well as my own, to wish Tim the very best with his -- the rest of his journey in whatever that is coming forward. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Nahendeh.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to -- I had about five pages of notes, but my colleagues took a whole bunch from me and I started crossing them off. I got down two pages.

Mr. Speaker, my first four years being in this -- as an MLA, I had the opportunity to work with Tim during that time. I can tell you the new 11 of us probably aged him about 30 years because, you know, Oceans 11, we kind of had a whole bunch of questions and he turned on the fire hose but we kept on throwing about 11 other fire hoses at him. So he was able to help us there.

I'm very thankful for having him here, though. He was able to provide the history to some of the previous decisions and visions of past Assemblies. Throughout the four years, he provided me and us good advice, suggestions on how to look at things with different lenses that we normally don't use and had strong leadership.

When I first came into the Assembly, I can tell you a friend of mine and former colleague,

Alfred Moses, sat me down and talked to me about Tim and all the help and support he received his first time during his first year. I can tell you his experience and support he received from Tim during his first time was the same as mine. In speaking with my other long-term colleagues that were there, it was the same as him. So Tim treated everybody in the same with respect and dignity that the office holds, and I thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank him and wish him all the best on his next adventure called life. I believe the Assembly will miss his presence and service but like I've always said, if you can leave your job in a better place than it was when you first started, you've done a great job and I can say Tim has done that. Again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wish him the best on his retirement, you've earned it, and all the best. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have as long of a history with Mr. Mercer. I was only elected this Assembly and I haven't been a Regular Member but that's kind of a point that I want to make. As Ministers, we don't interact with the Clerk's office as much; I wouldn't have necessarily had a long history, knowing all of the many achievements I've already heard about today. I'm sure there's others. I know others may speak to those others. I actually want to speak to some of the day-to-day things, though, that I think are forgotten. They are forgotten by what happens with the public service. They forget the role of the public service in leadership because they're not the ones that get the glories. Sometimes it's us that get the glories and then there's us that don't get the glory. But the public service never does. And, Mr. Speaker, this House, this building, is actually the seat of the senior most level of the executive of the government, of the legislative branch of the government, and Mr. Mercer has now been at the head of this government -- of this institution, of this building. That's a pretty heavy place to be. But that role gets missed sometimes when we talk about who he gets the glory for the work that gets done around here. And I think we've already heard, and I know -- I do know, even from the side where we don't necessarily interact as often, that the role of the clerk helps us build relationships, keep relationships, manage relationships. It's work that often happens very much out of the spotlight but if it wasn't happening, I can't frankly imagine how any of the work in this building would get done.

And so, Mr. Speaker, although there's these very spot -- very, very key achievements -- languages, the women being elected here, those are key things, there's a day-to-day function in this building that keeps democracy in the North going and it keeps democracy going in a consensus government. There's not a lot of examples to draw from. When you're in this role, in a consensus government, of how to do that job because we're special here. So when things go wrong, sometimes those are the things where leaders get highlighted. But when things go well, when things go smoothly, when work gets done, that doesn't necessarily get highlighted. But, Mr. Speaker, it's invaluable, it's the core functioning of government, and I think Mr. Mercer deserves a great amount of credit for that. And so what I want to leave him with is a little quote from Laozi //, which is this: A leader is best when people barely know he exists. When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say we did it ourselves.

But, Mr. Speaker, we didn't do it ourselves. Past Assemblies haven't done it themselves. We rely on the Office of the Clerk and the Office of the Clerk in this case was headed by Mr. Mercer. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And like my colleagues, a lot of what I wanted to say has already been said so I won't repeat it. But I do want to highlight some of the changes that have happened here at the Legislative Assembly since Mr. Mercer took the helm, and I've seen them -- even in my seven years here; I've seen a number of changes. And I will say that of course the Speaker gets all the credit for the improvements that happen at the Legislative Assembly, and I know Mr. Mercer wouldn't have it any other way. He doesn't want to take any of that credit, but I believe he has a big hand in bringing the voices of this Legislative Assembly to the people of the territory. Since his time in this role, the Legislative Assembly, the television channel has become a requirement to be carried by the satellite and cable broadcasters as part of their base package. So across the territory, people now have access to our proceedings on TV. And I know that they watch them. When I go into communities, I hear from a lot of people who watch the proceedings, a lot of elders who watch the proceedings. When I began here, there was no live streaming of committee meetings, of the proceedings. We can now watch the Legislative Assembly on Facebook Live, on Twitter, on the Legislative Assembly



website, on YouTube. We have access all around the world. We also have access in a number of different languages. So I believe there might be seven different languages being interpreted right now. So the Assembly, you know, it's in Yellowknife, and not a lot of people come to this building, not a lot of people in Yellowknife even come to this building. So what Mr. Mercer has really helped facilitate is taking the words of the MLAs, the representatives of the people, and ensuring that the people actually get to hear them. And I think that is going to be one of his lasting legacies.

Similar to what some of my other colleagues said, I found that Mr. Mercer's been very supportive. When we come in as MLAs, we're deer in the headlight. And he's well aware of that, he's seen many deer come through this House, and I found that he was always very supportive. And often I would receive support from him without realizing it at the time. It might be a comment that, you know, relates to something that we had previously discussed but wasn't directly related to it but it would sit in the back of my head and it would -- you know, it would impact me and it would help me. Little things. I have a poem in my inbox that Mr. Mercer shared with me after I told him about some of the things that, you know, I was experiencing as a Member.

As Deputy Speaker, I worked, you know, with the Speaker and with Mr. Mercer and he was always very supportive of providing developmental -- professional development opportunities. I had many good conversations about procedure. I know it's not something that most people are interested in but as Deputy Speaker and Government House Leader, I do enjoy those types of conversations and there's not a lot of people with the expertise that Mr. Mercer has as the clerk of a consensus government system. I believe there's only 15 Clerks in Canada. It's not a job that a lot of people do and so it's a very important job, and we need to ensure that people in those roles have the skills. And I always felt that someone was in charge at the Assembly here. You don't always get that sense in some organizations that someone's at the helm, but I always felt that someone was at the helm.

And the final thing I want to mention is that Mr. Mercer was -- he's never been afraid to present bold ideas, present options to Members that they might not otherwise consider. And he's always -- he always knows that it's, ultimately, the Member, it's the elected officials that make those decisions, but I did appreciate hearing things from him that you might not otherwise hear from someone.

And, you know, one very practical example is I was the chair of the special committee on transition matters in the last government, and what that committee does is they make recommendations to the incoming Assembly. Because an incoming Assembly is all fresh faces, basically there's many instances that whatever that committee recommends, that's what happens. And one of the options that Mr. Mercer presented was that perhaps we do a full year budget in this government. Generally we do a budget for a few months, and then we come back in the winter and the new year and hash out a much larger budget. Well, we did recommend that and that's what happened. And if that didn't happen, we would have been sitting in March 2020 without a budget. And what would have happened to the Government of the Northwest Territories? Everything was shut down. You know, we weren't getting together. We weren't able to do what we needed to do. And so because of that suggestion, which, you know, ultimately, we did accept, we had a budget for the first year through COVID. And I think that's a big deal and that really contributed to the GNWT being able to operate. And as my Member stated, you know, he would get a hand in the special committee on increasing the representation of women. And there's numerous examples like that. And, of course, you know, the clerk never gets the credit but those are just a couple of examples where credit is due. And so I look forward to hearing the experiences of other Members as well because I know that, you know, Mr. Mercer has had a very positive impact on this Assembly and on the Members. Thank you.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to acknowledge Tim on his retirement as well, and my experience getting to know him within this Assembly. And coming into this Assembly, being a first-time elected MLA, being a first-time elected Minister, and also being Indigenous really carried hard on me as well too. You know, my beginnings were very humbling. My experience was I worked for the government for 20 years. My story is quite similar to what we discuss here every single day. I know what it's like to be homeless. I know what it's like to be raised in the system. I know what it's like to live in poverty. But then my interactions with Mr. Mercer gave me the confidence, gave me the influence to just pursue that it's a lived experience that I do have, you are a Minister, tell your story, work through your portfolio, and just get the work done.

I wanted to let you know that your presence, your leadership, your knowledge is appreciated. You're very unique in passing on that type of acknowledgement to people and to build Indigenous women throughout the Northwest Territories as well, not only in that case but also increasing the number of Indigenous employees within this institution as well and giving them the ideal opportunity and recognizing the languages that are so important and so crucial to this territory as well. I wish you well in your retirement. I wish you good health. I wish you enjoyable, great experiences. And I'm very excited for you for the next -- your next chapter in life. Take good care. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Sahtu. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to also celebrate Tim today in his retirement. Not only have most of the things I was going to speak about -- even my jokes have been stolen by the other side in that Mr. Mercer was always providing us with advice; I just probably didn't take it very often. So as one of the Members that definitely has had one of the more tumultuous rides here in the Assembly, I first would like to apologize to Mr. Mercer for making his last few years here at the Assembly a very interesting and unpredictable one. I too did not have many interactions with the clerk's office as a Minister, and it was actually -- and I'm going to try to say this without tearing up too much. But it was upon the passing of Haylee Carlson here in the Assembly, who I know was very close to everyone, the staff, and Mr. Mercer himself, and at the same time I had lost my mother one week earlier and it was -- I never had an opportunity with everything that was going on, my siblings, to say good bye to my mom. We didn't do the service at the time. And it was attending Haylee's service and listening to Mr. Mercer speak to that where I was able to actually have some closure myself in what I was going through, and that, I think, was the first moment where I started my friendship with Tim.

Over the years, Tim did try to -- or that first year try to help me smooth over the things that were happening and unfortunately that did not pan out that way. But having moved on to this side, I then got to see the other side of it and have that unique experience of being not only a Minister but also having been a Regular Member and seeing exactly what the clerk's office did and what they brought to the table. And I can't even imagine -- you know, the expression of herding cats, I think if you take that to the millionth degree that's probably what Mr. Mercer had to do with the 19th Assembly. We were all in with a lot of new ideas and

probably not so receptive to listening to what might seem to be the old way of doing things, and I want to say that I think that Tim navigated that really well with us, encouraging us to make change and to follow our hearts, but also trying to get us to recognize that there are procedures and things that need to take place.

I believe Tim is a true parliamentarian. He truly believes in the system and that would lead to some interesting debates at times, as I am quite the opposite. However, I have come to really appreciate the level of expertise and knowledge that Tim has brought to the table because I come from no background like that. So I had no guidance. And I really have appreciated the clerk's office. And not only Tim himself, but the people underneath him that you can see are clearly benefitting from his amazing mentorship.

And one of the things that I've always come and struck to is when I look at some of our -- and I don't want to speak for them but they're not Members, and they don't get this opportunity, some of our Indigenous staff in the Assembly have always told me that Tim has been a strong supporter of theirs and that they feel he welcomes them, he encourages them, and he wants them all to succeed. And for that, I think that's the biggest kudos that we could give him in saying thank you for that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Mercer is the Clerk of the Assembly, he's essentially our deputy minister, but the thing I like about Tim is unlike quite a few deputy ministers, when he speaks, I understand what he's saying, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Mercer truly lives the ethos of fearless advice and loyal implementation. I had the honour of chairing caucus through the first half of this Assembly through some tumultuous times and I spent many hours in his office getting advice and discussing things, and he provided me a wealth of direction and options and always after those meetings, I was confident that they would be implemented. I was confident that they would get down to the staff who needed to implement them, which I think is often the hardest part of accomplishing anything in government is making sure it is actually followed up on and I've never had that concern with Mr. Mercer. I truly do appreciate his advice and his ability to give fearless advice, because I know that is not easy, that is not easy for many civil servants to do, to give advice that you simply may not want to hear. And so I just would like to thank Mr.

Mercer for all of his help and all of his advice in my time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, before ever meeting Mr. Mercer, it was immediately upon my successful election to the Assembly that he contacted me to give me advice on an issue that was dogging me. And I knew from that first contact that we, as MLAs, were in good hands. And R.J. said I told you so.

Mr. Mercer's dedication to this Assembly for the past 20 years is very appreciated by myself and I think everyone here today. I wish him all the best in retirement while he works on his class 3 driver's license and his air endorsement. So, Mr. Bassett, you may have a truck driver in the making. Seriously though, Mr. Mercer, from what I know of you in my short time here, your conduct and the service you provided was nothing short of exceptional, and we will all miss that. Thank you.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's pretty obvious that that first phone call that we received the very next morning after we were elected is a memorable one because it's definitely my first memory of talking to Tim. I had never met Tim before, and I had never spoken with Tim before. And I remember being so terrified on the phone that when I hung up, I realized I had absolutely no idea what he had just told me.

Mr. Speaker, Tim has a lot of passion for his role as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and that is very obvious. He has a lot of love for the Northwest Territories, and that is very clear. Tim has a vision for how to build a system that supports and honours consensus government in this territory, and that is certainly loud.

I had the honour, I can say now, of serving on Board of Management as well as some of my colleagues. And Board of Management spent a lot of time together in the 19th Assembly and so we got to know each other quite well. There were times where we didn't want to be in the same room together, but I think at the very end of this Assembly, as we enter into the last days, we realize that there was a huge benefit and a lot of memorable relationships that were created in those moments together and a lot of good work that was done in Board of Management with yourself, Mr. Speaker, and

Tim at the secretary position of that and I'm very thankful for that time.

One of the roles that Board of Management had was in interviewing for a new clerk. And I realize that, yes, while we were interviewing for a deputy minister position, that one of my biggest concerns about interviewing for that position was that it's not just another leadership job; it's a leadership job that is to the next level. Because, yes, you want someone that is experienced in management and, yes, you want someone who is smart and knows their stuff, but it's a huge task to deal with the 19 of us and it's one of the -- in my opinion, one of the biggest probably most challenging parts of the role and one of the most important parts of the role is keeping us all in line but also making sure that we are well supported, and that's not an easy task to do. And so one of my biggest concerns was how do you interview for someone's ability to connect with people when you may not know the person that you're interviewing, because it is very clear that connection is such a huge part of the role of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that one of Tim's greatest strengths is his ability to connect in a unique way with every single person that comes into this House and that is elected in some way, shape, or form. And I was honoured to be one of the people to receive not only that professional relationship but that friendship.

Mr. Speaker, my greatest respect for Tim as a human being, though, and as a person, definitely came through some of the darkest moments of this Assembly. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I was not prepared coming into this Assembly for some of the relationships and the connections that would be made. The North is a very small place, and while I didn't know Tim I knew people that worked in this building. And I knew people that worked in this building that aren't here anymore, and I was lucky enough to know staff who are here today and who were amazing support systems and at the helm of that is Mr. Mercer. So I wanted to leave Mr. Mercer with this because we all know that Mr. Mercer is a huge sailor.

I'm not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship, is a very common and well-known sailing quote. And I want to thank Mr. Mercer for helping me build the confidence as a first time MLA to learn how to sail my ship. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Member for Thebacha. Yes, I'll allow the mover to have closing comments. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I first got elected to the Legislative Assembly and came here, I found a situation where, you know, like I explained earlier today, that, you know, the slow pace of government and being in private sector for 50 years, I was a bit puzzled at all the processes that we had to follow to get one piece of paper or one little thing. And so after a couple weeks, I paid a visit to the clerk's office and I sat down with Tim. And I didn't really know him that well yet. And the conversation we had was incredible. And, you know, he says, Frieda, just concentrate on the two things that you would really like to concentrate on and work on those and when it becomes positive, you'll see why you're here. And I have a lot of respect for Tim. I had enough respect to stand by him through all the three and a half years because I know good always goes over bad. I've had it happen in my own leadership many times. And as long as you're telling the truth and as long as you stand by what you believe in and you have the compassion for what you do, good always goes over the bad. And with that, you know, I will miss Tim greatly. I respect him. And I've got to know him even more as chairing with him -- chairing caucus with him in the last little while.

I want to thank him for understanding what I stand for. And I also want to thank him on how he interacts with the Indigenous peoples. That, to me, is very, very, very important, and all peoples. He treats everybody that walks through the door equally, and that's a big plus. I know he's going into other things in life and going to enjoy some of the things that he always wanted to do because, I mean, coming here and spending, even in this last four days, like 12 to 15 hours a day was a little bit much, but -- and hopefully he'd be able to enjoy his cabin and enjoy the outdoors that he loves and the barbecues. And I also want to make sure that I extend my personal invitation to him on behalf of my husband and I, and the people of Fort Smith, to come and visit Fort Smith any time he would like. It's been my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to be working with such a great guy. And I want to thank him very, very much. Thank you, Tim.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Colleagues, before we do the vote, I just wanted to say a few words myself while the staff are here.

Mr. Mercer, I know I could only see the back of your head right now and I know -- you know,

this is my 12th year as an MLA, and Tim has been here for the majority of that. I know he took some time off for himself. But, you know, I really value all the -- I mean, I didn't come to his office that much but, I mean, as MLAs, you know, a lot of times, you know, there's pressures we get with this job and our personal lives and it's always good to bounce these issues off somebody, and Tim was that person for many of us. And, you know, it's usually you got pretty good sound advice but a lot of times he just asked you what you thought, and he'd be like ah, pretty much got it. But, you know, I really value that because a lot of times it was the right decisions to make and, you know, that's the kind of sound advice a lot of Members over the years have received. And, you know, that's what -- and a lot of the advice that we do get make us do our job 100 percent. And, you know, that's a role of the clerk, is to be there for the Members 100 percent and, you know, support you in any way they can and, you know, that means a lot to myself. And also the team that he put together. You know, look at the team up there that's seeing him off. I know you're all going to miss him as much as us but, you know, like you said it's a phone call away, but. Or just down the road. But, you know, to leave this Assembly, it's leaving on a good note and I wish him all the best and look forward to the future. And also for Tim, I know I have other words later on today, but I just thought I'd say that while the team is here. It's so important, you know. You know you have a lot of support with our incoming clerk, Mr. Rutland taking pictures. With that, I would just like to thank you all and thank Tim. Mahsi.

To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? Sure, it's up to Member for Thebacha.

The Member for Thebacha has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):** The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Yellowknife South. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. It's pretty close here, but -- I'm just kidding.

The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

I'm sure Mr. Mercer will be like some former MLAs and always up in the gallery at every session.

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 80:  
DENTAL HYGIENISTS PROFESSION  
STATUTE AMENDMENT ACT,  
CARRIED

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Profession Statute Amendment Act, be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 80 amends the Dental Auxiliaries Act and the Health and Social Services Professions Act to

- Require the Minister to recommend to the Commissioner regulations under the Health and Social Services Professions Act on or before March 31st, 2024, to regulate the practice of dental hygienists;
- Designate the profession of dental hygienists as a profession to which that act applies, effective April 1st, 2024;
- Transfer the regulation of dental hygienists from the Dental Auxiliaries Act to the Health and Social Services Professions Act, effective April 1st, 2024; and,
- Replace gender-specific language in the Dental Auxiliaries Act with gender-neutral language.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last three and a half years, I have spoken about oral health on numerous occasions in this House. I have focused on the need of the GNWT to change

and modernize the Dental Auxiliaries Act and the regulatory environment of dental hygienists to improve preventative oral health in small communities, and I have focused on the cost of the NWT's lack of equitable access to preventative oral health care. What I want to tell this House why it is important that I am moving forward with this bill.

We live in a unique part of the world with unique needs. In our remote communities, access to regular dental care is not consistent and treatment is not timely or immediate. Accessing treatment is complicated by the fact that dental services are not insured medical services under the Canada Health Act. Depending on an NWT resident's ancestry, their funding for dental care comes from different funding or benefit pots. Here in Yellowknife, there are multiple dental hygienists that residents can access on a regular basis dependent on financial and benefits the individual has access to. Some dentists and hygienists also travel to communities.

The Dental Auxiliaries Act stipulates that no dental hygienist shall practice dental hygiene except under the direction and control of a dentist. In this week's response to Oral Question 1435-19(2), Dental Hygienist Regulations, health and social services stated, quote, "access to dental services for Indigenous residents eligible for the non-insured health benefits program is funded by Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, through a contribution agreement with the department. The department, on behalf of ISC, enters into contracts to pay for the travel costs of the dental providers to provide dental services in communities. ISC determines the number of dental days allocated to each community, and funding is in accordance with this number."

In reality, how services are delivered on the ground across our territory differs than how they are intended. Yes, there are contracts for dental providers to travel to northern communities but on the ground what this means is that dental providers offer dental services in short blocks of time outside of Yellowknife in community hubs and small remote communities. These services are triaged starting with dental emergencies. This makes sense. If someone needs a root canal or an extraction, this will always be the more emergent case. What this means is that prevention is pushed back or simply does not happen and the next visit is more teeth being pulled and a cycle where preventative care consistently sits on the back burner.

Separating dental providers to allow for the option of dental hygienists to work independent

of a dentist is key to empowering dental hygienists to secure their own contracts; and, in turn, provide prevention oral health care in small remote communities.

This isn't only a challenge relevant to the NWT. Today all Canadian jurisdictions, except three territories and PEI, have legislation to support dental hygienists to be autonomous and self-regulated to varying levels. For example, some jurisdictions restrict the use of local anesthesia by dental hygienists. And I have to say a huge thank you to the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, the Ontario Dental Hygienists Association, and the British Columbia Dental Hygienists Association. All three associations were incredibly generous with the information they shared with me on lessons learned through their own legislation, what they would do different and why, and how they have created a regulatory environment for dental hygienists, and have strongly encouraged new modern legislation for dental hygienists in the Northwest Territories.

Yellowknife residents don't encounter the same barriers accessing preventative oral health care as small and remote community residents. But, Mr. Speaker, access to preventative health care is an all-of-territory concern.

Our oral health has a significant impact on our overall health. Oral health care, or lack thereof, can cause a cascading domino effect of health challenges down the road. According to the World Health Organization, almost all of the world's population suffer from oral diseases, and global cases of oral diseases have increased by 1 billion over the last 30 years, a clear indication that many people do not have access to prevention or treatment of oral diseases. Also acknowledged by the World Health Organization is the reality that people on low incomes, people living with disabilities, elders and seniors living alone or in care homes, those living in remote and rural communities, and people from minority groups, carry a higher burden of oral disease.

The most common oral diseases are tooth decay, severe gum disease, tooth loss, and oral cancers. But, Mr. Speaker, we're not only talking about oral disease. Core oral systemic health directly increases the risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, periodontal disease, and high-risk pregnancies. Every one of these jeopardizes a person's quality of life, may shorten their life, and is a significant financial cost to the government.

The operations budgets for the Department of Health and Social Services of the Northwest Territories is half a billion dollars, and the cost

of health care is not going down. In fact, Mr. Speaker, our expectations of our health department continue to grow, and the associated budget is not keeping pace, forcing the department to come back time and time again for supplementary appropriations to pay for a system that has outgrown its means and sits in significant deficit.

So, Mr. Speaker, the challenges of Northerners thousands of kilometres away matter because the success of the NWT depends on the health and safety of all its people and because the cost of reactionary health care is almost always higher than the cost of prevention.

It is also worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that in the Northwest Territories, 86 percent of dental hygienists identify as women. Denying dental hygienists the opportunity to practice outside of the control of a dentist means that the government is unintentionally denying employment opportunities in a sector that is largely female. In addition, less than a handful of NWT communities have resident dentists. This means that less than a handful of NWT communities can be home to practicing dental hygienists. Nurses work in our small remote communities without doctors, preventative health care professionals like chiropractors and massage therapists are free to work under professional accreditation using their professional discretion to provide services to NWT residents. Given the huge demand for oral health practitioners, and the known fact that prevention saves future burdens on our health care system, creating a regulatory environment that supports more prevention is critical. This, Mr. Speaker, also creates opportunity for economic diversification and employment outside of Yellowknife.

Do I believe that all dental hygienists want to be self-employed or work outside of a dentist's office? No, Mr. Speaker. But some want the autonomy and the ability to choose. Beyond the autonomy of this industry, Mr. Speaker, it is doing what makes sense for the health of our territory. One of the key objectives of the GNWT's oral health strategy calls for establishing systemic supports for improved oral health services, including improving the regulatory environment. But in the same tabled response to Oral Question 1435-19(2), Dental Hygienists Regulations, health and social services stated, quote, "delivery of dental services is not part of the NWT Health and Social Services system. Dental treatment remains the exclusive domain of private dental practices. As such, the department has no authority to dictate how dental providers deliver their scope of practice."

This response shows me the importance of building the regulatory framework originally referenced in the oral health strategy years ago. To remove systemic barriers to preventative oral health for all residents of the Northwest Territories, we must improve the regulatory environment that will support a preventative oral health system. This bill helps us accomplish just that.

Mr. Speaker, I have not carried this conversation on my own. My colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes has also spoken frequently in this House about the same. And without the opportunity to listen and learn from her lived experience as a northerner, a parent, a public health nurse, a nursing manager at the Inuvik Hospital, and as the Inuvialuit health systems navigator, I would not have had the opportunity to appreciate the depth of the challenges many of our residents face when accessing dental services.

I'd like to thank the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes for her consistent collaboration throughout this Assembly, this bill, and ultimately as the seconder of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Government House Leader.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has not had time to do an analysis of this bill. What the bill proposes would take government resources and we cannot endorse something without doing our due diligence. That said, we do want to -- Cabinet has taken the position that in the spirit of consensus government, we don't stand in the way of bills as they make their way through second reading. So Cabinet will be abstaining. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Government House Leader. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Bill 80 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 81:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EDUCATION ACT,  
NO. 2,  
CARRIED

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 81, An Act to Amend the Education Act, No. 2, be read for the second time.

The bill amends the Education Act to update the preamble to

- Recognize the vital role that Indigenous peoples and Indigenous governments play in achieving quality and excellence in education;
- Clarify a number of defined terms;
- Update the procedural requirements to be followed when modifying a school program for a student;
- Allow the Minister to access student records for the purposes of evaluating a school program or monitoring student progression through the education system;
- Permit school staff to disclose information in a student record to an education body or the department;
- Provide the Minister with the authority to permit the sharing of information relating to teacher certificate suspensions and cancellations with other jurisdictions;
- Clarify quorum rules for district education authorities;
- Obligate education bodies to provide student transportation;
- Update and clarify the duties and powers that may be allocated to education bodies;
- Provide education bodies that have been allocated with the same duty or power with a mediation option to determine which education body will perform the duty or exercise the power;
- Consolidate and clarify the areas in which the Minister may issue directions under the Act;
- Provide the Minister with the authority to establish oversight committees;
- Allow for mail-in voting for district education authority elections; and,
- Correct inconsistencies and errors in the act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 81 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 82:  
LEGAL PROFESSION ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 82, Legal Profession Act, be read for the second time.

This bill repeals and replaces the Legal Profession Act. The current Act is largely based on the 1976 Ordinance. It has been amended over time but there are parts of it that are antiquated and that have been overtaken by more modern legislation. In addition, the current Act does not reflect contemporary developments in the self-regulation of the legal profession across Canada.

The Law Society established a review committee to examine these developments and it came up with a series of recommendations in 2019. This bill integrates these recommendations into a new Act.

Minor errors and inconsistencies are also addressed along with the use of diversity-inclusive language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 82 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 83:  
LIQUOR ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 83, Liquor Act, be read for the second time.

This bill repeals and replaces the Liquor Act, SNWT 2007, c.15 to make significant changes and updates, including to

- Provide for the appointment of a registrar with responsibility for liquor licensing matters including the issuance, renewal, transfer, suspension and cancellation of licenses;
- Allow for the creation of new classes of liquor licenses in regulations;
- Allow for the creation of classes of retail vendors in regulations;
- Allow for the imposition of monetary penalties by a newly appointed chief inspector;
- Repeal the existing liquor licensing board with a liquor appeals board to hear appeals of decisions of the registrar and the chief inspector;
- Define a single community authority for the purposes of community control matters;
- Create new mechanisms for community control over liquor and provide certain protections for operating businesses;
- Make changes to the length of temporary prohibition orders, their associated timelines and requirements;
- Necessary updates to inspection, investigation and search and seizure provisions;
- Remove mandatory minimum penalties; and,
- Modernize language, including by using gender-neutral pronouns.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 83 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.



BILL 84:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for the Sahtu, that Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation to

- Change the name of the act to the Prosper NWT Act;
- Continue the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation as Prosper NWT;
- Clarify when a corporation will be considered a subsidiary of Prosper NWT for the purposes of the act;
- Provide the Board with the authority to modify Prosper NWT's non-financial support programs with the approval of the Minister;
- Provide Prosper NWT with the authority to provide non-financial support to business enterprises and members of the public outside of established programs;
- Provide Prosper NWT with the authority to provide financial support to business enterprises and subsidiaries;
- Provide the board with the authority to require parties to confirm their compliance with agreements they have entered into with Prosper NWT;
- Clarify conflict of interest provisions by adding the concept of a controlling interest;
- Clarify that persons are related under the Act if they are related for the purposes of the Income Tax Act (Canada);
- Permit Prosper NWT, subject to certain limitations, to use a portion of its cash on hand for the purpose of carrying on its business;
- Remove the requirement that the programs established under the act be periodically reviewed by the Minister;
- Modernize language, including using gender-neutral pronouns; and,

- Correct inconsistencies and errors identified in the act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 84 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Madam Premier.

BILL 85:  
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE  
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
IMPLEMENTATION ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 85, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act, be read for the second time.

This bill

- Affirms the declaration as a universal human rights instrument with application to the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Territories and the laws of the Northwest Territories;
- Provides a framework for the implementation of the declaration by the Government of the Northwest Territories in collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous governments or organizations; and,
- Affirms the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous governments or organizations in the implementation of the declaration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 85 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23 and 29, Committee Report 49-19(2), Committee Report 51-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2).

By the authority given to me as Speaker under rule -- order. A lot of sidebar in here.

By the authority given to me as Speaker under Rule 2.2(4), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, committee wishes to consider Committee Report 49-19(2), Report on the 2021-2022 Review of the Official Languages Act; and, Committee Report 51-19(2), Report on Indigenous Representation in the Northwest Territories Public Service. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We'll take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 49-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the 2021-2022 Review of the Official Languages Act. I will go to the chair of Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening marks. Member for Yellowknife North

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has been reviewing the Official Languages Act over the last two years. The committee's report was read into the record on March 27th, 2023. Since the act had not been changed since 2003, it was the committee's goal to

- Collect input from Northerners on the effectiveness of the Official Languages Act;

- To recommend changes to better protect and revitalize official languages; and,
- To ensure changes are implemented.
- The committee heard the desire for change during its outreach with the public as well as from past reports on this legislation. During the committee's statutory review, Bill 63 was brought forward by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to address some of the known issues in the Official Languages Act.
- Bill 63 received third reading on March 28th, 2023. While the committee was glad to see some changes to the Official Languages Act in Bill 63, the committee believes that those changes do not go far enough. In the feedback the committee heard, it was clear that participants across the Northwest Territories want and need more change.
- The committee has made 13 recommendations to further transform the way the Official Languages Act serves and protects official languages in the Northwest Territories. These recommendations strive to
  - Implement the right to receive services in your official language of choice;
  - Implement the right to K to 12 immersion education in your local language;
  - Doubling resource to support and revitalize Indigenous languages; and,
  - Support of official language speakers in the public service. The committee looks forward to the government's response to these recommendations.

The committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the review. The committee was inspired by Northwest Territories residents doing amazing things to reclaim their languages, teach young people with limited resources, and advocate changes to help their language communities survive and thrive. I would like to thank the committee for their work on this review. Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 49-19(2). Do any Members have any general comments? Seeing none. Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 438-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - INCREASE FUNDING FOR  
INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE EDUCATION,  
SERVICES AND REVITALIZATION,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories double funding for Indigenous language education, services, and revitalization. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 439-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - REIMBURSEMENT FOR USE OF  
INDIGENOUS OFFICIAL LANGUAGES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories reimburse use of an Indigenous official language as an eligible expense for all programs, grants, and contributions;

And further, these funding agreements should be multi-year to reduce administrative burden and improve sustainability. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 440-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - CREATIVE COMMONS FOR  
INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE RESOURCE  
MATERIAL,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment set up a creative commons for Indigenous-language resource materials;

And further, that the creative commons should build on the Our Languages NWT platform and offer an accessible digital space;

And furthermore, it should allow creators and users to share and collaborate on educational materials, language-learning apps, curricula, grant applications, and other resources. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to just want to speak directly to the Minister of education on this one. We heard one of the teachers say that they spent \$30,000 to create a textbook in an official language and then someone else actually owns the copyright to that and they can't, you know, share that with other language resources, they can't use the same kind of standard textbook formatting and get it translated. So the solution we heard to doing that was that there needs to be a creative commons for Indigenous language resource materials so that those are not copyrighted. This seems like a pretty easy ask, to make sure that those teachers could all share resources without concerns for copyright. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to just thank the committee for the work on this. That's not one that I sit on. And I think this just comes back to, I think, two years ago asking the Minister if we were going to get some of our languages on, like, Google and Google Translate. And I have to say, actually, since that time I've noticed there are more resources online that I can look up certain words in Inuktitut or Inuvialuit -- sorry, I'm not getting any -- I won't even try today. And so therefore, you know, I just see that this is such a great thing. Teachers are very collaborative. They're

very about, you know, not reinventing the wheel and sharing their information. And I think just having this kind of a resource is amazing, even as a person who doesn't speak an Indigenous language, just the ability to go somewhere and look it up would be great. So I think this is a wonderful recommendation from the committee. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 441-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - ANNUAL OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACTION PLAN,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that each department and agency be required to have an annual official languages action plan to improve and revitalize the language skills of its Indigenous employees. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 442-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE TRAINING  
ACCOUNT,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that each department and agency be required to create an individual language training account for each person;

And further, the account should guarantee each Indigenous employee a minimum number of hours of language training in any Indigenous official language, as a first or second language. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is something that the federal government does for French. And I've actually had a job for the federal government where they would pay me for four hours on Fridays to take French lessons. And I think it would be great to see us doing the same thing for our Indigenous language speakers in the GNWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 443-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES  
REVITALIZATION FUND,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance set up an Indigenous Languages Revitalization Fund in order to support Indigenous employees in the effort to reclaim, revitalize, and maintain and strengthen their languages. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 444-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE TERMS  
AND SPELLINGS FOR LANGUAGES AND  
COMMUNITIES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories restore Indigenous language terms and spellings to refer to languages and communities;

And further, that the GNWT should update all legislation, regulations, policies, guidelines, standards, and communications within the life of the 20th Assembly;

And furthermore, the GNWT should also consult Indigenous communities on the changes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. I know that to revive our language, it is important for all of us in small communities and I know that there's great effort made in, like in Yellowknife. But I'm not too sure about -- I know all of the -- all of our language are in danger, according to the report that I heard. So I'm just wondering, like, if communities like Hay River, I just want to know and ask whether the -- I think there's the Dene Zhatie and Denesoline. There's a lot of, you know, people living in that area speaking those language. So I just want to know how effective is the school promoting these language? I'm not too sure. So I'm just asking that question. But this is very important. So I'm just -- I'm just asking that because it is important because in our school, we do the same, and -- but I know more needs to be done in this area. So I'm just asking. It's just more of a comment but it will be nice if we can see some kind of a report so that way we can build on it to revive to, you know -- like for our language to survive for long into the future. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. To the motion. Question has been called.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. And I'm sure the Minister heard and could consider the question in their report.

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 445-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT – INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment help ensure Indigenous-language early childhood education is available in each community;

And further, to achieve this vision, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment should provide additional and sufficient funding to program operators that use Indigenous languages. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. And just, the motion that's in your package is actually out of order. So the one that was next should be at the end. So the motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. You know, the most inspiring things we heard from committee were those cases where there were language nests for preschool children. Their brains are sponges. That's where we were learning. That's where we heard cases where you have young children talking to elders, and they are learning the language. And I think we have fortuitous timing that we are rolling out universal child care in this next few years and we are spending, you know, unprecedented dollars on child care and building spaces. And so I think it's important that we should try and prioritize a lot of those spaces to be using Indigenous languages and when they are, they should get extra funding so that they can do that. So I think it's just a unique opportunity to make sure we have those language nests as we build more early learning child care centres. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 446-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - RIGHT TO RECEIVE LANGUAGE  
SERVICES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories recognize the right of each resident to receive services in the official language of their choice;

And further, this right should go beyond the concepts of "significant demand" and "nature of the office," and follow the principle of substantive equality.

And furthermore, as such the Government of the Northwest Territories should consider quantitative and qualitative characteristics when determining service levels to each official language community;

And furthermore, this right should also be remedial in nature, designed to counter the gradual decline of Indigenous official language speakers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. First off, for the principle of substantive equality and the idea of Indigenous language rights being remedial in nature is something committee stole from the federal Indigenous Languages Act. They've actually surpassed us in the way they are treating rights. And right now the vast majority of complaints to our Official Languages Commissioner are about French language, they're not about Indigenous languages. And the right is, you know, it's -- you will have significant demand in the area and then it depends on the nature of the office which to me, Madam Chair, is just not really a right. It's really hard to know even if you have a right, let alone if you are able to complain about it. I know there is hesitation on the GNWT to create, you know, all-encompassing rights similar to French but I believe we can do this better with technology. There's a way to make sure interpreters are available all the time to people when they walk into a hospital, when they walk into an office, when they're dealing with child and family services. It needs to be clear that they have that right, and there's an interpreter centre set up. It doesn't -- and I think with technology we

could make sure that is occurring. And we can give Indigenous languages the same right to service that French has. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 447-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT – INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE SIGNS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories set up a policy and a plan to display more Indigenous language signs before the 19th Assembly ends;

And further, the policy should require all new signs at all territorial public bodies and community governments to prominently feature the local Indigenous official language;

And furthermore, the plan should set targets and offer funding for new Indigenous language signs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We heard from Indigenous language speakers they just want to see their language around more. I think a signage policy is pretty low hanging fruit. I'll note here in the Assembly, as we have replaced signs, we have included an official language. It's just simply about making it more visible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 448-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - MICHIF LANGUAGE,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment commission a study on the state of Michif in the Northwest Territories and options to recognize Michif in the Official Languages Act;

And further, the study should be tabled in the House within the first 18 months of the 20th Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 449-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - INDIGENOUS OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
IN EDUCATION,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment implement an exercisable right for Northerners to full K to 12 immersion in each local Indigenous official language;

And further, to achieve this vision, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment should prioritize Indigenous language revitalization in the ongoing Education Act modernization. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to note that this right exists in Nunavut and what they have done is their plan to roll it out, it goes until 2038. And I think that's the kind of multigenerational thinking you need if we're actually going to ever achieve this. And part of

their plan speaks to they actually need to have students go through the education system, become fluent so they can then become teachers. So that's the kind of thinking they're at with this. And I believe as we go on to review our Education Act, language rights need to be a key part of it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 450-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 49-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE 2021-22  
REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES  
ACT - RESPONSE TO  
RECOMMENDATIONS,  
CARRIED

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you concluded consideration of Committee Report 49-19(2)?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 49-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the 2021-2022 Review of the Official Languages Act.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 51-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report

on Indigenous Representation in the Northwest Territories Public Service. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for any opening comments. Member for Yellowknife North

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations made it a priority to find ways to increase Indigenous representation in the Northwest Territories public service. This work began in 2020, and the committee's report was read into the record on March 28, 2023. The committee met with people in person and virtually in communities across the Northwest Territories to hear their perspectives on this matter.

The committee consistently heard a deep longstanding disappointment with the government as an employer and a viewpoint that the system is intended to keep Indigenous people out of the public service. The recommendations formulated by the committee address the main concerns heard by members of the public: The government needs to improve the way competitions are held; decentralize operations; create a fair and transparent appeal process; implement mechanisms to hold hiring managers accountable; set hiring targets; and, be cautious of potential problems with limiting the definition of Indigenous. The committee asks the government to recognize the reconciliatory intent of these recommendations and to implement these recommendations in relevant policies.

The committee expresses gratitude to everyone who took the time to meet with committee, in person and virtually, and made the effort to provide us with their thoughts in writing. I would like to thank committee for their work on this review. Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. I will now open the floor to general comments on committee report. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this -- I'm glad that we got this report done. The work that we did in this report, you know, one thing that I have to say about the -- this priority and this report is that when we came into this House, this was a priority of one of the things that I discussed in my campaign. This was something that as a hiring manager and as an employee, as an Indigenous employee of the GNWT for many years, you know, I lived a lot of these things. So I want to also -- so I want to thank the people that came forward and the people of the Northwest

Territories that shared with us their concerns with this. This has been many years in the making. Like, we've had the Affirmative Action Policy. There's been so many issues with the affirmative action policies. We needed to move that needle. The Minister of Finance who is the Minister of human resources with all her other portfolios under that title, you know, I know that her department -- and I want to thank her department of all the work that they've also been doing. You know, since we got in this House, raising the -- you know, all these programs in this House has actually maxed out a lot of the Indigenous recruitment programs, you know, we've highlighted a lot of the things in this government and, you know, I've met with the Minister; I've met with Minister and her staff on HR issues. So they've been very live to a lot of the issues. And so this report, you know, being able to table this report and put these recommendations, I know that the framework, a lot of the framework that they -- the Indigenous Recruitment Framework, they line up with, and so I'm hoping that when we do get our response in 120 days, we are going to be so happy. And so again, like I said, that -- for general comments, I just wanted to -- you know, I could talk to every one of these motions but I won't today. There might be a couple I might title just to clarify and, again, like I said, thanks to the people of the Northwest Territories, we are working for you. We did hear you, and we're trying to make this change. And I think this legislative has really upped the ante on this Indigenous recruitment and improving the numbers. So I thank Cabinet, and I thank all the Members for making this stand out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Are there any other general comments? Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 451-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY 1-ONLY  
COMPETITION,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Affirmative Action Policy reflect its objective and intent and mitigate the disadvantage and underrepresentation of Indigenous persons in the NWT public sector by implementing a P1-only competition. Thank you, Mr. Chair.



**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion. Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Affirmative Action Policy that we've had for many years hasn't done justice for what we want to see. So creating and implementing a priority 1-only competition is what we want, and that's why this priority's here. We want to see Indigenous people, you know. We don't want to water it down. We don't want to blind the lines -- blur the lines. So we want to make sure that priority 1 candidates are given the opportunity first to be given the opportunity to do the interviews and possibly get the jobs. You know, and once we're at par, we can revisit this and maybe it'll be sooner than later. And I'll be happy to be hopefully not in this place when that comes. But, I mean, so that's why this priority and this recommendation is here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I'm pleased to see this. And, you know, the Charter of Rights allows for such a policy. And, you know, when we talk about affirmative action, I think it's important that we make -- we make it alone a priority. We -- like, my colleague said, we seem to be watering down, you know, the interpretation a bit and the policy. So I'm glad that it is being made -- or this motion did come forward. It's clear and concise.

The one thing, though, I guess, that you I would recommend as well is that I know there's some discussion about possibly changing the definition of Indigenous person, which I would ask that it remain as is going forward with any new policy. And I think that we're looking at the Indigenous Employment Policy. But other than that I'm pleased to see that we are making this a priority because at the end of the day, affirmative action is about bringing Indigenous people into the public sector. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 452-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
RELOCATION OR REMOTE  
CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIONS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories identify which headquarters positions can be located to the regions, which jobs can be tagged as flexible and moved among a number of locations, and those that could be classified as remote working arrangements aiming to allow priority 1 employees to work in the community of residence. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, again, now I'm pleased to see this one as well because, you know, if we expect to increase the number of Indigenous people in the public sector, decentralization is going to be important. But when we talk about decentralization, we used to talk about it as, you know, moving a department or a part of a department. I think we have to look at, as it says here, as look at individuals and if we move individuals and they can still do the work, you know, we do have individuals working in southern Canada right now that, you know, that are -- seem to be -- it seems to be working out okay. So this is a good move and I think that, you know, for the Indigenous people that don't want to move out of their communities, which there's probably many, this is a great way to proceed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 453-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS

REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE - APPEAL  
PROCESS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE  
POSITIONS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish uniform, clear, and accessible appeal process for public service positions that establishes a mechanism empowering priority 1 candidates with the ability and enough time to appeal a hiring decision before a job is offered to a non-priority 1 candidate; operates independently and arm's length from government; and, an appeal body that is representative of the Indigenous population with a minimum Indigenous membership of 50 percent; clearly outlines how appeals can be requested and considered; contains clear terms of reference for fair and consistent appeal process; and, ensures availability and accessibility of the support by Indigenous staff of the diversity and inclusion unit to the Indigenous candidate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** The motion is in order. To the motion. MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is one thing that we heard that Indigenous employees, they don't even apply anymore because they feel that there's no process with the affirmative action and the appeals process, there's nothing that can help them even call out when there are injustices in the hiring process. So this is why we said before a P2 or a P3 is offered a position, and if there is a P1 candidate that was interviewed, passed an interview that didn't get the offer, that they are notified that a P2 -- you know, that they didn't get the offer to a P2 or a P3 because this has happened. There has been statements that come to us that this has happened because people say that the other -- you know, the Affirmative Action Policy is not done across the board in the territory the same way. And so this gives the opportunity for a P1 to appeal and then somebody outside that process that did the interviewing can look and make sure the process was done and if they followed a policy accordingly because under the policy if a P1 passes the interview, then they should be offered the job. There shouldn't be a P2 and a P3 that they're competing against. But this happens. It happens over and over again. So that's why this motion is there. And we want to make sure that we're doing what we said we were doing in this. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 454-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
CAPACITY BUILDING,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, for the purpose of capacity building, make it a standard policy to ensure that an Indigenous person consistently occupies at least one assistant deputy minister position within all departments; consistently staffs all regional supervisor positions with Indigenous employees; promotes and requires, where possible, that all public boards and agencies have a minimum level of Indigenous representation within the overall makeup of their board of directors; requires, where possible, for agencies to invest in hiring Indigenous employees and follow the Affirmative Action Policy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion. MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you. We've just seen this in the lands -- or environment and climate change. They've targeted a position, a regional ADM position that is -- it gives the room for somebody in the region to -- an Indigenous person to grow into an ADM position, which gives them that experience. And I think the thing is that in the government, sometimes the Indigenous people are left to the side because all of the positions are in Yellowknife and not necessarily are they known and their experience is known to move up into these roles. So this is where -- you know, this might not happen overnight. But this is -- this is a plan. This is a goal. And this is a motion. So we're asking it to be looked at seriously, that this can be done, so we can see more Indigenous people in our senior management. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA YK North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 455-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT  
INDIGENOUS PROFESSIONALS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories attract Indigenous professionals with roots and relations in the Northwest Territories to take public service positions with the GNWT by creating an outreach campaign targeting Northwest Territories residents studying outside the Northwest Territories; offering incentives to returning students; and, requiring that hiring managers are aware of the campaign. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. Is that a question? No, okay. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 456-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE - HIRING  
PRACTICES AND JOB COMPETITIONS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories and all departments update the job descriptions of all public service positions to ensure the inclusion of value statements which affirms the importance of

Indigenous knowledge and community experience; update job information section of all job descriptions to ensure that only plain language is used; ensure that each job information section provides an equivalency formula that is publicly accessible and demonstrates concrete examples of what education equivalencies will be accepted in place of university education; create a mechanism that requires offering qualifying priority 1 candidates who participated in a competition a training path into the position before submitting the job to a non-priority candidate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is order. MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with this recommendation, a lot of people when you look at the GNWT's job descriptions, they don't make a lot of sense. They're -- not a lot of them are in plain language. You read them and somebody -- you can't meet the qualifications. Like, I don't -- like, it just seems like you just -- there's not a target that you can meet. So that's why with this one -- and then equivalencies. We talk about equivalencies in many job descriptions. But as somebody who's applied on jobs, I have never been able to understand how I measure up to an equivalency. And if that was built into job descriptions -- like, when you're creating your job description, you're creating what equivalency could be for this job, then at least when I'm applying I can say well, this is my equivalency because sometimes hiring managers and hiring HR, they don't use equivalencies and so you're not included into that competition because they only put the people that have the schooling criteria. And so this way it could be appealed, have another mechanism of appealing because you would be able to say I met those equivalencies and I didn't even get a job interview. So that is why those -- this motion is there and it's important because Indigenous people, you know, they need to feel confident when they're applying on a job. And women -- it's known that women will not apply on a job if they don't think they meet the qualifications statistically whereas men will apply on a job even if they don't meet all the qualifications. So Indigenous people are probably worse off because they already don't trust that they're going to get even an interview. So that's why this one is there. Thank you, Mr. Chair

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 457-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
TRANSPARENT RETENTION PRACTICES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories commit to transparent retention practices by requiring all departments to develop and follow succession planning guidelines; maintain and share internal position tracking; track and share information about transfer assignments, and/or promotions; ensure that departmental succession planning is informed by employees' goals and expectations by connecting with development goals expressed by employees in the annual performance appraisals; ensure that all Indigenous employees in senior management positions are well supported by their supervisors and are given training opportunities that are suited to their employees interests and can career goals; create a mechanism to ensure Indigenous employees/applicants receive preferred and priority hiring when replacing outgoing employees leaving the public service. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 458-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE - EXIT  
INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories requires all departments to conduct exit interviews with all Indigenous employees, including interns and summer students; ensures exit interviews with Indigenous employees leaving a department are conducted by Indigenous staff of the diversity inclusion unit; and, requires that all public service annual reports include a section with an analysis of why priority 1 employees are leaving the public service. Thank you, Mr. Chair

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 459-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
INCREASING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS  
PARTICIPATION,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work towards increasing participation of Indigenous students in all programs, grants and contributions focused on youth by advertising the availability for youth development and making it known in small communities; creating recruitment campaigns in small communities so youth can participate in existing programs and apply for positions; have an advocate for youth and students in each department; creating and tracking hiring targets in all communities for Indigenous youth seeking public service employment under programs such as SNAP, summer students, and internships; and further, that the Department of Finance restructure the summer student employment program to allow a more extended period for students to apply; require managers to hire priority 1s summer students and deplete the priority 1 candidate list before considering non-priority 1 students; ensuring not to leave one priority 1 summer student without summer employment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. MLA for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 460-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends to the Government of the Northwest Territories that all departments have in place support for Indigenous employees and look to the Indigenous patient advocates positions implemented by the Department of Health and Social Services as a model to how to provide support; work with the Indigenous employee advisory committee and the diversity inclusion unit to provide support; offer pathways to leave to access counselling and addiction services; and, apply trauma-informed language and practices as a norm. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 461-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE -  
INDIGENOUS RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION FRAMEWORK,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories includes in the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework support in finding housing at the new job site for Indigenous employees who are relocating to take a government position or

move within government; provide a moving allowance for Indigenous employees relocating to other communities; offer education leave to help Indigenous employees to finish any education that was not completed before employment with the guarantee to remain in the public service at a minimal return to the same job level; offer education leave to Indigenous employees to support their career goals and interests and help expand their opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with the second -- or the -- sorry, with the third bullet, the education leave to help Indigenous employees to finish any education. Sometimes we have Indigenous employees that get into frontline positions, they may have, you know, some education, and then when they apply to -- for educational -- education leave, they're denied because they say well, you're already in this job and you don't need any more education to do the job. And then education leave is denied. And so some -- and so, and then when we look at the next one, we have people that are in frontline jobs who maybe say if they start off as an office admin, and they want to -- you know, they want to move up in their career so they want to go back and get their business diploma, and then they want to go back and get their business degree, you know, as they come back, but they should have secure employment to go back to at least what they left. So that way they have the opportunity for succession planning within the department that they're starting in. This is a way we can grow our Indigenous, you know, staff, especially out in the regions. So, like, that's what this recommendation is indicating. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. In Nunavut, a beneficiary can apply at any time to a job that a non-beneficiary has, and if they get it they remove that person. Committee didn't quite go that far. But we're thinking -- but we want the same level of planning with P1s, that if you have a non-P1 position in the government, the succession planning should be to put a P1 in that position and there should be a complete plan to make sure they have the education and they are trained and they are identified to get into that position. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

MLA Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 462-19(2):  
COMMITTEE REPORT 51-19(2): STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON INDIGENOUS  
REPRESENTATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SERVICE –  
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS,  
CARRIED

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mahsi, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 51-19(2)?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 51-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Indigenous Representation in the Northwest Territories Public Service. Mahsi.

Member for Kam Lake.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** There is 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. Mahsi.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 49-19(2) and Committee Report 51-19(2) and would like to report progress with 25 motions carried, and that Committee Report 49 and Committee Report 51-19(2) are concluded. And Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Sahtu. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 68:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHILD DAY CARE  
ACT,  
CARRIED AS AMENDED

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Child Day Care Act, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion. Minister responsible for ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we just considered this bill yesterday in Committee of the Whole. Some people may recall that there were motions moved at that point. It was a dead heat, and there was no changes to the bill as we had a couple of ties.

Since that time, I've spoken to the department, I've spoken to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, and I considered how could we incorporate some of those changes that the Members would like to see, some of the concerns that the Members have been expressing, into the bill so we can find a clause that we can all agree on.

So the clause in question related to the disclosure of the identity of a complainant, someone who makes a complaint against a

child care operator. And the reason that is included in the bill is because we want to create a robust system where parents feel empowered to bring forward their concerns about the services that their children are receiving from their child care operators. What we don't want to do, though, is create a situation where we're criminalizing people when we obviously don't need to. And so what was proposed originally in the bill probably too far in one direction. Committee came back with a proposal to adjust that language. I came back with a counterproposal. And neither of those were, I guess, acceptable to a large enough portion of this Assembly and so I think we've landed on some language that hopefully we can get some more support for.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Range Lake, that clause 13 of Bill 68 to be amended by deleting proposed subclause 19.2(2) and substituting the following:

2. An operator shall not

- a) retaliate against a complainant under section 19.1 or,
- b) disclose the identity of a complainant under section 19.1.

3. Notwithstanding paragraph 2(b), an operator may disclose the identity of a complainant

- a) to a lawyer retained by the operator to provide legal services in respect of a complaint
- b) to a trusted advisor, or,
- c) as authorized by the director.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. To the amendment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** And so I just wanted to explain this a little bit. So what you're seeing here is in addition to the amendment that I moved yesterday, and that is that an operator may disclose the identity of a complainant, you know, to a lawyer, or as authorized by the director or to a trusted advisor. We understand that there are child care operators who may be new in the business. And they might want to seek advice from someone who has some more experience, or there's a million other scenarios. And we want to ensure that the operators feel

like they are supported, and they can reach out and get that support. At the same time, we want to protect parents; we want to protect their identities if it might be detrimental.

And I will say that what this clause does, or what it attempts to do, is address a very, very small percentage of issues that ever arise. Most complaints, the vast majority, are dealt with through conversations with child care operators and they don't proceed to a point where there would be any sort of repercussions, any suspensions or anything like that. So this is not an indictment on the whole sector. This is to address some very small issue but an important issue to those who it affects. And so I hope that Members think that this addresses their concerns, and I hope that I can get their support in this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is order. To the amendment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

To the motion as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? To the bill, sorry. To the bill as amended. And a recorded vote was requested by the Minister. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):** The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

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

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):** The Member for Great Slave.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero opposed, one

abstention. The motion is carried. Bill 68 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third Reading of Bills.

Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret M. Thom, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills.

---SHORT RECESS

### Assent to Bills

**THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Margaret M. Thom):** Mahsi. Good afternoon Mr. Speaker, Premier Cochrane, Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, staff and visitors in the public gallery.

It is always a good feeling and honour to be here and see all of you. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and hard work on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. It is with great honour and respect that I acknowledge the territory of the Dene, Metis and Inuit of this great land. We are extremely grateful to live, work, celebrate, and be welcomed as visitors in your territory.

After the long and cold winter, it is nearly time to say, Spring is in the air. So enjoy the well-deserved, much-needed Easter break to enjoy the beautiful spring weather, longer daylight hours, the single digit temperatures in some places, and the sunshine. This break will allow you to breathe in the good fresh air to ground you. I wish you all safe, enjoyable travels to your homes, your loved ones, your constituencies. Happy and Blessed Easter season with your loved ones.

Now as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 56, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act
- Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022
- Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act
- Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
- Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2
- Bill 63, An Act to Amend 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
- Bill 73, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 4
- Bill 76, An Act to Amend the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act
- Bill 86, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2022-2023
- Bill 87, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2023-2023
- Bill 88, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024
- Bill 89, Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2023-2024

Mahsi cho. Thank you. Quyananni. Merci beaucoup. Koana.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, please be seated. Colleagues, on behalf of the House, I thank the Commissioner, the Honourable Margaret M. Thom for being here today. It is an honour to have her join us in the Chamber. It has been a long sitting and I know we are eager to adjourn. But before we do, I would like to say a few words and I thank you for your time and attention.

First and foremost, I want to thank each of you. I know this sitting has been difficult at times but it has also been very productive. You have concluded consideration of the operations budget, three supplementary estimates, seven pieces of legislation, some of which I know were challenging, and 14 committee reports. This is in addition to numerous statements, questions and motions.

Colleagues, that's a lot of important work and you should be proud of yourselves. Mahsi.

Throughout this sitting, I have enjoyed your lively and thoughtful debates and discussions. We don't always see eye-to-eye and we don't always agree. Some discussions in this House are very intense or uncomfortable. That's the nature of our job as the representatives of our people. Even when we don't agree, we can



always find ways to work together and be respectful of each other and this institution. Colleagues, that is consensus government in action.

Consensus government does not mean that we must always agree. Consensus government does not mean that we will always get our way. Consensus government means that we will have the opportunity to share our views, influence policy and legislation, and represent the people who have elected us. I thank each of you for contributing to a successful sitting.

Colleagues, I also want to thank the interpreters who have joined us throughout this sitting. We honour our languages when we use them. The interpreters make it possible for us to use our languages on a daily basis, and I thank them for their service and commitment to honouring our official languages, our people, and our cultures. I know it has been challenging at times, the speed of some of our speeches, but I thank you and I really respect the work that you do.

Colleagues, finally, I want to take a moment to thank our clerk, Mr. Tim Mercer, and congratulate him on his retirement. Mr. Mercer has served as clerk of this institution for twenty years. That's 870 sitting days. He has served six Assembly's, that's 63 Members and six Speakers, I am very proud to be one of those Members and also one of those speakers.

Tim, I want to thank you for your valuable advice you have given to me and to all Members for many years. It was always appreciated. And sometimes we even followed it.

Tim, as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, your corporate and procedural knowledge is second to none. I know we are in good hands with Mr. Rutland taking the helm. You will be deeply missed. Tim, I know you love sailing and I hope you have the opportunities to spend many beautiful summer days on Great Slave Lake aboard the Picante. Mr. Clerk, hold fast and stay true.

Colleagues, please join me in thanking Mr. Mercer for his dedication and service. Thank you, colleagues.

---Applause

Mr. Clerk, one last time, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):**  
Orders of the day for Thursday, May 25th, 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
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - 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
  - Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
  - Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 25th, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:40 p.m.