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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation

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Minister responsible for Homelessness
Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board
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Ms. Frieda Martselos

(Thebacha)

Ms. Katrina Nokleby

(Great Slave)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson

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(Hay River North)
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Minister of Justice

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Minister of Environment and Climate Change
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

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(Monfwi)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER.....	6787
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS.....	6787
Federal Partnerships (Chinna).....	6787
Addictions Recovery Supports (Green)	6788
Transportation Update (Archie)	6789
Progress on the Mandate Commitment to Maximize Government Procurement Benefits (Wawzonek).....	6790
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	6791
Expanding the Scope of Healthcare Practitioners (Cleveland).....	6791
Affirmative Action Hiring Policy (Martselos).....	6791
Emergency Management (Weyallon Armstrong).....	6792
Reflections on Housing NWT (Bonnetrouge).....	6792
Arsenic Remediation Guidelines (O'Reilly).....	6793
Federal Compensation for Indian Residential School Survivors (Edjericon)	6793
Reflections on Role as a Member of the 19 th Assembly (Rocky Simpson).....	6794
Future Location of Yellowknife North Slave Campus of Aurora College (Nokleby)	6795
Benefits of a Single Service Office Model (Johnson).....	6795
Exemption of Federal Income Sources from Income Assistance Benefits (Jacobson)	6796
Regional Decision-making Authorities (Semmler)	6797
Eulogies for Barb Tsetso, Sarah Lennie and Dawn Fabien (Thompson)	6797
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	6797
ORAL QUESTIONS	6799
REPLIES TO THE COMMISSIONER'S ADDRESS	6799
Ms. Green's Reply	6799
Mr. Thompson's Reply	6814
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	6835
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	6836
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	6864
THIRD READING OF BILLS.....	6865

Bill 65 – Builders’ Lien Act.....	6865
Bill 84 – An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act.....	6866
Bill 85 – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act.....	6866
ORDERS OF THE DAY.....	6867

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 5, 2023****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 392-19(2):
FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, as housing Minister, one of my main goals was to strengthen and develop partnerships and relationships. Now, as we come to the end of this Legislative Assembly, it is evident that partnerships have played a crucial role in our success. One of our most important relationships, of course, is with the Government of Canada. We have a number of programs and new projects that would not be possible without this partnership.

Mr. Speaker, in the past four years I have met with federal Minister Hussen, Minister responsible for Housing, Diversity and Inclusion; and Minister Vandal, Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, on several occasions, most recently with the new Minister responsible for Housing, Diversity and Inclusion, Minister Sean Fraser. I have also engaged on several occasions with the Northwest Territories Member of Parliament Michael McLeod and Member of Parliament, Mr. Chad Collins who is the chair of the national housing caucus.

Mr. Speaker, it is through these engagements with federal officials that we have the opportunity to outline and highlight the need for federal support to improve the housing situation.

Housing NWT staff have also been very engaged with their colleagues in the federal

government, and it is through these partnerships that we have been very successful in securing resources for the North.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for Housing NWT, I am proud to say that through our partnership and relationships over the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly, over \$600 million in federal funding has been announced to support housing priorities across the Northwest Territories.

We recently announced another partnership project with the City of Yellowknife at the Aspen Apartments. Through this partnership with the city and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing NWT has a budget of approximately \$5 million under the cities stream of CMHC's Rapid Housing 3 Initiative for safety upgrades and other required renovations. This project allows Housing NWT to acquire and modernize the Aspen Apartments, a 36-unit building, which will further increase our number of owned public housing units in Yellowknife while freeing up leased units for private market rental needs.

Approximately a year ago, Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT assumed full ownership of the Nordic Arms apartment building in Yellowknife. With assistance from Canada, we were able to complete necessary upgrades and other renovations for the building so that public housing tenants could move in safely.

Housing NWT has worked hard over the life of this government to increase its stock of quality, energy-efficient, and affordable housing for those most in need. With the Aspen Apartments and Nordic Arms, these buildings, Housing NWT is delivering its commitment to be innovative and provide sustainability.

In addition to these projects, we are also supporting the low-income households through the Canada-NWT's housing benefit, a monthly subsidy up to \$800 for families to cover rental costs. Any household paying more than 30 percent of their gross income on rent can receive this benefit with the eligibility being able to stay in the program for up to two years.

Mr. Speaker, the Canada-NWT housing benefit is entering its third year, and I cannot speak highly enough of this program. Housing NWT's mandate is to increase the well-being of individuals and communities by providing fair access to quality housing supports for people who need it the most. The Canada-NWT housing benefit just does this by providing much-needed financial assistance to house people who are otherwise unable to afford it. Our staff have heard very positive feedback from community members who have accessed this funding. It is programming that allows residents to breathe at ease and save a little bit more.

Mr. Speaker, the accomplishments outlined today are only some of the most recent announcements of federal investment made over the life of this government. I am encouraged that through both mine and the department's partnership with the federal government and our colleagues throughout Canada, we have prioritized the Northwest Territories' housing needs and delivered by approving a wide range of projects under the National Co-investment Program, the Rapid Housing Program, and the Reaching Home Program.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT acknowledges and celebrates how much this government and the Government of Canada has prioritized our housing needs as we continue to advocate for further supports through our recommendations to enhance and allocate funding through the national housing strategy and the urban renewal and northern Indigenous housing strategies that are being led by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, during my conversations with the federal Ministers, I have made it clear that we would also be in support of funding going directly to Indigenous governments to support Indigenous housing for the North. And as outlined previously this session, this was indeed a huge success.

Mr. Speaker, this is significant federal funding that will continue to support and to increase affordable housing units throughout the North, additional market housing units, and repair opportunities also for private homeowners. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 393-19(2):
ADDICTIONS RECOVERY SUPPORTS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, substance abuse continues to challenge residents, family, friends and communities in the Northwest Territories. The health and social services system has a range of options to help Northerners recover their health and well-being. I am going to summarize a few of those options that have taken shape in the 19th Assembly.

An approach called Stepped Care 2.0 has transformed the community counselling program by offering same-day or drop-in support, resulting in a 79 percent decrease in wait times. Community counsellors can also help residents gain access to more specialized services such as facility-based addictions treatment.

Mr. Speaker, we now have six facility-based addictions treatment programs. The department has recently contracted Sunrise Healing Lodge in Calgary to provide culturally-safe, recovery-oriented, and person and family-centered services. Sunrise Lodge responds to the request from residents for an Indigenous-led treatment option.

Even before individuals return from addictions treatment, the community counselling program offers aftercare planning and support. This is part of our response to the 2022 Auditor General's recommendations to improve addictions services.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that the availability of safe, sober, housing close to home is another important component of support to individuals in their recovery. The department is taking steps to establish community-based transitional housing options in four different communities. Work is progressing well in Inuvik and Yellowknife. The next step is to work program delivery costs into the next budget.

The department also continues to support the delivery of a managed alcohol program in Yellowknife. This program began during the pandemic as part of a comprehensive system of support for people living with addictions. This program takes a harm reduction approach by providing participants with a set dose of beverage alcohol in a safe setting, limiting intoxication levels and the consumption of non-beverage alcohol. The program is delivered in combination with housing, health care, counselling, and life skills.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the leadership role Indigenous governments and community organizations have in delivering addictions recovery supports. Following a request from them, the department recently merged three existing funds into one. This combined fund will

help reduce the administrative burden on Indigenous governments while providing them with more flexibility in determining the types of programs needed in their communities and how they will be funded.

I am pleased with the direction that our work is taking and the supports available to NWT residents, yet I recognize there is still more to do.

We are planning for a combined community counselling satisfaction and addictions recovery survey for early next year. This combined survey will seek feedback on people's experiences with all the available NWT addictions recovery supports and services, including the types of supports they used, any challenges or barriers they encountered, and what needs to be improved.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by discussing the ongoing dialogues initiated between myself, the department, and Indigenous governments. Our primary objective has been to enhance our collective efforts in addressing the addiction recovery requirements of NWT residents. I deeply appreciate these exchanges and their influence on shaping our course of action. Our shared goal is to help residents, and I firmly believe that the most effective solutions can be achieved through working together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 394-19(2): TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, today I want to focus on the Government of the Northwest Territories' in accomplishments in road, air, and marine transportation during this 19th Assembly.

Enhancing our all-season highway system has been a top priority. In November 2021, the GNWT opened the Tlicho Highway for traffic for the first time, adding to the territory's roster of all-season highways. This 97 kilometre all-season road was advanced in partnership with the Tlicho government and will reduce the cost of living in the region.

The GNWT is also nearing completion of the phase 1 of the Prohibition Creek Access Road just south of Norman Wells. This 6.7 kilometre all-season road along the existing Mackenzie Valley winter road alignment is expected to be substantially complete in the fall of 2023. Not only is the construction of this all-season road

making our transportation system more resilient to climate change and providing access to recreational opportunities, it is also providing employment and training opportunities for Sahtu residents in advance of the proposed Mackenzie Valley Highway Project.

Advancing the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the Slave Geological Province Corridor are two projects that are at the forefront of our mandate commitment to make strategic infrastructure investments. We have established partnerships with the Indigenous governments and the Indigenous organizations and have undertaken significant work to prepare the developer's assessment report which is required for this Mackenzie Valley Highway environmental assessment. We continue to be on track for submission of the report during the life of this government.

As for the Slave Geological Province Corridor, we have also established relationships with Indigenous governments and undertaken work required to inform the future regulatory application of the proposed Lockhart All-Season Road, the first segment of this corridor.

Along with building new roads, the GNWT continually invests in existing highway infrastructure. This fiscal year, we have invested \$62.8 million in highway, bridge, culvert planning, design and construction, to more than 195 kilometres of highways, bridges, culverts, and access roads.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is responsible for operating and maintaining 27 public airports in the territory, especially vital in our communities without year-round road access. In this fiscal year alone, we are investing \$40 million in airport improvement projects, including several improvements to the Mike Zubko Airport in Inuvik. At our busiest and largest airport, we continue to advance Yellowknife's 20-year master plan, which will guide the airport's growth and development.

In 2022, we also selected a new board for the revitalization of the Yellowknife Airport Economic Advisory Committee, which provides strategic advice on the issues and future business decisions to the airport's management, GNWT senior management, and Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, waterways like the Mackenzie River and Great Slave Lake have long been essential transportation routes to move people along and essential goods to the North. Marine Transportation Services and fuel service division staff did a tremendous amount of planning this year to give us the best chance for

a successful sailing season. Even with the best laid plans, significant challenges arose across the season, including two evacuations of staff and contractors from Hay River and low water levels across the Mackenzie River. These low water levels have caused us to adjust our sailing schedules, regrettably cancel the third and final supply trip to Norman Wells and Tulita, and pivot to a hybrid model to move cargo and fuel to the communities. Marine Transportation Services staff have been quick to problem solve in support of the essential supply to northern communities.

Speaking of marine accomplishments made by this government, I am happy to say work on the Hay River Harbour Restoration Project is ongoing. To create an emergency navigational channel for vessels, the GNWT is removing approximately 84,000 cubic metres of sediment from the Hay River harbour. Work is expected to be complete on October 7th.

As evidenced in the recent evacuations and re-entries of the NWT communities, the importance of access and transport by air, road, and water is paramount. The GNWT continues to invest in our road, air, and marine transportation infrastructure to improve the quality of life, lower the cost of living for residents, and support the expansion and diversification of the economy. But our success hinges on the hard work of the staff across the territory, including those involved in the safe evacuation and return of residents this month. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 395-19(2):
PROGRESS ON THE MANDATE
COMMITMENT TO MAXIMIZE
GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT BENEFITS

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, when we started the 19th Legislative Assembly, Members put forward, as one of its priorities, ensuring that government procurement maximizes benefits for Northwest Territories' residents and businesses. We knew that procurement policies had not been meaningfully updated for several years, and we wanted to make sure we were getting as much value out of every dollar as we could.

In January 2021, I appointed an independent advisory panel to engage with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, elected leaders, the business community, stakeholders and residents, on government procurement. In June 2021, the panel

completed its engagement and provided a comprehensive report including 50 recommendations. The panel's report, as well as our discussions since with Members of the Legislative Assembly, residents, businesses, and Indigenous governments, has informed work by the departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment; Finance; and Executive and Indigenous Affairs, to fulfill our mandate commitment.

The report on the review of GNWT procurement policies and practices, including the Business Incentive Policy, P3 projects, and the Northern Manufactured Products Policy, the report presents a carefully formulated plan for improving government procurement to maximize benefits for Northwest Territories residents and businesses. Additionally, the report includes data that demonstrates that the number of government contracts awarded to Northwest Territories businesses has increased over the past three years.

Mr. Speaker, government procurement and contracting is a major source of economic activity throughout the territory, and our residents and businesses should benefit from this as much as possible while balancing the need to ensure projects are undertaken in a timely and fiscally responsible manner. One key tool to try and achieve that balance is by incentivizing contractors who commit to using local and Northwest Territories labour and buying Northwest Territories goods with a benefit in the form of an adjustment to the bidding process, which is why we have introduced a Vendor Performance Management Policy that holds contractors accountable for these commitments.

The policy provides that Government of the Northwest Territories, with tools needed to accurately assess, monitor, and enforce vendor performance consistently across all government departments and Housing NWT. This will first start with the monitoring and enforcement of obligations made under the Business Incentive Policy.

Mr. Speaker, we must also find and put into practice real practical solutions and give Indigenous businesses support to maximize their opportunities for growth. We are working with Indigenous governments through the modern treaty and self-government partners and the Northwest Territories Council of Leaders so the Northwest Territories can become a leading example of how to achieve economic growth amongst one of the fastest growing cohorts of business in Canada, that of Indigenous-led businesses.

With a unified set of modernized procurement objectives and principles, and a framework to monitor and enforce refreshed procurement tools, we are now set to capitalize on this stronger foundation. These ongoing efforts will help make government procurement more transparent and better able to maximize benefits for Northwest Territories companies while ensuring a balance between value for public dollars and maintaining as much public money as possible stays in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1642-19(2): EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've spoken in this House many times about the vital importance of equitable and accessible health care provided by supported health care workers. Canadians en masse are working to access health care. They are waiting for elective surgeries, access to specialists, testing, and treatment requirements of cancers, chronic disease, and STIs, and a surge in addiction and mental health support needs. In addition, special treatment programs like audiology, speech pathology, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy appointments put off over the pandemic further bottleneck our already fragile health care system. The catch-up, Mr. Speaker, will take years, and some national experts speculate that the Canadian health care system may never catch up under its status quo approach.

Here in the NWT, we're even farther behind with reliance on Alberta's health care system and the fact that many of our existing health care workers are practicing through a scope much more narrow than their southern colleagues.

Pharmacists in southern provinces can prescribe some medications or adapt a prescription to suit the needs and reactions of a patient, give injections like vaccines or flu shots, or work with patients to sort out medication amounts, or recommend alternatives. My concerns about the limitation of dental hygienists are long-documented in this Assembly as well as their importance to preventative care and long-term impacts on the health and wellness of residents. And, third, Mr. Speaker, many Northerners are still delivering babies far from home and without their support

system. Many families stop work early to leave their home community to travel for the arrival of a little one. This means less income, removal from the safety of their community and support system where they will potentially deliver without their partner, potentially be left with no support for older children, and then expected to travel home with a brandnew baby. Work on implementing the midwifery program and expanding access to doulas need to continue.

Mr. Speaker, our health care system has a regulatory backlog, and I believe that by working to expand the scope of some health care professionals, we can alleviate even some of the demand on our system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1643-19(2): AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HIRING POLICY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for my statement today I want to revisit a topic that I have spoken about many times during the 19th Assembly, and that subject is the Affirmative Action Policy.

Mr. Speaker, I know That the Minister of finance just tabled a What We Heard report last week regarding the government's review of the Affirmative Action Policy. I understand that the report concluded that the Government of the Northwest Territories should repeal affirmative action and replace it with a new policy that prioritizes the hiring of Indigenous people connected to the NWT first; and, then priorities all Indigenous Canadians at large.

Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to state plainly and clearly that I welcome all Indigenous people that were not born in the NWT but are living and working across the territory today. These individuals are most welcome. The point I am getting at here, Mr. Speaker, is that with any repeal and replacement of the Affirmative Action Policy, the government must keep in mind several key aspects of the policy as well as the original intent on whom the policy was meant to serve. Those were Priority 1s, 2s and 3s.

Mr. Speaker, I have always cared deeply about the health and well-being and advancement of Indigenous people, but I also care about non-Indigenous people. And within the existing Affirmative Action Policy, non-Indigenous people who were either born within the NWT and who live in the NWT more than half of their life will qualify under the policy. That is an aspect of the policy I have always been in

favour of and will continue to be in favour of. However, in the future when a policy is initiated and made official, I hope it will consider any person who has lived at least ten years or more within the Northwest Territories and that secondary priority hiring will be provided to them.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, priority hiring in the NWT comes down to human resources doing their job right. Managers and hiring teams cannot continue to hire their friends or their family members. The appeal board also needs to be a neutral, fair, ethical, and transparent body that is approachable by the average person.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but I will leave it at that for now and hopefully the next Assembly, if I do return to this House, I will continue to address this topic down the road. I will have questions for the Minister of finance at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1644-19(2):
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, on August 28th, 2023, the day of our emergency sitting among the wildfire crisis, I introduced a Private Member's public bill, An Act to Amend the Emergency Management Act. The bill passed second reading that day and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. The purpose of the bill is to require the GNWT coordinate its emergency response activities with Indigenous governments affected by the emergency.

Mr. Speaker, requiring the GNWT to coordinate its emergency response with Indigenous governments should not require a law. It should be a given. Unfortunately, this has not been the experience of Indigenous governments. Due to a lack of coordination by the Government of the Northwest Territories with Indigenous governments during the evacuation of Yellowknife, Indigenous people, many with language barriers and unique needs, were uprooted to cities in the south in which no one knew their language or knew how best to help them with their unique needs. This has led to our most vulnerable populations at risk, such as elders, the homeless, and those struggling with addictions. This does not reflect well on this government.

Indigenous governments and organizations asked to be involved from the start and were told no. This has to change. Decisions about

Indigenous people must be made by the Indigenous people, not by the Government of the Northwest Territories alone.

A couple of weeks ago, I received a letter from the Standing Committee on Government Operations. They stated they recognize there are many problems with the Emergency Management Act. They also shared my dismay at the gap in support for some Indigenous evacuees and disruption of essential services for non-evacuated communities. The committee believes Indigenous government needs to be engaged as true partners in emergency management at all stages. I agree. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Sorry about that; I thought I had enough time to just conclude. But while I am disappointed that committee has not to proceed with the bill because they said there is not enough time to study the bill, they indicated this work should be a priority for the 20th Legislative Assembly. I call on all my colleagues in the next Legislative Assembly to support this important work to ensure this avoidable tragedy never happens again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1645-19(2):
REFLECTIONS ON HOUSING NWT

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few observations of Housing NWT that I would like to share with the House, and it helps to ease my mind for the time being.

Housing of residents is a major issue for all communities in the Northwest Territories, whether it be in the city, regional centres, or the smaller communities. Equally, and perhaps more important, are the isolated communities in the Beaufort region - Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok, and Paulatuk.

I can only imagine the mental health of a tenant when they are evicted from a housing rental unit, have no place to stay, and most of these people have families. This is prevalent across the vast Northwest Territories. Yet, the housing minister has not reached out nor visited these communities enough to truly understand their housing issues and to offer some kind of comfort and possible concrete solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government offers the housing program with 100 percent dollars for Indigenous housing. That program is the Rapid

Housing initiative. When this program rolled out in November 2021, there was a very short window to get the applications in. 30 days. I guess many of the communities in the territory didn't have the capacity to fill in the applications and to do it within that very short time period. Many communities were challenged with human resources and missed the golden opportunity for free housing. On top of it all, the federal government kept silent and sent out letters rather than make a huge announcement of an initiative that would have, at the very least, solved most housing shortages, including to the Beaufort region.

The Central Mortgage and Housing corporation, CMHC, has an office in Yellowknife but may as well be back in this Ottawa since no one knows of their existence in the North and what role they can play in addressing our dire housing needs.

When I had conversations with the CMHC representative regarding the initiative, they would not provide me with any information as they state it is all confidential. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi, colleagues. It is ironic the Rapid Housing initiative is a confidential program while spending public dollars.

I also had conversations with the Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, CIRNAC, regional director which, like the conversation with CMHC, went nowhere.

Mr. Speaker, that was my experience with the federal government representatives stationed here in the North and in Yellowknife. Many of our residents don't have easy access to these representatives. Mr. Speaker, the housing minister and staff should have played a crucial role in ensuring all communities have access to the Rapid Housing Initiative Program. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1646-19(2):
ARSENIC REMEDIATION GUIDELINES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have been waiting patiently for about 20 years for GNWT to finally review its arsenic remediation guidelines. Yesterday I talked about the flawed environmental guideline for contaminated site remediation with its very short public comment period.

Buried in one of the appendices are new arsenic remediation guidelines that significantly lower the acceptable limits for arsenic in soils for various land uses. This appears to be based on new research and background studies. The research shows the background levels of arsenic are significantly lower than what was originally set and, also, that most of the arsenic contamination in the Yellowknife area is a direct result of mining activities. The background studies were only recently made public following my request on August the 7th to the Minister.

The new arsenic remediation guidelines would significantly lower the acceptable limits for all land uses from what was set in 2003. A few examples, residential land use is lowered from 160 to 120 parts per million arsenic, and industrial use has gone from 340 to 163 parts per million with no explanation. The most alarming part is that areas outside Yellowknife have much lower limits, at 47 parts per million for residential use and 90 parts per million for industrial use. It's not clear why it is okay to expose Yellowknife residents to three times more arsenic than those who live outside.

Perhaps the detail are in those documents that were only recently released. I tried to look at them last night, Mr. Speaker, but way over my head. But it is not explained in the guideline itself anywhere. I always thought that arsenic soil remediation guidelines were set far too high to protect human health. The new proposed guidelines seem to bear that out. The biggest implication may be for the Giant Mine Remediation Project that used the old 2003 arsenic soil remediation levels which may no longer be safe for human health. So of course the rhetorical question, Mr. Speaker, is will Giant Mine remediation now adopt the new lower arsenic levels? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on the new proposed arsenic soil remediation levels. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1647-19(2):
FEDERAL COMPENSATION FOR INDIAN
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I stand before you and this Assembly with a crucial matter that I have spoken of before and demand immediate attention. It is an issue that pertains to the rights and well-being of our Indigenous people who have attended schools under the purview of the Government of the Northwest Territories after April 1st, 1969.

As many of you are aware, a landmark battle was fought by Indigenous survivors who attended the federally-run day school. This battle resulted in the federal day school class action lawsuit wherein compensation was made available to those who had suffered mistreatment, culture alienation, and during this time in these institutions.

While this is a significant step in addressing historical injustice, there is a grave troubling admission that cannot be ignored. The GNWT, during the period under question, continued to operate schools, some of which were residential boarding schools and day schools. Many of these institutions were run by religious organizations, organizations notably by the Anglican Church, Catholic Church. It is crucial to emphasize that the GNWT received funding from the Government of Canada to support the operation of these schools after April 1st, 1969 - the cutoff date for the federal day school class action lawsuit.

This funding was acknowledged by the federal Government of Canada of its responsibility to support the education of Indigenous children in the Northwest Territories. Therefore, it is only just and fair that the Indigenous students who attended these GNWT-operated schools after April 1st, 1969, be allowed to seek compensation through the federal day school compensation program. It is a matter of quality and justice that we cannot afford to overlook.

To provide specific examples, the chief Jimmy Bruneau School, residential boarding school, St. Patrick's School, a day school, operated within our jurisdiction during this period. Students who attended these schools, like their counterparts in federally-run institutions, experienced the same systematic issues and culture erosion. Therefore, I call upon this government to recognize the urgent need to get ahead of this issue and extend a list of eligible institutions under the federal day school compensation program to include those GNWT-operated schools that received federal funding. These students should be given the opportunity to seek the redress and compensation that is rightfully theirs from their government. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Our commitment to the truth and reconciliation requires us to correct this oversight and ensure that no Indigenous students who suffered the consequences of attending these schools is left behind. We have a moral obligation to pursue justice for all

regardless of where these injustices occurred. Not to mention there is continued risks from similar class action lawsuits if the government continues to do nothing. It should not take the courts to make this government act and do the right thing.

I implore my honourable colleagues to support this crucial endeavour and join hands in advocating for the inclusion of these students in the federal day school compensation program. Let's stand together in the pursuit of justice, healing, and reconciliation for the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions for the Premier shortly. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1648-19(2):
REFLECTIONS ON ROLE AS A MEMBER OF
THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been four years since I was first elected and not many, if anyone, can say they served with their son in any government legislature in Canada, and I am proud that happened here in this 19th Legislative Assembly. Together, I would hope that myself and my son R.J. were able to provide respectful, unbiased, fair, and timely representation to all our constituents in Hay River, something they all expect and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few years I have asked myself, did these last four years change who I am as a person? I believe it has not, and I am grateful for that.

Throughout my life and career, while encouraging my children and others to do the same, which is to show respect for all people, be available to hear their stories, and providing help to those who need a helping hand. I hope that those principles had a positive influence on those we represent.

Mr. Speaker, as a political representative, it is never about you. It is about the people one serves. I would recommend to all who are elected in the next Legislative Assembly, before you walk through the doors of this building it is important that you check your ego in at the door and pick up some respect, compassion, understanding, commitment, and be prepared to challenge the system when it is wrong and support it when it is just.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that when I stand here on the floor of this House, or when I go down the hall to talk about a Minister about

constituent issues, I know I have a strong and committed team behind me, and that team is made up those constituents of Hay River. And I thank each of them for having placed their confidence and trust in me to represent them over these past four years, most of which has been very trying times.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that one represents all of their constituents equally based on government policy, legislation, and laws to get to what is right and just. To accomplish that, it requires all the skills, experience, education, and outside networks one has. If you find that any of the policies or legislation has been unfair, unbiased, or just do not make sense, it is up to you to work towards making change. You will find the system to be cumbersome and untimely but that should not stop you as there are experienced and dedicated researchers and staff to assist you and you can make a difference. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituent assistant Leanne Campbell for the work that she has done for all constituents over the past four years and for answering their calls 24/7 throughout these four years.

And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my wife Bette and our family for supporting me during these last four years, including all the highs and lows that came with it. And again, thank you, Hay River.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1649-19(2):
FUTURE LOCATION OF YELLOWKNIFE-
NORTH SLAVE CAMPUS OF AURORA
COLLEGE

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, time and time again I have heard from constituents and residents of their concerns with the proposed location of the polytechnic university. Although the Minister pointed me to the Facilities Master Plan Engagement Report to explain how he chose Tin Can Hill, I feel as if he engaged on the criteria of a site without really thinking of the operational and, more importantly, the emotional implications of this site. Mr. Speaker there are real, practical concerns with the Tin Can Hill site.

Traffic to the campus would be directed along School Draw Avenue or cut through Copper Sky Apartments. Neither of these entry points are prepared to handle the volume of traffic that would be involved with a university and pose

serious safety issues for my constituents living there. Housing will be seriously impacted given the limited Yellowknife rental market. The apartments in my riding are sitting at practically zero vacancy with overcrowding issues. How do we intend to house students while also ensuring that residents, who live in my riding, are not pushed out given the plan calls for 50 percent of students to find market housing?

I worry for my constituents, including many long-term pensioners and low-income families - residents who are already struggling to keep up with our skyrocketing cost of living. I worry that they will be forced from their homes due to rising rents and neighbourhood gentrification.

The Minister has said the Tin Can Hill MOU is not legally binding and that things will be flushed out with consultation. However, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be more innovative and forward thinking with the selection of the university site. One option I want explored is the capital site which encompasses this Assembly as well as the museum.

The capital site represents a more sustainable and strategic parcel of land for the university, not only from a traffic, growth, and housing perspective but also from a recreational land use perspective; that emotional piece I was mentioning earlier.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight that the Facilities Master Plan Engagement Report does not transparently reflect how the Tin Can Hill site was chosen and how engagement occurred. It is a flawed plan that does not adequately address the practical realities of the area, the limited accessibility by road, and the potential emotional and physical impacts on residents' health and well-being at the loss of such a treasured, valued green space in the backyard of my community that I love, Great Slave.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1650-19(2):
BENEFITS OF A SINGLE SERVICE OFFICE
MODEL

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The benefits of a Service GNWT model or single service window model are pretty obvious. There's Service Canada. Service BC. Service Alberta. I actually don't think there's a single jurisdiction in Canada, other than us, that doesn't have a single service window. And we actually kind of have one. We have service officers in the communities. But the Premier

throughout this government has refused to bring them in to Yellowknife, refused to even consider a single service window, and seems to think it's impossible. But in reality, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the few things we could do that could create efficiencies. For example, a Service GNWT office would do things such as help with income assistance, housing, you could get your birth certificate there, you could pay fines there, you could apply for a lease, you could get your marriage license - typical things that the government does that, right now, are scattered through about 12 different offices in Yellowknife with a multitude of workers.

And the benefits to a service window model, Mr. Speaker, are numerous. Firstly, it allows you to buy one piece of E-services software. Right now, we are spending tens of millions a year on software licenses. Every year that software budget line just goes up and up, and there seems to be nothing we can do about it. Right now, E-services is housed in the Department of Finance despite the fact that all of the services it's providing are kind of scattered across the GNWT. And in some cases, there's actually the E-services platform and then another piece of software within the department being used for the same thing and they don't talk to each other. And never do the workers in the other department. We've heard multiple stories throughout my term of housing asking for your employment records, then income assistance asking for your employment records, and then sometimes the workers get in a fight. This is all well documented by integrated case management in the Department of Justice which basically gave up trying to get GNWT departments to work together. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we have made negative progress on this issue.

So for the next Premier, do something about this, adopt a Service GNWT model. It's not that complicated. Every government does it. It saves you a bunch of money. It really is a win-win-win situation.

And another thing it does, Mr. Speaker, is it allows you to be a little bit more flexible with your operating hours. Most service offices are open evenings and weekends. You could, perhaps, renew your license at the DMV on the evenings or weekends, which I have been asking for four years, Mr. Speaker, and have made no progress at all. So I give up. Next Premier, do better. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1651-19(2):
EXEMPTION OF FEDERAL INCOME
SOURCES FROM INCOME ASSISTANCE
BENEFITS**

MR. JACOBSON: That's pretty hard to beat that one. So, Mr. Speaker, today the residents are accessing a variety of government support programs - housing, income support, and disability supports, across the territory, and especially my riding. This is due to a variety of reasons but the main reason that we do not have the sustainable income in Nunakput region - there's no jobs and nothing to sustain families. I have told this House to be compassionate, flexible about the needs of our people, particularly those in small communities.

But, Mr. Speaker, today my residents are facing claw backs, withholding of their income support payment. The ECE took steps in March 2020 to exempt from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB, from the calculation of benefits on income assistance, the applications. However there are other payments that our residents received, including CERB, CRCB, that's disabilities, and CRSB and CWLB, are now being accounted as assessments when applying for income support.

Mr. Speaker, we need to remember that the residents do not have much support and much resources and are trying to get as much as they can to support their families. I already -- and we're already not providing enough. We're pushing them to obtaining other supports during this unprecedented -- the pandemic that we went through.

The money is not a huge sum of money, Mr. Speaker. People are struggling on high costs of living, high cost of food, just barely getting by. I call again and again we need some compassion here, Mr. Speaker. We need to show we care. COVID feels like forever ago, and we're all worried about the impacts and the supply chain issues, the vulnerability of our residents. People are trying to do whatever they can do to take care of their family. I will ask questions of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to make sure that the CERB payment and the disability payment are not being calculated on the income support program and seeing if we could -- for the next government to take off. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1652-19(2):
REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING
AUTHORITIES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the priorities of this government was to increase regional decision-making authority. I am unsure how much of that we actually have done in this government. We have decisions continuously coming from the capital. In my region, you know, the thing is that we have certain land claims, we have certain things. You know, we're waiting for decisions on cabins and how we're going to have -- you know, people are going to be able to establish a lease on a cabin if they're Indigenous. But we can't deal with it in our region.

We have procurement issues in my region. I have heard nothing but procurement issues. I know the Minister has stated that things are going to change. But I'm hoping that they're going to get better in my region.

Mr. Speaker, housing. Housing has impacted my region significantly. You know, the thing in our region, we've lost -- when we lost the housing -- or the territorial housing for our staff, this impacted our children's education. This impacted the health of our people. We cannot get jobs, people to come there. The cost of living is too high. That, and we get brand new graduates. I'm not saying that they're not great people but new grads teaching our children. You know, they're dealing with many issues, especially in the smaller communities in my region.

A lot of these decisions, the health authority, you know, that -- one of the reasons that I left GNWT was the centralization of the health authority. All the decision-making, the things that we could do in our communities different and tweak the programs, those kind of went away because we have to get permission from Yellowknife.

We made this a priority. We've had things come through us. You know, we had confidential little documents saying what they're going to do. So I am going to have questions for the Premier as to what decision-making authorities have been given to the regions and have they changed and have they impacted and made positive changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1653-19(2):
EULOGIES FOR BARB TSETSO, SARAH
LENNIE AND DON FABIEN

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House to recognize the passing of three individuals from the Nahendeh riding. These three people were amazing and very private individuals. With this in mind, I would like to recognize them.

Barb Tsetso, Fort Simpson. Barb was my next door neighbour. She was a wife, mother, and grandmother. I will miss seeing her and having those wonderful chats on the side of the road.

Sarah Lennie, Wrigley, a very committed person to the youth and education system. Sarah spent over 40 years teaching in Fort Simpson and Wrigley. She could have retired but she loved going to the school and being with the youth of Wrigley. Like others, I enjoyed talking to her and receiving her wisdom on life. She was a wife to Tim, mother and grandmother.

Tim would like to thank everybody for the support and condolences the family received during their loss.

Don Fabien, Fort Simpson. I had the opportunity to speak to Don numerous times throughout the years. He was a very knowledgeable man and always had a bit of wisdom he would like to share. One of the things we spoke about in the last four years was about his daughter. He was very impressed with her and the things that she was able to achieve. He was a very proud dad.

Mr. Speaker, these three individuals will be sadly missed by their family and friends. My condolences go out to them.

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

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to start by introducing Darin Chocolate, who is sitting right there, and Kenzie Yakelaya, who I haven't seen, who are working for us as pages in this session. They are residents of Yellowknife Centre, and I want to thank them for all the work they've done for us in the last two weeks.

I'd also like to introduce Mr. Shawn Dean, a constituent of Yellowknife Yellowknife Centre, a former director of communications for the Legislative Assembly. I hope you're enjoying your retirement, Shawn.

And I'd also like to recognize my partner Janice McKenna, my brother from another mother Don Babey, and my friend Audrey Henderson. Thank you for coming.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't see my page in the Chamber at the moment, but I would like to recognize Rhiannon Ackerman-O'Connor who I have actually known since she was a little baby. And as well welcome my friend Nicole Sok to the gallery, who is here watching the proceeding today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Lee Mandeville who is here watching his son page here today, I think Zack. Oh, he's over there. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two pages from the Sahtu. Jaylen Gaudet and Nevah Takazo.

And also I'd like to recognize the interpreters for the Sahtu, Therese Etchinelle and Sarah Cleary. Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After eight years, I am going to try this again. I want to recognize a constituent in my riding, hopefully I will have to remember his name, David Wasylciw.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Mr. Shawn Dean, a vital Member of our communications team for many, many years. Like his MLA, we do wish he enjoys his retirement but we sure could have used you in the last few months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize four Yellowknife pages who have been helping us out. We got Liam Kincaid, Zachary Mandeville, Sula Ray, and Kya Little Kim Wickens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like recognize one of the pages, Kole Lizotte. I believe he has a special someone who might work here as well. But also I believe Frame Lake resident Audrey Henderson is, I think behind me, is here as well and I want to welcome her to the Assembly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and recognize Tlicho interpreters/translators Jonas Lafferty of Behchoko and Mary Rose Sundberg of Dettah. And the other interpreter/translator, Sarah Gargan, Mary Jane Cazon, Bertha Catholique, Tom Unka, Sarah Cleary, Therese Etchinelle, Lillian Elias, and Susan Pepper, for doing the important work and preserving our Indigenous language. Thank you.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did promise that both fathers, I'm going to embarrass our pages here, Zach Mandeville, your dad is very proud, and he was very excited to see you here.

Sula Ray, thank you very much for being here. Your dad said to bug you and I've been able to do that. So thank you for that.

Lee Mandeville, a respected ECC officer, and I thank him very much. As well as an entertainer and he did have cold fingers, he said, yesterday, but I didn't notice a beat -- a change in his music, so.

And as well from the Deh Cho, Mary Jane Cazon. Thank you very much for the work you've done as an interpreter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Kam Lake also has a very proud page in the House. We have Liyah Yakeleya-Grymalosi who I'd like to say a very huge thank you to. And I also a notice a couple pages around the House who I had the honour of photographing as tiny little babies, including

both of the ones to your right and your left. So thank you very much for their service.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Inuvialuktun interpreters, Valerie Steffanson and Lillian Elias. For the last four years, I'd pop in and listen to them speak in my language, Inuvialuktun, and it's been very helpful. Quyananni.

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

If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, I hope you're enjoying our proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience. And welcome once again, Mr. Mandeville. Thank you for all your service. And Lee plays a mean fiddle, if you didn't know. Keep up the good work.

Also to our interpreters, over the last four years here, especially the last two years with steady interpretation into our Indigenous languages, you've all done a wonderful job. And it's amazing how you keep up to some of our Members. But I know we try to speak slower but, you know, with the time and all, but you're doing an amazing job. Keep up the good work and hopefully the next generation follows your footsteps and takes this on as well. Thank you once again.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1620-19(2): EXEMPTION OF FEDERAL INCOME SOURCES FROM INCOME ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

MR. JACOBSON: I appreciate that. Mr. Speaker, with the CERB payments and the disability payments across the territory, and especially into our riding of Nunakput, can the Minister explain to me why are we debt collecting for the federal government and we are -- these are programs that are impacted because residents have received this federal funding, but are we still debt collecting for CERB and disability payments across the territory? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to need a bit more detail on the Member's comments. I know he had a statement. He was throwing around some acronyms, throwing around a bunch of numbers. So I can say that the CERB program, that was exempted from the calculations for income assistance. So there were people who claimed that who are on income assistance, and I understand that the federal government has been clawing some of those payments back or requiring repayment of some of those payments if the individuals weren't eligible. The CRB program, which came after the CERB program, was not exempted and so that was counted against people's income assistance. And so if they did not claim that, then that would have been counted against their income assistance and recovered. I can't speak to some of the other issues that the Member is mentioning. But as far as I know, we don't do debt collection on behalf of the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Acronyms or not, we're clawing back funding that should be going to the residents that are -- that these different programs that we're supposed to provide. CERB payments, yeah, okay. The second, is this round two for the territorial government? It's disability payments that they're being clawed back on. And I've been told by individuals in my riding that they're being clawed back so they're being penalized. So why do CERB one, or the first part of CERB for the -- to no claw backs and then number two they're clawing back when we approved in the House that they weren't going to do this. They told us that, so why are they doing that? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not quite clear what the Member is referencing, what he means by disability payments. I'm going to need a bit more detail on this. I know that the folks who administer income assistance, they are as compassionate as they can be. We do have regulations. And so they must -- the program is regulated and so they must follow those regulations. It is the law. And so while they are compassionate as they can be, there are some parameters that they have to follow. So I'm happy to look into this further. And if the Member can provide a bit more concrete information about what he's referencing and perhaps even some constituent names, we can actually dig into their individual files and ensure that everything is happening the way it is supposed to be. We don't want people to, you know -- to not have what they need to get by. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I will get the Minister those names in regards to the family, single mother of five children is being deducted \$41,000 and not getting income support and being penalized by our government when they should be providing service. I think that we have to try to keep the, I guess, services that are needed by the single people. And we're not -- this is not by choice for taking income support. It's because they have no choice and there's no jobs where we're from.

Mr. Speaker, I really think right across the whole, with the forgiving the CERB payment, is this Minister -- and I'm going to bring it forward in the next government, to take out the CERB payment claw backs on the second one and the disability payments that the federal government did, and they are being taken away from our people back home under this program, so is the Minister willing to look at that and taking those payments and claw backs and give it back to the people instead of doing the federal government's dirty work. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as I know, we don't claw back disability payments. We don't do debt collection for the federal government. So I look forward to the Member providing some more concrete information that I can look into. Thank you.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, we're not giving these people enough support. Can the Minister commit to forgiving clients who receive federal supports during the pandemic and ensuring they continue to receive their income support and resources? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government did exempt a significant amount of the federal supports that were provided to residents by the Government of Canada. We made clear that certain income from the government would be deducted. And so there should be no reason now why income support is clawing anything back because those residents would have claimed that they were receiving that income at that time. I'll also note that although it is delayed, the rollout of the new income assistance program, this government has increased income -- has approved increases to income assistance that we haven't seen in a generation. There's significantly more exceptions. There's more incentive for people to get out there and find work, or rather we're removing the disincentives to work. So we have made significant progress. It's just a matter of getting that program rolled out. I'd like to think if it wasn't for the

evacuations, it would be coming out next month but that's yet to be determined. But I know staff are working hard to try and get this program off the ground so that we can better support residents. Because I agree, what we've been providing for the past, you know, 20 years, it's remained relatively static. And the prices have gone up in the past 20 years so change was needed. We committed to that at the beginning of this government, and we've made those changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1621-19(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF MIDWIFERY
PROGRAM CHANGES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of health and social services.

Mr. Speaker, in February of this year, the Minister indicated that the midwifery program implementation was being held up by staffing challenges. Can the Minister provide this House with an update on recruitment for the midwifery program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a shortage nationally and internationally of midwifery candidates which is hobbling our efforts to fully staff our program. That doesn't diminish our commitment, and we are still actively recruiting for midwives wherever the program exists. So to be more specific, the territorial manager position is vacant and currently open for competition. The midwifery specialist position is filled and will focus and support the territorial program. Fort Smith, one out of three positions are filled so the services are limited. Hay River, two out of 3.75 full-time equivalent positions are staffed. And this includes the services that -- that staff there includes the services provided to Fort Resolution with visits that occur every six weeks. Yellowknife, one out of four positions are filled. And this position has been redeployed to support stabilization of staffing in Fort Smith because there are alternatives to midwife use in Yellowknife. So in short we are very short staffed, but we continue to advertise to fill all the vacant positions. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister speak to whether or not the health and social services midwifery recruitment team is looking at fostering relationships with midwifery training institutions

to create practicum-like opportunities here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the health and social services system doesn't have any formal relationships of the type that the Member is talking about. But I think there's room for us to be proactive there because we do, in fact, welcome students to do practicums in our health and social services system and that, of course, extends to midwifery as well. So I think that there's room for us to perhaps create a more solid relationship with one of the training facilities to make sure that we have a steady supply of students. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that as well. I know that this is not, you know, an area where we'd need to reinvent the wheel. The Northwest Territories does this with other health care positions and other jurisdictions do it with midwifery. So I appreciate the Minister's support on that one.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering what work is being done to create opportunities and support certification processes in the Northwest Territories for internationally-trained midwives that might be interested in moving to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as with other health professions, we don't have the capacity to evaluate international credentials to decide whether they meet the registration requirements in our jurisdiction. So what we count on is that internationally trained health care providers are licensed in another province and once that happens, they're eligible for registration in the NWT. So we depend on the greater capacity of the provinces to assess their credentials and then once they've been assessed and found to be adequate, then of course we would register them here in the NWT as well. The business about evaluating international credentials is something that the whole health and social services system across the country is looking at because it's a very uneven approach as things stand now. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by acknowledging that health and social services has a very full legislative, regulatory, and policy creation slate. But I'm wondering if the Minister can provide an update to this House as to what timeline the department is working toward to

complete the midwifery regulations? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, work has started on creating midwifery regulations under the Health and social services Professions Act. And that work will produce a modernized framework, including looking at the scope of practice, which I know the Member spoke about in her statement, to align with the scope of practice in other Canadian jurisdictions.

There is now an advisory committee with representatives from the Midwives Association of the Northwest Territories who are meeting with the department to do this work. So drafting instructions are being developed now, and it's anticipated that the regulations will come into force in 2025. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1622-19(2):
LOCATION OF YELLOWKNIFE-NORTH
SLAVE CAMPUS OF AURORA COLLEGE

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Given that the funding is still required to come from Canada to complete the new North Slave Campus, has the department given any thought to re-engaging with the public on the proposed location of the polytechnic university? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There will be engagement if it's shown that the Tin Can Hill site is viable as an option for the new campus. Right now, they are undertaking a phase 2 environmental assessment. The phase 1 assessment showed there is moderate potential for contaminated soil or groundwater and so that work is happening. I believe that we were expecting it to be done this fall but because we were evacuated, the expectation is for the spring. So once that information is in, that will be provided to the board and to the college. They will look at it and make a determination if they want to pursue that spot or not. So at this point, engagement isn't necessary because we don't even know if that's going to be the location. Once we get that information and the board makes a decision, then the city process kicks in, and there is going to be significant public engagement. I know that the Member raised issues about traffic and

things like that, and those are real concerns. And those are the kind of things that will be addressed through that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We see this time and again where, you know, stuff is being done behind the scenes or things are advancing before it really is taken out to the public for that engagement. I think a good example of that was the five options presented to us for the airport terminal building at which point committee told the Minister right off the bat two were not viable.

So given that, I'm kind of -- you know, I have to wonder why we had all this kerfuffle if we haven't even picked that as the site yet. However, I would like to know has the department done a comprehensive assessment on areas such as the downtown or the capital site as proposed areas for the new build, has it only been looking at Tin Can Hill, and if so, why not? Thanks.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of sites were looked at. There's a number of different options for post-secondary campuses. Some campuses are all located in one area. Some are located in downtowns with buildings located on different blocks of the city. And so the model that was chosen for the for Aurora College North Slave Campus was a model where we wanted to be close to downtown, close to transit, close to places that people can live, but all in one place so that students can live near the school and somewhere near, you know, outdoor areas as well, so that people maybe coming from the smaller communities might feel a bit more at home. And the master plan discusses a number of other locations.

There are reasons why this was the preferential site. There's some locations around the ledge here where the land was not perhaps of the size that would allow for future expansion. Here in the capital site, there's requirements about, you know, sight lines to the ledge and things like that. So there were a number of reasons why that was chosen as a preferential site, but a number of spaces around the city were looked at. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They may have been looked at, but I don't think they were really considered given that I have not been able to find any information on why Tin Can Hill was selected out of all of these groups.

The Minister speaks to the fact of the lack of area for expansion around the capital site and sight lines and things like that. Well, the sight lines, we can change. We're consensus. We

can pass things so that we can look at a building across Frame Lake. I think we'd all be fine with that.

When we talk about the expansion piece, this would actually be an opportunity for once the Akaitcho land claim is settled for the Indigenous people of this territory and area to become the future landlords of the polytechnic. So to say, yes, the capital site is restricted in space and expansion size, yes, in and of itself it is. But we're not getting another building. We're too small. So start there, and then you can expand into the Akaitcho. So with that being in mind, can the Minister speak to whether there has been any conversations with the Akaitcho whose impacts -- it is their land that the North Slave Campus will end up on. Have they shown any interest in the polytechnic university and potentially being the future landlords? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've met with chiefs from Yellowknife on a number of occasions to discuss the economic opportunities that could arise from the North Slave Campus. It is much too early to nail down what those might be. And it's difficult to plan -- to make a long-term plan when, you know, a part of that plan -- the land that we could potentially use is sort of unknown what the status of it will be. Perhaps, you know, a future Indigenous government doesn't want -- wouldn't want to partner with the college. However, I'm very open to that. I think that would be great. You know, when we do things in the North, if we can create economic opportunities for Indigenous governments, I'm all for that. So as we progress forward with this, those are conversations that will continue to go on. And I've made that commitment to the chiefs as well. Thank you.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So reading through all that, the answer's no, there was no discussion about them being the landlords of the future facility.

I guess where I kind of struggle with this, we're talking about economic development. We're talking about land claims. We know at some point the land around Frame Lake, because it will be settled and hopefully sooner rather than later, not that I think anything progressed during this Assembly; however, when that land is settled it will be developed. And at that point, there will be buildings, there will be things put on it. I really can't see the ec dev part of the YKDFN not wanting to see buildings near the hospital.

So that being said, can the Minister commit that they will go back and re-engage -- or the department will re-engage on the location of the polytechnic university? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of engagement to come. So after we get the report back from the phase 2 environmental assessment, that'll determine the next steps. And before there's any shovels in the ground, there will be a significant amount of engagement, hopefully partnerships with Indigenous governments, hopefully economic opportunities that will be realized. So with only, you know, a couple weeks left here, I can't make any commitments to go out and, you know, do more engagement on this. But all of that work will happen. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1623-19(2):
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HIRING POLICY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the finance minister confirm if the government intends to repeal and replace the Affirmative Action Policy before the start of the 20th Assembly, including any actions that may occur during the election period? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been a suite of things that have happened in the Department of Finance for the human resources over the last four years, and certainly the Affirmative Action Policy and the work we've done to review it is part of that. Seeing it to its end would certainly be nice towards the end of this Assembly but, Mr. Speaker, the Member's already noted, we only just were able to table the report in terms of what we heard and what we've been recommended to do and, as such, it really would not be appropriate at this point to be making a change at the dying days of this Assembly and before the 20th, so. And certainly not during an election period, Mr. Speaker. So I expect that there will be no changes to the Affirmative Action Policy before the 20th Assembly. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether the government's work that has gone into repealing and replacing the Affirmative Action Policy will be lost after the end of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: No, it will certainly not be lost, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is very committed to this work. And as I said, this is really -- the work that's gone on is part of what has already been going on and what's already in place under the Indigenous recruitment and retention framework, the Human Resources Strategic Plan, the Diversity and Inclusion Framework. So while this policy is certainly connected to those things and that work is ongoing, as such it is connected. And the work is ongoing, and it will certainly not be lost. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if the future Affirmative Action Policy will also include an appeal board, an appeal board process for applicants to consider if they wish. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, right now what we do have is there are staffing appeal regulations that come in under the Public Service Act. There are staffing appeals that are reviewed by staffing officers who are independent from the public service, independent from the Department of Finance. So there is a process in place. That said, I know there's often concerns raised, and it was raised during the review process, about whether or not this is sufficient or adequate to make sure that people are, in fact, benefitting from the processes we have in place. So that was part of the review and that was part of the recommendations, and that will certainly be taken into consideration, again, as work goes -- is ongoing at all times in the department to improve its processes. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us what she thinks the next government or next Minister should do on this file when it comes to any potential changes to the Affirmative Action Policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Oh, Mr. Speaker, I can't -- I can't tell you what I think. Or what I think the next Minister can do.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a fulsome review that was conducted. I would commend people to -- if they are interested in this area, to look at what we heard -- the What We Heard report, to look at the recommendations therein. It is the recommendations that are saying to bring in an Indigenous employment policy that would really refocus on an area that we know that the Department of Finance would like to see

improvements, that we know it's an area that the public service remains underrepresented. And it does include some recommendations as to how we might change that -- or how we might structure that.

It also speaks to some of the other issues that Member -- this Member has raised, other Members have raised around, you know, other demographics here in the Northwest Territories. So there's a lot of information in there, a lot of suggestions and recommendations in there. I can only commend them to the next government, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps put something in the transition binder about how they might want to go about thinking of this. But, really, beyond that, Mr. Speaker, it's not my place to say. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1624-19(2):
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON ARSENIC
REMIEDIATION GUIDELINES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on the so-called public engagement on the environmental guideline for contaminated site remediation. It also includes the arsenic remediation guidelines. These revisions have taken 20 years, Mr. Speaker. On the heavier same web page, the review period is now about seven weeks, not including the evacuation period. So can the Minister explain why this public engagement is so short and at the very end of the life of this Assembly? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the public engagement period for this guideline was opened on August 4th, 2023, and has been extended until October 15th, 2023, due to the evacuation. The standard GNWT engagement period is between four to six weeks. Given the evacuation, the department has extended this engagement timeline just well beyond the six-week period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Well, let's talk about that public engagement period. The extension might allow for more meaningful public input on the guideline but communications from the department, in my view, need to be improved.

Can the Minister tell us whether he is prepared to improve public communications, including a further extension, some plain language materials on this important policy document, and maybe even a public meeting or a webinar? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do not believe a plain language summary is required. Mr. Speaker, the guidelines provide a short overview of the methodology and approach taken, which is accessible on Have Your Say web page. The Have Your Say web page provides an e-mail address that is monitored daily. Any specific questions the public might have are reviewed by staff and responded to as required and in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, merci, Monsieur le President. I spent about an hour and a half looking at the material last night. Way over my head, so it's definitely not plain language. But the new guideline would reduce the acceptable limits for arsenic in soil related to all uses compared to the 2003 guidelines. However, the new guidelines would allow Yellowknife residents to be exposed to, in some cases, three times as much arsenic as those people living outside of Yellowknife.

So can the Minister try to explain why it is okay to expose Yellowknifers to, in some cases, three times as much arsenic compared to those that live outside of Yellowknife? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Revisions to arsenic criteria were undertaken through a structured and scientific risk assessment process to determine approximate background criteria based on the evaluation of new data and methodology since 2003. This process includes assessment of human health risk, and it was concluded that these levels of arsenic are safe for Yellowknife residents. Human health risk assessments look at all exposure pathways. Examples include how people use the land and where they can get their food, whether it is from the land or grocery store. And these are all factors that determine the level of the risk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. That's great. So public contractors get, you know, six weeks to look at stuff that may have been taking 20 years to develop. You know, very technical stuff. Not good. This is not good public engagement, Mr. Speaker.

But it's not clear what these new arsenic soil remediation guidelines would mean for the Giant Mine remediation project. Although that work was finally approved under an environmental assessment completed in 2014, the soil remediation was based on the old potentially unsafe 2003 arsenic soil remediation guidelines. So can the Minister tell us whether the new, much lower, arsenic soil remediation guidelines will be applied to the Giant Mine Remediation Project? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Giant Mine Remediation Project has been aware of the potential change to the GNWT environmental guidelines for contaminated soil or remediation. Current remediation activities, as defined by the closure and completion plan and the water license, are based on the 2003 guidelines, which were adopted by the land and water board at the time. It is important to note that both the 2003 and the revised 2023 guideline allow proponents to carry out a site-specific assessment to determine suitable criteria using soil remediation based on consideration for site factors and conditions. The Giant Mine Remediation Project undertook a site-specific assessment and was considered with the 2018 human health and ecological risk assessment. As such, the Giant Mine Remediation Project will continue to apply the 2003 guidelines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1625-19(2):
COMPLETION OF TLICHO ALL-SEASON
ROAD TO WHATI

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho highway is designed and intended to provide year-round road access to the Tlicho region. It is the Tlicho's wish to eventually have all-season road extended to Gameti and Wekweeti. In this Assembly, we saw the completion of most of the portion to Whati; however, the last 10 kilometres are not completed. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister what happened to the final section of the Tlicho All-Season Road to Whati? Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. We have applications in to the federal government to complete the rest of that highway. We started -- we completed phase 1. We are working with the Tlicho partnership as per our cooperation agreement. So, I mean,

yes, we are looking into it. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho highway to Whati was built only to the pre-existing Whati access road used to connect Whati to the winter road. The access road does not meet modern engineering standards that consider things such as ponded water, drainage, and drivability. It is not up to the same standard as the rest of the Tlicho All-Season Road. With this in mind, the community government of Whati would like to see this deficiency corrected.

Can the Minister tell me when will this section be constructed and, if it's not in the works, commit that it will be included in the next capital budget? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I became Minister of Infrastructure, I was quite surprised that we didn't finish the road all the way too so I mean, I -- it's a 12 kilometre access road that needs to get into the community of Whati. We have taken steps over the few years in preparation for the Whati access road improvements. This has included things like surveying, design work, and securing necessary permits. Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that this work will start within the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there seems to be no reference to the Tlicho All-Season Road in the 2024-2025 Capital estimates. This is very troubling as the highway has been left incomplete in terms of connecting Whati with an all-season road. The last few kilometres are missing. There is an access road that is substandard. It would not be allowed to remain if it is -- would not be allowed to remain if it was on the major road into Yellowknife. The Minister must ensure the concerns of Whati are heard. Will the Minister invite the representative of Whati to the next working group meeting? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to note that once we get the funding, then it'll be put on the books. So we're just anxiously awaiting for the federal government to be able to perhaps respond to our proposal and get the rest of that highway completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason why I brought this up is because the community of Whati are very concerned, especially the leadership. So that's

why I brought this up at this time. And they would like to see the work completed as soon as possible because it is -- if you drive on it, it is not good. The last section leading to the Whati road, to Whati -- to the community of Whati is not drivable. So that's why I brought it up because the chief from Whati would like to see this completed as soon as possible. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, that is what we're working at. I do want to note that this project's into two phases. The phase that we're going to start will consist of road embankment improvement, some of the ditching, drainage culvert installation, signage, replacement of the culvert with a short span bridge. This is our next phase, Mr. Speaker. This is something that we are looking for funding. And, you know, I'm anticipating that work is going to start right away. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1626-19(2):
COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING RAPID
HOUSING INITIATIVE

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are related to my Member's statement on housing and are for the housing minister.

Housing NT did not notify communities, nor residents, of the Rapid Housing Initiative Program despite the cries for help from all communities dealing with severe housing shortages. Can the Minister apprise this House, and the residents of the Northwest Territories, as to why Housing NT were not involved in the rollout of the Rapid Housing initiative in the NWT? Mahsi.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for asking the question as well too. Within the housing portfolio, I did create a position that was specifically -- would conduct the engagement between the Indigenous governments and the communities as well, and to be working with us, the stakeholders, NGOs, so they would have an opportunity to apply for federal funding. To date, we have been quite successful. There has been 17 applications throughout the Northwest Territories. And one of them had actually been submitted by the Member's riding, the Deh Gah Gotie Nation. They're receiving \$4.8 million to construct 18 units and to be also looking at six duplexes from

Housing NWT, and we'd be looking at transferring the six units over to the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that. She's mentioned only one community. And I've asked why, you know, it was for the whole of the Northwest Territories because there was many communities that were missed as per my Member's statement.

Mr. Speaker, although this may have been a federal program, shouldn't Housing NT be aware of any programs initiated by the federal government and received a head's up from the Liberal Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories and also from the NWT senator? Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member, and I wish I got that information as well too. I wish we had the direct contact that as soon as those federal programs are announced that we would be first on their list for them to contact. But unfortunately, we're not. So that's why the position was created so they can provide that communication between myself and the CMHC and Canada to work with the Northwest Territories so we know what programs are out there and what programs we actually can apply for. But to date, we have received funding directly to Housing NWT and then also to the Indigenous governments.

In my earlier statements, there is \$600 million throughout the Northwest Territories that has been allocated to Indigenous governments with working with housing, with the federal government, in order for us to put houses on the ground. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister's really missing my point on this whole -- my Member's statement alluded to the Rapid Housing programs and the fact that the Housing NT Minister and staff didn't do enough to ensure that every community was going to get some units, because I'm saying everybody's been crying for housing, especially in the Beaufort Delta where there's really hard to get at the communities of like Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, and Ulukhaktok. And these were 100 percent dollars for homes that could have been given to people. And I ask housing, you know, why were they not aware of the program? And they did say they hired somebody so why didn't they jump on that, CMHC, about the programs?

I would like to know if the Housing NT Minister and staff had any contact with CIRNAC regional director or the CMHC office to have serious conversations about the severe housing

shortages in all our communities? After all, it is a treaty right for most and a relocation right for others. Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I just want to reiterate \$600 million is here in the Northwest Territories for housing. Housing has travelled into the surrounding communities as well. We have established our community housing plans, which engages every single community in the Northwest Territories and looking at what their specific housing needs are. Right now in the Member's riding, Enterprise has completed their housing plan. Kakisa is in progress. And K'atlodeeche is completed. Fort Providence has not yet begun. And the reasoning for these community housing plans is a direct communication document between us and the federal government as well, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say that within this portfolio, I've had several trips to Ottawa to specifically meet with Minister Vandal, Minister Hussen, and just recently Minister Shawn Fraser, and looking at the drastic needs for housing in the Northwest Territories. I feel that we've done significantly well throughout the North and working with Indigenous governments, also creating the Council of Leaders housing working table. Just want to say \$600 million that has never been established in any of the years of this government and as long as we've existed. The last time we had a replenishment of housing units, Mr. Speaker, was in the 1970s. We made great progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And mahsi to the Minister of housing for that. I'm not even certain I've seen \$600 million in Housing NWT budgets. So I'm not sure. There's still severe shortage of housing. The Member from Nunakput is still crying for housing. And still nothing is happening up there.

Mr. Speaker, does the housing Minister and staff truly believe that offloading housing rental stock to Indigenous organizations is a profitable business venture? Mahsi.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just -- I want to correct the Member as well too. I don't want to say we're offloading units to Indigenous governments and to the smaller communities. These are business partnerships that we've engaged in conversation. The community is interested in some of our units. They want the unit transferred. And I am about working in partnership. Housing cannot solve the housing

crisis on its own. We need the Indigenous governments at the table as well too.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that looking at what we've done so far, we've had a number of engagements throughout the Northwest Territories in addressing housing differently. If we're looking at repairing fuel tanks, if we're looking at repairing stairs, we do have a community housing initiative program there that the communities can apply to. Housing has been very active throughout this government, and I commend the work that housing has been doing. And there's -- believe me, there's a lot of work that still needs to be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1627-19(2):
FEDERAL INDIAN DAY SCHOOL CLASS
ACTION LAWSUIT

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about the federal Indian day school class action lawsuit. This lawsuit was based on physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and culture genocide. You know, this class action lawsuit covered 650 First Nations throughout Canada and 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. Those compensations that were paid out were anywhere from level 5 to level 5, or \$10,000 to \$200,000.

Mr. Speaker, I've been getting a lot of calls, and constituents in my riding that were talking about how about the students after 1969. Because when you make application with the federal Indian day school class action lawsuit, you only could apply to April 1st, 1969. And then after 1969, the students were left out. But after April 1st, 1969, the GNWT took on the control of the education from Government of Canada, but the abuse continued for 16 years thereafter and the last residential school and day school ended in 1996.

So my question to the Premier would be given the compelling argument for extending the federal day school compensation program to include Indigenous students who attended GNWT operating schools after April 1st, 1969, can you provide a stance on this matter and your government's willingness to advocate for these students' rights to seek compensation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to say how old I am,

but I know I was in school in 1969 here in the Northwest Territories. So if former students though, Mr. Speaker, feel that they've suffered the same abuses as those in federally-run schools, then, Mr. Speaker, they need to seek legal advice to look at any recourse that they can get through the courts. I'm not saying that abuses didn't happen. I was a student there. I seen some things. I experienced some things. But I'm not aware of any specific allegations that have come across my desk as Premier so I can't state on that. I do understand that the Member feels that the schools that were run by the GNWT after 1969 operated under the same principles as the federally-run day schools but this contention needs further examination. What I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that under legislation established through this Assembly, schools have not had their purpose as systematic assimilation of Indigenous people since the GNWT take over it. It was not about cultural genocide. It was about educating students, Mr. Speaker.

And I think the other point that needs to be made is that schools in the NWT have been operating with considerable community involvement. It's not the same way that the federal day schools or the federal residential schools were operated. So I think that having the community involvement, the different priorities of educating our students, is in itself different from the federal day schools or the residential schools. But, Mr. Speaker, again, anyone that feels that they have been abused in any school, right up to today, should seek legal advice in my opinion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yeah, I agree that, you know, the schools have changed from then to now where it is today. You know, after April 1st, 1969, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church have assumed the contract for 16 years with the GNWT and then the last school ended in 1996, so.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the Premier for tabling this document, you know, looking into my questions that I had put forward back in June.

In light of the fact that the GNWT received federal funding to operate schools after April 1st, 1969, the cutoff date for the federal day school class action lawsuit, what steps is your government taking to ensure that Indigenous students who attended these schools - GNWT school run such as Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, St. Patrick School - are not excluded from seeking compensation from the injustice they endured? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This litigation was filed against the federal government. So my understanding is that membership in the class of former students covered by the federal day school class action lawsuit is determined by the particular requirements of that litigation. I don't have that on hand. That was against the federal government. But, again, I do recommend that any student that feels that they've been abused in any way at any time should seek legal advice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. Could you please elaborate on your ongoing discussions or collaboration between the GNWT and the federal government to address the historical mistreatment and cultural alienation and experience by Indigenous students in the NWT operating schools after April 1st, 1969, particularly in light of the federal government's responsibility in funding these institutions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't remember what sitting it was, but the Member did ask me to bring it forward, the concerns to the Premier of Nunavut and to the federal government. I did make a commitment in the House that I would do that, and I'm pleased to report that I have had discussions with the Premier in Nunavut and I have brought the concern to the federal government as per my commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Premier. Premier, what measures is your government considering to support Indigenous survivors who attended GNWT-operated schools after April 1st, 1969, in their pursuit of justice and healing, and how can we ensure that their voices are heard in this critical matter of truth and reconciliation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've said numerous times in public events, etcetera, that I believe in my heart, I truly believe, that part of the healing process is actually being able to share your story. I experienced that when I practised social work myself, and I always found that the more people can share their stories the load just comes off somehow. It is part of the healing journey. So I do know that we have various counselling supports in the NWT, some through the health and social services, but also some that aren't recognized. Supports that people don't see as

traditional. I know when I worked at the Yellowknife Women's Society, I spoke a lot to people that were Indigenous and went through residential schools. I know Native Women's is there as well, the Salvation Army. So the key, Mr. Speaker, is if you have any trauma of any sort, please seek help, whether that be through recognized counselling supports or family or friends or agencies that are there to support you. Don't tackle it on your own. Speaking is healing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1628-19(2):
UPDATE ON REVIEW OF REGIONAL
DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITIES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, my questions are for the Premier. On a mandate, we said increased regional decision-making authority was a priority. The mandate stated that there will be a departmental review. What came of that departmental review and if any significant changes that were made? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually had to pull my notes for this one. It's been a while since I got questions on this so -- but it's good that the Member brought it up because it shouldn't be forgotten.

So I do know that in 2021-2022 that we engaged with regional senior managers and headquarters to look at the perceptions around the decision-making authority in the regions. We did an internal review as well of the job descriptions to make sure that there wasn't any differences. Within that review, we found there was no difference in the job description between a regional senior manager and a headquarters regional manager. So then it told us that probably the likelihood is training. So we initiated some training courses that'll be ongoing to be able to give senior managers in the regions more training and what is -- the powers that they do have.

We also had discussions with the deputy ministers of all departments to make sure that they understood as well, Mr. Speaker. And then we also hired a consultant to actually get more information. So I think, Mr. Speaker, we got the engagement. We got suggestions. We listened to them. We implemented training. We talked to DMs. But hearing the conversations from the Member, clearly, there's still an issue. And so

clearly, this needs to be looked into again, and we need to do more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Premier. I guess, yeah, that -- when we made this mandate -- or this priority, my envision when we all agreed is that it would increase our powers in the region and just, like -- I don't know, I haven't heard anything. Is it all -- has it increased if somebody can approve somebody's annual leave? So I'm asking the Premier if there was any significant changes from these reviews and all of this stuff and training that gave power to the regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, in reviewing the job descriptions, in theory the regional senior managers should have the exact same authority as managers at headquarters. So, again, it's something, like I said -- I'm hearing it's more than just training. We need to make sure that our deputy ministers are aware. We need to make sure that every department, every Minister, is aware that this is an issue and speak to your deputy ministers, speak to headquarters because we are -- deputy ministers are headquarters -- to make sure that the regions have the autonomy, the authority that is vested in them, that is granted within their job descriptions, to make sure that they have the abilities to make decisions for their residents as outlined in their job descriptions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. This will be my last question; I won't have a supplementary. Will the Premier commit to making sure that over these next few weeks that she's still there and her Cabinet that she will discuss this with her deputy ministers, that our regional superintendents, regional managers, all know what their authority is and they use their authority? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will definitely have -- I think have a little bit more before the next Assembly is sworn in, and as do the Ministers.

I will make the commitment in this House that I will speak to the secretary of Cabinet, who is responsible for all the deputy ministers, to make sure it reinforces, but I'm also telling all Cabinet Ministers while I'm standing here, to make sure you speak to your deputy ministers to ensure that regional managers have the authority invested under their job descriptions to make decisions that they are qualified and mandated within their job descriptions to do. So that, I've already given direction to my Ministers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1629-19(2):
MOTOR VEHICLES OFFICE OPERATING
HOURS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my four years to get the DMV to change their operating hours, I actually went backwards. It was closed for most of COVID, and it was closed for evacuation, and then they went to online booking only, and then they actually limited their hours and closed during lunch hours, and it's become harder and harder to use the DMV despite four years of asking. So one last time, will the Minister of Infrastructure try and buck this trend and look to open the DMV either on an evening or a weekend? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One more kick at the can. As I've stated before, Mr. Speaker, we've looked at the Member's suggestion and determined it would be at a significant financial cost to extend the hours, or even just to open on weekends. I also want to emphasize that the impact that increased hours would have to the safety and work balance of our staff who already have a stressful and often thankless job.

Mr. Speaker, I do also want to note that you can get most of your services online. You could renew your registration at 3 a.m. in front of your computer, in your underwear if you want. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This happens.

MR. JOHNSON: That's good.

QUESTION 1630-19(2):
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON ARSENIC
REMEDIATION GUIDELINES

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Speaker, I have some further questions I'd like to pursue with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on this arsenic remediation guideline matter. It's not clear whether this new work went through any kind of an internal or external review or was discussed with interested co-management bodies, such as the land and water boards or even the Giant Mine Oversight Board. So can the Minister tell us who was consulted during the development of these new arsenic remediation guidelines, and can he summarize what happened or make a commitment to make that information public? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for ECC.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in developing the guidelines, input was provided by several academic arsenic researchers, a health risk expert with the Giant Mine Oversight Board, and the GNWT departments. GNWT staff will continue to discuss the guidelines with land and water boards as part of the current public engagement process. Public comments and concerns will be addressed in a What We Heard summary report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. These guidelines, whatever they look like and that get approved at the end of the day, I think they have some significant implications for the Yellowknives Dene First Nation that live on perhaps some contaminated lands or want to have some business opportunities there, the City of Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories Construction Association. So has the department actually done any kind of outreach to any of these governments? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Governments or NGOs. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For that detail, I'll have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. If it's not the case that they've done that engagement, I really urge that this department do that work.

I guess my next question, Mr. Speaker, is once these are finalized, what sort of public communications is there going to be? Because this will have implications for people that buy and sell land, real estate agents, banks that do financing. This has got some pretty serious implications. So what is the department going to do to communicate these new guidelines to the public and interested parties? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, I think it was his first question, we will address the -- part of What We Heard report will be provided. We will also put it on our website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that, but posting this to a website I just don't think is going to cut it. I tried to read this stuff last night.

It's highly technical stuff. And the document that's out there for public engagement right now is three pages. There's no references in it. It's not very well done in my humble opinion. It doesn't even explain that we're going from 2003 guidelines to a new set of guidelines. I think the Minister needs to beef up the public engagement/public communications component.

So can the Minister undertake to talk to his department about how they're going to improve communications of this now and moving forward once the guideline is finished? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I thank the Member for his encouragement, his advice, and I will reach out and have conversations with the department. Thank you.

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

As it is the last day tomorrow, I know there may be a lot of questions, so we'll have to shorten up the preamble and the answers, to the point, just so everyone gets a chance. Thought I'd give you a head's up. Thanks.

Written questions. Colleagues, we will return after a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Colleague, we will continue. Oral questions. Just kidding.

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

Replies to the Commissioner's Address

MS. GREEN'S REPLY

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say goodbye to you and my colleagues in this House. It has been a privilege to spend the last eight years in this Legislative Assembly representing the constituents of Yellowknife Centre and for the last three years serving all residents in the NWT as Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister responsible for Seniors, and Minister responsible for People with Disabilities. I would like to start with some acknowledgements.

My parents made the decision to immigrate to Canada when I was a child. It opened a world of opportunities in education and employment I don't think I'd had if I had stayed in England. I

am so very grateful to them. My dad, Stan Green, instilled the social justice values that have shaped my life. He has been a fervent supporter of my political career and I count on his constant encouragement. Thank you, Dad.

Turning to the people in the gallery today, I would like to thank my partner, Janice McKenna, for her steadfast help and encouragement through our many years together but especially in the last eight. She has inspired and supported me through the many challenges of political life. Thank you, Janice, for your patience, love, and wisdom.

I also want to thank Catherine Pigott who persuaded me to give Yellowknife a try as a place to live and work. And my brother from another mother, Don Babey. As well as my friend and champion, Audrey Henderson. Thank you all for your friendship.

The early days of my political career were overwhelming, indeed like drinking from the proverbial firehose. There was so much to learn about the government, about how the Legislative Assembly works, and getting to know colleagues.

A former MLA gave me a valuable piece of advice early on. He said, If you are well informed, you can be very influential. I took that to heart and continued to read as much as possible.

Regular Members can also make a difference in other ways. The one I found most effective was motions. I put forward five motions in my first term, and they all gained some traction. The one I am most proud of is my motion on International Women's Day 2018, creating targets for increased numbers of women MLAs in this House. In the 18th Assembly there were just two women elected, myself and the Premier. And in the history of this legislature, there had never been more than three women here at one time.

The motion came to life with the creation of a special committee to increase the representation in the Legislative Assembly. Five of us toured ten communities in the NWT to learn about the barriers women faced running for office. We made recommendations to remove those barriers in the special committee's interim report. Women said they needed a family-friendly workplace, information and training on the role of MLA, and financial assistance to pay for campaigns. My colleagues adopted all these recommendations.

The final report dealt with the question of introducing quotas to ensure change happened. While most women told the

committee they didn't want quotas, they did want to see more women in the House. In the end, we recommended that if voters didn't vote for women in the 2019 election, we would revisit the idea of quotas through a plebiscite. The point, of course, turned out to be moot when voters elected nine women to the House in that October, and an additional woman in a by-election, creating a majority of women Members in the House. A first in Canada.

The result exceeded my grandest expectations. I am proud of helping to bring so many women into politics. I believe that having women here in the legislature has made a difference. There has been an unprecedented focus on housing, child care, education and health. At the same time, women have shown they can lead on the economy, finance, and infrastructure. My hope is that women's representation is now the norm and voters will again vote for women's equality on November 14th.

As well as having more women in the House, the 19th Assembly couldn't have been more different than the 18th. The COVID-19 pandemic had a lot to do with that. We were just starting the winter budget session when fears about transmitting the virus put public life on hold. People went home, worried about being isolated from family and friends, trying to help children and youth to get on with school, and pivoting to keep their businesses open. Those stressful days became stressful months as the lockdown continued, not only for businesses but also for students whose education was disrupted, seniors who were isolated for their safety, and people who didn't have homes. It was also a time of great innovation: Working from home, online education, and expanded telehealth, to name a few.

At the end of that summer, I joined the executive council and became part of the government's response to COVID.

It's worth remembering that we had few cases in the NWT in 2020 thanks to a comprehensive and controversial lockdown by the chief public health officer. The federal government provided us excellent support with testing, PPE supplies, and prioritizing the North for early access to vaccines.

On New Year's Eve 2020, staff started vaccinating elders in long-term care. After seeing COVID kill thousands of seniors in the south, I think we all shared a sense of relief. But our real COVID test was still to come as new more infectious strains swept through the community and other communities in 2021 despite continued precautions. I mourn the people who died - elders who were

knowledge-keepers in their communities and the unhoused population.

I want to thank all the staff from the department and the health and social services authorities who worked so hard to make each of the steps along the way work. Your dedication and personal sacrifice made a difference to all of us. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, in the 18 months since the public health measures ended have required a massive effort to catch up on other priorities. I am proud of the work the staff of the health and social services system have done to complete the alcohol strategy, the seniors framework, the Baby Bundle Program, the Indigenous Patient Advocates, the Office of Client Experience, and reaching a draft agreement with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation for them to take the lead in caring for their children and youth.

The initiative I am most proud of is the work to overhaul the Extended Health Benefits Policy. The ability to access benefits, such as drugs, medical appliances, dental and vision care, will no longer be tied to the diagnosis of a specific disease. These benefits will be available to all residents of the NWT. No one who has coverage under the old specified condition program will lose it. And 2,200 people who didn't have insurance before will soon have it. In short, we have developed a policy for universal coverage that includes everyone.

This new safety net requires income testing that considers family size and location in the NWT. If cost-sharing is required, it will have an upper limit based on income. These changes come into effect on April 1st next year, and staff are working hard to provide a seamless transition for clients of the old program.

I'd like to thank everyone who has had a hand in all these initiatives. I want to make special mention of deputy minister Jo-Anne Cecchetto and former deputy minister Bruce Cooper for their leadership, along with the rest of the team who give it their all every day. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, now I want to talk about where we need to go from here with health and social services. Our biggest challenge is recruiting and retaining staff. NWT HSSA had a vacancy rate of 13 percent across all regions and departments as of this summer. We are especially short of nurse practitioners, midwives, registered nurses, and physicians in regional centers. While we haven't had to close any health centres, several of them have been, or are on, reduced services because of staff shortages. We have had good uptake from staff on the incentives that we've offered to strengthen retention, as well as hiring as many

Aurora College nursing graduates as possible. But this national, even international, problem persists and challenges us to provide the level of care residents want and need.

Our second biggest challenge is the cost of delivering health care. It has escalated, along with everything else, in our lives. For example, the cost of a hospital stay in the NWT is almost twice the national average, and hospital stays are generally longer here. The health and social services budget is the largest in government at \$610 million for this year. Even though federal funding for health care will increase this year, the amount is not a game changer. In fact, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is forecasting that it will again add to its operating deficit, now at \$245 million.

Staff compensation and benefits, along with unfunded contracts and medical travel, are the primary drivers of the deficit. Let me assure residents and taxpayers that staff are working hard to contain costs and seeking funding from a variety of sources for positions, services, and programs that are unfunded or underfunded but it's an uphill battle.

Mr. Speaker, our third primary challenge is to manage expectations of what health and social services can deliver. The demand for more services and programs is constant. There are lots of good ideas and the territory would benefit from them, but financing and staffing new initiatives is a real challenge. We simply can't offer all services in all centres given the money we have available and staff vacancy rates.

Outside of federal funding tied to specific initiatives, the GNWT has limited sources of revenue to direct to the system. We are not Alberta with multi-billion dollar surpluses. We are at a fork in the road. Either we stop offering services free of charge that are outside the NWT health care plan or we ask NWT residents to pay for those additional services according to their means. This is a big ask here in the NWT but not in most southern jurisdictions.

The idea of paying for things, like physiotherapy and eye exams, won't be popular but it is necessary for the system to maintain the focus on core services. There's no sugar coating this, Mr. Speaker. There are hard decisions ahead for the residents of the NWT to support the health system. At the same time, the next government will have to continue to lobby Ottawa to increase investment in health care to walk the talk of reconciliation with NWT residents.

The heartbreaking truth about the health and social services system, Mr. Speaker, is that

despite all the money spent, health outcomes for many residents are poor. Life expectancy in the NWT is five years less than the national average. Deaths that are avoidable with better prevention and care are two-thirds higher. We also have higher rates of smoking, drinking, and obesity which drive chronic conditions. All these numbers come from the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

The underlying cause of poor health in the NWT is poverty. Unfortunately, our poverty indicators are depressing. The NWT Bureau of Statistics estimates that 15 percent of the population lived in poverty in 2021, using the Northern basket measure of goods and services representing a basic standard of living. That's 6,400 people who don't have enough money for the basics.

Drilling down further, 23 percent of the population reported they worried about food security all the time. The Salvation Army in Yellowknife recently reported food bank use has doubled since the evacuation. Our housing crisis continues to deepen with core housing need that includes housing that is unavailable, unsuitable, or inadequate is at 24 percent of NWT households as of 2019. Almost a thousand people are on the public housing waitlist across the territory. And while it's hard to gather reliable numbers of homeless people, we can all see it's a growing problem in Yellowknife and the communities across the NWT and involves younger residents than ever before.

What happens to people who are homeless, hungry, and suffering from chronic disease? Mr. Speaker, the answer won't surprise you: Their health outcomes are poor. This situation contributes to the avoidable deaths I just mentioned.

Clearly, we have an equity problem and I expect the disparity between have and have-nots to continue growing given the increased cost of living. But it doesn't have to be this way, Mr. Speaker. We can and should prioritize investments in these social determinants of health to improve health outcomes. Let's start with housing.

During the COVID lockdown, we came as close as we ever have to ensuring everyone had a place to live. Once the pandemic started, living in a congregant setting such as shelters wasn't a good idea because the virus was so infectious. Instead, people lived in hotels, with wraparound services. I'm not aware of research on the health outcomes of providing hotel rooms other than the intended and important benefit that they protected people from getting COVID. But almost as quickly as it started, the use of hotel rooms was scaled back and people

returned to shelters. That was the similar situation that we recently saw during the evacuation, where the street population went from shelters to hotel rooms back to shelters.

We know about the health effects of not having stable housing. There is evidence that people who are homeless are more likely to be admitted, or re-admitted, to hospital and live only half as long as the rest of the population. In summary, to quote Dr. Andrew Boozary of the University of Toronto, "What rate of death and disease are we willing to accept by denying people access to housing?"

NWT Housing has been chipping away at this problem, buying property such as the Aspen Apartments in Yellowknife for example, to increase transitional housing options in Yellowknife. But we have a long way to go.

Mr. Speaker, we have some significant challenges ahead, but we also have some successes to celebrate as well. The department started down the path of establishing cultural safety and eliminating racism in health care ten years ago. The department has made a commitment to this work and to value and incorporate Indigenous knowledge. Today, there is a cultural safety division staffed by Indigenous people. They provide important training and advice to ensure the work we are doing is culturally safe and antiracist. We want to rebuild residents' trust in health and social services and we're willing to do the work to get there.

Mr. Speaker, we have made historic investments to improve child and family services and they are giving us good returns. We are working on a paradigm shift to support children and youth to stay with their families and in their communities. This year's annual report, which I will table later today, says 95 percent of children and youth who are receiving services do so in their home or in their home community.

Mental health issues have emerged front and centre even before the pandemic and are more significant today. The department has responded by increasing the number and variety of counselling and treatment options. Now the average wait time for a scheduled appointment is four days in the NWT compared with the national average of 22 days. Client satisfaction with counselling services is at 72 percent. Hospital stays for mental health and substance use are on par with the rest of Canada. That said, suicide rates are three times higher; a number that is obviously much too high. I hope to see the best practices learned, from a study trip to Iqaluit in June, become an action plan on suicide prevention early in the life of the next government.

Mental health, as we know, goes hand in hand with addictions. The Auditor General's report on addictions and aftercare has helped to identify priority areas to address. We need to continue strengthening addiction treatment in partnership with Indigenous governments. I continue to believe that one centre won't meet the needs of the whole territory. Many regions have started working on their own initiatives - the Gwich'in healing camp, the Ticho healing path, and the Deh Cho healing camps. Please take note of the word "healing." We need continued collaboration to help move residents into a healthy and happy place in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with some additional thanks. First, to the constituents of Yellowknife Centre. Thank you for electing me to represent your issues and ideas and to my constituency assistant Craig Yeo for his excellent service. Thanks to my staff, Elizabeth King and Ramie Wourms, who have gone the extra mile every day. I want to thank my colleagues on the executive council and the staff that support us. And, lastly, I want to wish the Members of the 20th Assembly wisdom, humility, patience, and kindness for the important work they will do for all of us in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON'S REPLY

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I must apologize. This reply to the Commissioner's address is going to be a bit all over the place, and I ask my colleagues for their patience.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the response to this year's unprecedented wildfire season. Many people across the NWT have recognized the dedication and hard work of everybody involved in protecting our communities, residents, and critical infrastructure, and many Members of this House have expressed their gratitude during the final session of the 19th Legislative Assembly. I want to begin by acknowledging that when emergencies happen, there will always be lessons to be learned. No response is perfect. That is why we began taking on an independent third-party review of challenging fires that impacted communities earlier this summer, as we do with major wildfires every year. We've also begun planning an overarching independent review of this year's fire response with findings that will be made public. As usual, we take these lessons learned

and apply them for the next year to help improve how we fight wildfires in the face of changing climate.

There have been some comments made during this Assembly that are simply incorrect, and I would like to set the record straight on some points. It is important to do because some of these statements have resulted in long-term firefighters contacting me to ask why should I do this again next year?

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I want to reiterate that every fire that threatened a community was actioned early and fought hard from the air and from the ground as conditions allowed. Wildfires are an important and natural part of the boreal forest, but we always work hard to protect our people, communities, and key infrastructure.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change brought additional fire crews, helicopters, air tankers this year, and started them early. We trained hundreds of extra firefighters from our communities to be ready for the season. This allowed us to action the first fire on May 4th, almost a month earlier than usual, and helped us respond to the record fire season. Saying we did not respond, or that we responded too late, is simply inaccurate. This disrespects the efforts of our firefighters and fire managers who battled hard all summer long during a wildfire season that lasted from May until now.

Most of our wildfire crews live in the same communities that they worked so hard to protect. They are our friends, family, and neighbours, and bring years of knowledge, training, and expertise in fighting fires in the boreal forest. Fire crews in our regions are 90 to 100 percent Indigenous, and they know our land and forests very well and know how to fight northern wildfires. Some have been fighting fire for 40 years and have a wealth of experience and Indigenous knowledge that help guide their work. Many of the crews from communities in the northern territory spent most of their summer in the South Slave, Deh Cho, and North Slave region, away from their families. Every day that conditions allowed, wildland firefighters went out on the land in blazing heat, and other fire personnel worked as hard as they could under extreme stress to protect the places they live and the people they care for.

Mr. Speaker, this summer some fires reached some of our communities, not because of failure in planning, preparation or action. They reached communities because of extreme fire behaviour driven by severe drought conditions, with rainfall levels in Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife less than 8.6 percent of normal in

some months this summer. In the hardest hit areas, record temperatures and wind events and built-up fuel in the forest from decades of fire suppression which primed those fires for explosive growth.

A drought code is an indicator of how hard it will be to put out a fire. A drought code of 300 is very high and over 425 is extreme. Maximum drought codes this summer were 1,124 in Fort Smith, 958 in Yellowknife, 902 in Behchoko, and 719 in Enterprise. Given these conditions, there was no amount of people, resources, or efforts that could have stopped some of these fires.

We heard from our most experienced firefighters, including many retired Indigenous wildfire experts from the NWT who came back to help, that these fires behaved differently than anything they have seen before. Wildfire experts who joined us from elsewhere said the same thing. It wasn't just the NWT that had a challenging fire season this year. More than 18 million hectares burned across Canada, with 5 million in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, when we needed resources, we brought in more than 1,000 firefighters from almost every Canadian jurisdiction - Parks Canada, the United States, South Africa, and New Zealand. Hundreds of type 3 firefighters from the Canadian Armed Forces came to help make firebreaks and mop up fires, allowing our firefighters to focus on direct attack fighting key fires.

Fighting wildfires is dangerous, and firefighters need specialized training to do this work as safely as possible. This is true every year but especially important this year with the extreme conditions and explosive fire behaviour. Even with specialized training, there were fire personnel injured this year and, as everybody knows in this House, is aware, one of our firefighters lost his life on the line. This is why we don't send out inexperienced untrained people to fight fires. We also bring in extra aircraft and other resources when we need them.

On a single day, there were 68 helicopters in the air, more than six times more than our regular territorial fleet. We had hundreds of pieces of heavy equipment, dozens of air tankers, and a range of structural protection equipment including sprinklers and specialized foam to protect homes and cabins.

This was the largest firefighting force ever dedicated to a wildfire response in the NWT and the most money ever spent fighting fires in the NWT. We fully used every possible resource

available, and no one in the fire program let the territories burn.

We also communicated about fires more than ever before. There were 773 fire posts on this site, the fire website, from May until September, and updated daily on all fires and several times a day on major fires. The audience on NWT Fire grew from just over 8,000 followers to 20,000 today. Engagement increased ten-fold and messages reached every user online. ECC communicators gave well over 450 interviews in northern and southern media to ensure evacuees between July 15th and September 15th were informed about wildfire threats and status. I personally gave over 50 interviews, Mr. Speaker.

We further made an unprecedented investment in paid advertising across all media - from social to print to radio - meaning FireSmart and wildfire prevention messaging reached thousands of Northerners regularly throughout the wildfire season. The EMO provided updates to the public safety pages, issued public alerts via NWT Alert, held regular press conferences with the media to inform the public and provide a daily executive situational report on daily EMO activities, to provide only a small amount of the work these people did over the course of multiple months this summer.

Mr. Speaker, when wildfires threaten our communities, we quickly mobilized the GNWT's well-established emergency management system coordinated by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. These efforts are led by the Emergency Management Organization, or EMO, and a team of emergency management officials who are trained and dedicated to supporting an emergency response. They worked closely with wildfire officials, communities, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous organizations to provide coordinated response at a community, regional, and territorial level making decisions from there.

Mr. Speaker, the impact on people's lives and the loss of homes, cabins, and other important values in place like Enterprise, K'atlodeeche First Nation, Hay River, and Behchoko is heartbreaking, and we send our deepest condolences to all those who were impacted by these fires. As we work to help people rebuild and recover, we must also recognize how much worse things could have been if not for the tireless efforts of the brave firefighters, wildfire experts, and fire managers.

Thousands of homes and hundreds of cabins were saved. Countless pieces of infrastructure. There are multiple communities which could have been subject to similar fate without those

efforts. It can be easy to look back and focus in on one fire and decide what should have been done, but it's important to look at the broader context.

For example, on June 28th there was multiple new wildfires starting in the North Slave region. The region was already initially attacking four fires close to values at risk including a fire located 2 kilometres from Wekweeti which resulted in the evacuation of the community. ZF015 was surrounded by a burn from 2014 with no fire values at risk in close proximity and was 50 kilometres away from Behchoko.

Usually young forests and previously burnt areas are barriers to spread. Fire personnel are constantly reassessing and prioritizing action plans on the fire environment over large areas. A wildfire management team actively responded to this fire as conditions allowed. This response included the use of multiple aircraft including air tankers and helicopters to attack the fire, ground suppression by multiple crews, and a number of ignition operations to prevent fire growth towards Behchoko. This response was overseen by an incident management team that included experts, an experienced and well-trained overhead team, wildfire experts, ignition experts, a structural protection specialist, and over 100 firefighters.

On that note, I would like to thank the many people and the organizations that stepped up to help protect communities across the NWT. I would like to recognize the NWT's fire management team that included dedicated and experienced firefighters, wildfire experts, technology and communication specialists, and a wide range of other supports and overhead staff.

This summer we had 34 fire crews of NWT residents, including 22 contracted from Indigenous businesses, and many extra firefighters. Buffalo Airway was a key partner in operating our air tanker fleet, and multiple aircraft companies, including Great Slave Helicopters and Acasta Heliflight, provided aircraft support to allow our fire personnel to do their work.

As this historical season progressed, a number of wildfire experts who had retired from the ECC came back to share their knowledge and experience to assist with fire operations.

I would also like to thank the many heavy equipment operators, contractors, camp workers, and others. There are too many to be named individually but I am very grateful for your contributions. I would like to thank the many individuals, companies, groups, communities, Indigenous governments and

Indigenous organizations and agencies, that played critical roles in responding to wildfires threatening our communities, critical infrastructure, and other values at risk.

We are grateful for the support provided by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, which coordinated in the sharing of resources between jurisdictions. Through this partnership, we received help from firefighters from Alberta, BC, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Alaska, Washington State, New Zealand and South Africa.

At the community and territorial level, the Territorial Emergency Management Organization and regional EMO's were key in our response to this historic wildfire season. I would like to extend my gratitude to communities and Indigenous governments who played key roles in local emergency management efforts. Local fire departments from multiple NWT communities stayed to help protect their community, and many local and territorial businesses provided invaluable support. Specialized wildfire and structural firefighting companies also came from outside the NWT to help.

At the federal level, we appreciate the continued support of Natural Resources Canada and the Canadian Forest Service, key partners in our work year after year. The Canadian Armed Forces stepped up to help provide Type 3 firefighters to help with mopping up the fires, freeing up our home-grown Type 1 firefighters to focus on initial attack on high priority fires.

Mr. Speaker, without these collaborative efforts to protect our communities and residents, the NWT would be in a much more dire situation today. I hope that all Members of this House appreciate this effort and want to join me in thanking them all.

Mr. Speaker, I have listed the team, and I would like to have them deemed as read for this record.

- Aaron Campbell
- Adam Yeadon
- Adele Naendzo
- Aidan Blake
- Aiden Kotchea
- Albert Elleze
- Alec Bertrand
- Alex Skinner
- ALEXI TAUREAU
- Alexis McLeod
- Alfred Antoine
- Alfred Nande
- Alicia Hancock
- Alyssa Ross
- Amanda Minoza
- Amber Gale
- Amy Gummesen
- Andrew Martin
- Angel Kondike
- Angel Simon
- Angus Smith
- Anthony Ekenale
- Arthur Nande
- Atanda Kotchea
- Bernice Bertrand
- Bertha Gargan
- Betty-Lynn Jumbo
- Beverly Bouvier
- Billy Lesage
- Brad Lafferty
- Bradley Kelly
- Bradley McArthur
- Brandon Norwegian
- Brendan Tsetso
- Brent Squirrel
- Brent Starling
- Brett Elkin
- Brian Martineau
- Briana Kotchea
- Brittany Payou
- Brock Sabourin

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Desjarlais | <input type="checkbox"/> Claudio Ardilles |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Winnie Namugerwa | <input type="checkbox"/> Jason McNeill |

Mr. Speaker, besides the communities I have many individuals, organizations, and governments to thank. The work to undertake and support 12 community evacuations throughout this spring, summer, and fall was truly a team effort. It would not have been possible without our partners who either formerly participated on the territorial or regional emergency management organization or supported their work.

My thanks to Northland Utilities, the Northwest Territories Power Corp, NorthwesTel, United Way NWT, Canada Task Force 2, the Government of Alberta, BC, Manitoba, and Yukon, the Ministers from across Canada that did reach out to offer support and the NWT Emergency Management Organization.

At the federal level, my thanks to Environment and Climate Change Canada, Public Safety Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Coast Guard, the Canadian Armed Forces, Joint Task Force North, and Minister Blair, Minister Wilkinson, Minister Guilbeault, and Minister Sajjan.

Thank you all, thanks to all GNWT departments and agencies for your significant contribution.

Last but not least, a tremendous thank you to the staff at Municipal and Community Affairs. The GNWT used an Incident Management Team, or IMT, to do the evacuation, provide evacuation supports, and repatriate residents. In total, the IMT had 79 GNWT employees on it. 37, or almost half were MACA employees. In addition, there were other MACA employees who supported the IMT work.

Mr. Speaker, I have a list of the team, and I would like to have them deemed as read for the record.

- Alicia Korol
- Alison Brown
- Angela Littlefair
- Arshad Khalafzai
- Ashley Gillis
- Barb Watson
- Beverly Pilgrim
- Bobby Bourque
- Braden Redshaw
- Carolyn Ridgley
- Charles Poon
- Chris Hewitt
- Christina Gaudet
- Colin MacPherson
- Craig Halifax
- Damon Crossman
- Dana Moran
- Daniel Drimes
- Donna Woodland
- Eileen Gour
- Emily Collier
- Emily King
- Gavin Olvera
- Gwen Robak
- Ian Legaree
- Ivan Russell

- Jay Boast
- Jean Soucy
- Jeff Brockway
- Jennifer Young
- Joe Acorn
- Justin Hazenberg
- Kavitha Balaji
- Kevin Menicoche
- Leonardo Conde Fernandez
- Lorie Fyfe
- Lynn Huang
- Melinda Lenoir
- Michelle Pond
- Mike Drake
- Nadira Begg
- Olivia Lee
- Ryan Semak
- Sonya Saunders
- Tara Naugler

Now on to my thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Grace Berikoff for her support to my career as a MLA. Grace is my spouse, my partner, my best friend, and one of the biggest supporters in front of and behind closed doors. She's also been responsible for looking after our home and our four fur babies - Bailey, Bandit, Blossom and Daisy - as I do my job. She goes above and beyond to share the load of life's struggles and disappointments so I can focus on the Nahendeh residents and their issues. She makes time and space to be a sounding board and hear my ideas.

As for my children, they've always been and always will be huge supporters of mine, whether it is my decision to run for public office or looking for other career pathing. I can say that they are huge supporters of mine. Like Grace, we discuss various topics, whether it is world, political, sports, or family issues, but it is done with open mind and shared respect. Like a constituent once said to me, Children are there to be loved and supported even if they want to go a different direction than you wanted them to go. I think that's the same for them when it comes to me. I want to say thank you

for the support and supporting me through these eight years.

To the residents of the Nahendeh, thank you for putting your faith in me for two terms. It has been a great honour to represent you but, most importantly, for opening your homes and your lives for me during these eight years.

Thank you to my team. As we come close to the end of the 19th Assembly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Geoff, Krista, Kim, Deb, Allyson, and Ashley, for making these four years go smoother considering everything we had to dealt with. I greatly appreciate that we were able to support one another and pitched in where we needed to get the work done. I know you sacrificed your personal and family time for the sake of the job and have proven to me that there is no "I" in "Team."

Mr. Speaker, it is said that a team is only as strong as its weakest link but with these folks, we had an amazingly strong team. Because of their unrelenting hard work, we had become a streamlined unit. I want to say thank you to every single one of them for making all our achievements over the past years possible.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a very challenging four years for the 19th Legislative Assembly with COVID, floods, wildfires, evacuation, and our day-to-day business that we needed to do. I want to express my sincere gratitude for all your hard work during these four years. I bet when you campaigned for this job, you were not thinking it was going to be like this. However in saying this, we were very fortunate to have you all here for the residents of the NWT. Your hard work, generosity, and thoughtfulness have truly made a positive difference for the people of the NWT. I know that we did not always agree on the direction we needed to go but that is healthy for the development of the NWT. We need people with different opinions and ideas to move forward. If you come from places of kindness, compassion, and thoughtfulness, we're doing the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that I witnessed numerous colleagues go above and beyond to help improve bills, budgets, regulations, and the day-to-day life of NWT residents. For those colleagues, I will always remember their hard work and contributions that they made. Just remember, you were able to make a difference for somebody's life. This person will be able to have the opportunity to pay it forward and make a difference in somebody else's life. Mr. Speaker, I wish everyone all the best on whatever adventure takes them in the years to come.

After being elected in the 19th Assembly, my colleagues gave me the honour to be elected to Cabinet, and the Premier had the trust and faith in me to hold several portfolios during these four years. I was very fortunate to work with outstanding deputy ministers - Sylvia Haener (Lands), Jamie Koe (Lands), Joe Dragon (ENR), Pam Strand (ITI), Debbie Molloy (WSCC), Dr. Erin Kelly (ECC and ENR) and Laura Gareau (MACA). And all the department staff at headquarters and regional offices.

Mr. Speaker, it always been said that the Ministers get all the praise and the staff do all the hard work. Well, that's not fair. GNWT staff are the reason we achieve everything that we do. GNWT staff unselfishly work together to get results, and I want to thank you sincerely. I'm flattered and honoured to be the Minister of such staff. I wish I had the time to personally thank every staff person here today that I met and had discussions with. Unfortunately, I do not. I know this is not the same as in person, but I want to say that we have amazing people that work for the residents of the NWT. All I can say is thank you, thank you, and thank you for your service.

In reflecting back, I can say that it has been a very interesting 19th Legislative Assembly with COVID, the 2021 floods and the 2022 floods, and this past fire season which saw us evacuate 12 communities, with K'atlodeeche First Nation and Hay River being evacuated twice. We had some difficult decisions to make but we made them. Sometimes they were not popular decisions, but they were the right decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I was very fortunate to work with very dedicated, hardworking, and generous chiefs, mayors, councils, staff, and volunteers during these emergencies. I can tell you that none of those people signed up for these disasters, but their leadership throughout these times was greatly appreciated. They choose to serve their residents, and this is the most noble cause there is. Helping your fellow neighbours to both prepare for disasters and navigate the recovery when the skies clear. On top of this great leadership and work, we are very fortunate to have amazing private businesses help to protect their communities. The tireless hours they put in and the use of their equipment was greatly appreciated by all. From the bottom of my heart, I say thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank four of our colleagues who have decided that they will not be running for the next Assembly.

The Premier. I had the pleasure of being elected with her in the 18th Assembly. As we got to know one another, I came to realize that

she was a very hard worker, a caring person, and would be willing to chat with you on any topic. As a Minister, she always had an open-door policy. She wanted to work with the Regular MLAs. I felt she wanted to get things completed and help the residents of the Northwest Territories. I can tell you her passion was the housing portfolio, and she was very proud of the housing work that was completed during her time there. In the 19th Assembly, I had the pleasure of being part of her Cabinet. She had a unique way of doing things that changed things up a bit. She developed a team and encouraged us to have open and frank conversations. As well, she believed in true consensus and working with AOC. It was a bit more work but very helpful in how we did our business. She worked to get money into the NWT, and it didn't matter if it was Indigenous government or the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, she had one rule and that was no surprises. She wanted to know what was going on so she could be prepared. I can tell you that I called her or e-mailed her late in the evening more than once, and she was always there to answer the call. I would like to thank her for her leadership and the leadership she showed during these four challenging years and wish her all the best in her next adventure.

Minister Green. Like the Premier and I, Minister Green was elected in the 18th Assembly. I had the pleasure of working with her on the social development committee where she had the honour of being elected as the deputy chair. As we worked together, we had some very good conversations and road trips during those four years. I still remember her being able to knit regardless of the road conditions or flights. As well, she always had boxes of knitting that she asked us to take back to our constituents. Those boxes were not small, but our residents truly enjoyed receiving them. During this Assembly I got to work with her as part of the child and family committee of Cabinet and on FMB and Cabinet. Like the 18th Assembly, she was prepared and knew her files. Like me, we had some interesting times with Indigenous Service Canada Minister but, as she said, it is about the residents of the NWT and we need to continue to work hard for them. I would like to wish her and her family all the best in her next adventure.

Mr. Speaker, Rylund Johnson. I had the pleasure meeting MLA Johnson for the first time at MLA orientation. He was always promoting the importance of transparency and being open as he could with me. It started out with him telling me the public who he was going to vote for, whether it was the Premier or Ministers. And I appreciate that about him. As I had the opportunity to work with him on various issues,

he was still true to his way of doing business. He would ask why certain things could not be shared publicly. Approximately, six months into the 19th Assembly he came into my office with a small package. It was a small painting from a local artist. The painting was called A Road to Fort Simpson. He told me that he bought it and realized it was more appropriate if I had it, so he gave it to me. If you look at his constituency promotion items, it was often items made by local artists or businesses. This was Rylund.

Another aspect I enjoyed was his ability to make some of his Member statements or his replies be a bit more entertaining. He would always add a bit of his humour, and it seemed to go over well with our colleagues. I know he is going to enjoy his next adventure and do a good job at that too. I wish him all the best.

This is going to be the hard one. Kevin O'Reilly. I had the pleasure of sitting next to Kevin and working with him during the 18th Assembly. Somebody once asked me to describe him and after thinking about it for a few minutes, the following words came to my mind: One of the hardest working individuals I knew. He was very passionate about the work he does and is not shy about sharing his point of view. Sometimes he was the only person who would stand up to vote for or against a topic. He worked hard for the residents of the NWT. Does this mean that we always agreed? Heck no. There were times where we agreed to disagree and move forward. During the 18th Assembly, Kevin came to me and told me that he was going to do a Member's statement on a certain project in the Nahendeh region and asked if it was alright with me. I told him it was his Member's statement and I didn't want to stop him from doing it. However, I did tell him, three days later, I was going to do an opposing Member's statement on the same project. That was our relationship. I would describe MLA O'Reilly as a good friend, Somebody that you could reach out to and chat with anytime. He's always there for you.

To the four of you, all the best in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the next four years. The next part of this speech is going to be about what I believe the next Assembly needs to focus on.

First things. We need to realize if we don't fix -- we can't fix everything in the next four years. You are not going to change the world in the next four years, but you need a good start to better the life of NWT residents.

Government Renewal. With all the programs identified, the works needs to be finished in the 16 months of the next government. There is a huge number of unfunded positions within departments, and we need to see if those

positions are needed. If they are, they need to be added to the budget. If not, they need to be removed.

In regards to municipal and community affairs, as I stated in my Minister's statement, municipal and community affairs needs to conduct an after-action review using external contractors. The after-action review will be extensive and will involve the public and all partners. However, the GNWT needs an updated NWT emergency plan that enhances GNWT and community government training, increased capacity for emergency response, and evacuations across all NWT communities. Organizational changes are needed but at a minimum, we need to build the regional capacity by five additional regional staff and three headquarter staff to deal with the recovery of these disasters.

Designate Authorities. There are nine designate authorities in the NWT. A designate authority refers to a community that is within the jurisdiction of the federal government's Indian Act whereas other municipal governments in the Northwest Territories are created under territorial legislation, such as the Charter Act, Hamlet Act or the Cities, Towns, and Villages Act.

Territorial legislation allows for boundary identification and provides the municipal governments with a range of powers as set out in legislation. The Indian Act does not contain the same powers as territorial legislation, and the authority to identify a set boundary is not identified in the federal legislation.

All designate authorities are approximately 95 percent Indigenous, but they are not treated the same as reserves in Canada or the NWT. The GNWT needs to work with Indigenous Service Canada to treat these communities properly and provide them with increased funding and land.

ECC. With a record-setting fire season, I spoke to several elders from the Nahendeh region and we discussed things that need to be looked at. We spoke about combining a combination of firebreaks and prescribed burns around communities. We spoke about working with private business to cut the big trees for telephone poles, fence posts, and cabins and sheds, and use the smaller ones for firewood. A prescribed burn of the leftover would build bigger firebreaks. As an elder explained to me, this was done previously to protect communities or assets. As well, they need to look bringing fire crews and aircraft in earlier and keeping them later.

The IGC process. The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to advance

land and natural resource legislative initiatives throughout implementation of the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol.

The protocol and associated process convention are new to this Assembly and while there is always room for improvement, I feel that it is important to note the value of collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations and other partners on land and natural resource legislation. I look forward to seeing this important work continue in the next Assembly.

Project Finance for Permanence. Mr. Speaker the Indigenous-led Project Finance for Permanence, an initiative that seeks to bring together many funders to contribute to long-term conservation in the Northwest Territories while supporting healthy cultural, economic, and communities. This initiative should bring millions of dollars of long-term investment to the Northwest Territories. Parties to the NWT Project Finance for Permanence group include Indigenous and territorial, and federal governments, as well as private donors. The parties have reached a draft framework that is being considered for approval by the GNWT, Indigenous governments and Canada. The funding model, which supports Indigenous leadership in conservation and shared decision-making, would support the GNWT's Healthy Land Healthy People conservation work plan and provide sustainable economic and community development in the NWT. This work needs to be continued in the 20th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as you heard from Minister Green of her vision for NWTHSSA, I would encourage the GNWT to look at realigning the Department of Health and Social Services and the NWTHSSA. We need to look at how this structure is operating. The rationale was it was going to streamline the process and reduce operating costs. When NWTHSSA was created, it started with a deficit and continues to see their deficit increase. The reality is NWTHSSA is so busy with patient care that areas such as child protection does not get the attention it needs. I encourage the next Assembly to consider a department of health that focuses on providing health services and medical travel.

Speaking about medical travel, we need to work with Indigenous Services Canada to fix the shortfall that we are receiving for our Indigenous population. ISC only provides a small amount of reimbursement of the total costs. Canada needs to step up its support for Indigenous people in the NWT. For example, they don't supply certain things like dental and

medical support for smaller communities. This needs to be addressed once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, another part of medical services is medivacs. We need to see an increase in service. Waiting for five to seven hours for a flight is not appropriate. We need to add an additional plane or, even better, work with regional airlines to provide this service so they can get patients to at least the regional health centre so they can get better support until we can get them to Yellowknife or Edmonton. This is about the people's lives.

The second part of the department I would also encourage the next Assembly to consider is a department of social services that would see a realignment of services - child and family workers, adoption and foster care, income support, and other senior programs like fuel subsidies. The common denominator is poverty and by combining the supports that address poverty, you will help ensure families have better access to supports necessary to help their families prosper.

Infrastructure. The next Assembly needs to focus its efforts and budget on one major project. I think this needs to be the Mackenzie Valley Highway and have it constructed all the way to Tsiigehtchic, not stop in Norman Wells. This needs to include a bridge at Fort Simpson Liard River. There are many factors that makes this the perfect project. It helps with Canada's sovereignty in the North, connecting isolated communities (all-season access routes), economic diversification, increases tourism, small business potential, and promoting further development and exploration of the natural resource in the region.

In regards to education, Minister Simpson did a great job with part 1, but we need to get part 2 done. Education is an important part of our future and we need to have that completed.

Housing. This Assembly, we saw an improvement from the previous government. On top of the GNWT getting funding, we saw Indigenous governments get funding to build housing units. This needs to continue and should be a priority for the next government.

These are some of the ideas I have thought about for the past year. In closing, I would like to thank everybody and wish everybody the best.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. 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 Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 1028-19(2):
2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT DIRECTOR OF
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 1029-19(2):
REPORT ON NWT MEDICAL TRAVEL
SERVICES: 2021-2022 AND 2022-2023

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: 2022-2023 Annual Report Director of Child and Family Services and Report on NWT Medical Travel Services: 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 1030-19(2):
PRIORITIES FOR CRITICAL MINERALS IN
THE NWT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Priorities for Critical Minerals in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 1031-19(2):
OPERATING PLANS FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EDUCATION
BODIES FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL
YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2024

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Operating Plans for the Northwest Territories Education Bodies for the 2023-2024 School Year Ending June 30th, 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

TABLED DOCUMENT 1032-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTIONS 1592-19(2): HOUSING 1600-
19(2): HOUSING

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Follow-up Letter for Oral Questions 1593-19(2): Housing and 1600-19(2): Housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 1033-19(2):
2022-23 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
EQUAL PAY COMMISSIONER ANNUAL
REPORT 2022-23

TABLED DOCUMENT 1034-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY
COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT 2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 1035-19(2):
SCHEDULE C AMENDMENT
REGULATIONS, 2023

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents.

Colleagues, pursuant to section 40.23(2) of the Public Service Act, I wish to table the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Equal Pay Commissioner for the Northwest Territories. Also, pursuant to section 99 of the Legislative and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly for 2022. Finally, pursuant to section 21(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act Schedule C Amendment Regulations, 2023.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, 75, and 80, Committee Report 52, 53, and 75-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19 (2), Tabled Document 681, 973, and 974-19(2).

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 record. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to deal with Bill 80, Tabled Document 973-19(2), Tabled Document 974-19(2), Committee Report 52-19(2), and Committee Report 75-19(2). Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

we'll take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): I call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Professions Statutes Amendment Act. I will ask the sponsoring Member of the bill to provide opening remarks. MLA for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Professions Statute Amendment Act 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; to regulate the practice of dental hygienists; designate the profession of dental hygienists as a profession; transfer the regulation of dental hygienists from Dental Auxiliaries Act to the Health and Social Services Professions Act, and replace gender-specific language with gender-neutral language from Dental Auxiliaries Act. Our oral health has a significant impact on our overall health. Today, almost half of the world's population suffer from oral diseases and global cases of oral disease have increased by one billion over the last 30 years. The most common oral diseases are tooth decay, severe gum disease, tooth loss, and oral cancers. Poor oral systemic health also directly increases risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, periodontal disease, and highrisk pregnancies.

Every one of these jeopardizes a person's quality of life, may shorten their life, and is a significant financial cost to this government. The operations budget for the Department of Health and Social Services of the Northwest Territories is over half a billion dollars, and the cost of health care is not going down. In fact, our expectations on our health department continue to grow and the associated budget is not keeping the pace. Changes to prevention have the potential to have long-term cumulated impacts on the government's bottom line and the quality of life of Northerners.

Here in Yellowknife, residents have access to dental hygienists depending on financial resources and benefits the individual has. But in 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 and the funding contract that potentially bring oral

health care to their community come from different funding or benefit pots. And given the current legislation, it makes it hard for contracts to be tendered solely for prevention.

Today, the Dental Auxiliaries Act stipulates that no dental hygienist shall practice dental hygiene except under the direct -- the direction and control of a dentist. In our last session -- or a few sessions ago now -- sorry, Mr. Chair, the health and social services response to Oral Question 1435-19(2) stated, quote, Access to dental services for Indigenous residents eligible for the non-insured health benefits program is funded by Indigenous Services Canada through a contribution agreement with the department.

The department, on behalf of ISC, enters contracts to pay for the travel costs of 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, end quote.

In reality, how services are delivered on the ground across our territory differs and how they are intended. Yes, there are contracts for dental providers to travel to northern communities but on the ground, this means outside of Yellowknife. Dental providers offer dental services in short blocks of time where 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. But this means prevention is routinely pushed back or simply does not happen, and the next visit is more teeth being pulled and perpetuates a cycle where preventative care consistently sits on the back burner.

Separating dental providers to allow the option of dental hygienists to work independent of a dentist is key to empowering dental hygienists to secure their own contracts should they choose, provides Indigenous governments with a mechanism to hire dental hygienists and, in turn, provide more equitable access to preventative oral health care across the NWT.

Mr. Chair, earlier this year, the Standing Committee on Government Operations travelled with Bill 85, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act. A resident of a small remote community asked committee if passing Bill 85 would help their community access equitable health care, specifically dental care, because a dentist has not visited their community since before COVID, and the only dental care seen in the community is through

medivacs for oral abscess. Bill 80 will help to create this path.

Today, all Canadian jurisdictions, except the three territories and PEI, have legislation to support dental hygienists to be autonomous and self-regulated to varying levels, even those working in remote regions of northern Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador and northern British Columbia.

It is also worth noting, Mr. Chair, that this is also a decentralization and economic diversification conversation given the employment opportunities this will potentially create outside of Yellowknife.

As outlined in my Member's statement today, I believe that expanding the scope of practice of some of our health care professionals will help alleviate some of the bottleneck on the entire health care system. This facilitates one of those pieces.

During review of this bill, the Standing Committee on Social Development received concerns from a stakeholder about the timing associated with the bill. I was happy to collaborate with committee and concur with two motions to expand the timeline of the bill to a deadline proposed by committee. But there are reasons I also believe that having a deadline for this work is important, Mr. Chair. I want to start by acknowledging the significant demand on the Department of Health and Social Services over the course of this Assembly. From the demand during the pandemic and subsequent territorial emergencies to the substantial legislative agenda that still lays in front of this department. But the oral health action plan tabled in the last Assembly outlined multiple timelines for deliverables that came and went in the 19th Assembly. Even with the MLA for Deh Cho, MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes, and myself championing on the floor, calls for improved regulatory frameworks and improved access to oral health care starting in February of 2020, paired with my ongoing conversations about a Private Member's bill, this work still did not happen.

Health care is a high demand, yet evolving system, and the demands on renewal will continue long past the 19th Assembly. In the past, other GNWT departments experiencing significant demand on employee time and legislative or regulatory needs have tendered contracts for legislative and regulatory drafting to continue to meet its mandate. This is an alternative that health may need to consider to get this work done.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to take the time to thank Mr. Toby Kruger, law clerk, for working with me on

this bill. I would also like to thank committee for the work they did reviewing my Private Member's bill, the input from stakeholders, including Nigel Lenny, and share my gratitude with my colleagues for their support in this important work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA Kam Lake. I will now turn to the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that reviewed the bill for any opening comments on Bill 80. MLA for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Profession Statutes Amendment Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on March 30th, 2023, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. The standing committee held a public hearing in Yellowknife on May 12th, 2023. Committee heard from two stakeholders at the meeting -- at the hearing and received two written submissions on the bill. Bill 80 will designate dental hygienists as their own profession and provide dental hygienists with the option to work independently of a dentist.

Committee recognizes the state of oral health care in the NWT, that dental services are so limited that many residents go months, even years, before they can receive dental care. For many residents, there is no other option but to wait with decaying teeth and in physical pain until services are available locally. Because of the limited access to oral health care in communities, committee heard that this has resulted in dentures being made for children as young as 12 years old.

For those who can afford it, residents resort to paying for their own travel expenses to go to Yellowknife, or further south, to receive dental work. This is not an acceptable solution when dental hygienists could be empowered to work independently. Committee heard from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation the benefits of enacting Bill 80, specifically that it will potentially allow for greater access to federal funding. It would allow the IRC to bring services into communities faster. It would enhance the quality of life in the region. The IRC recognized the relationship between oral health and mental health, with those having access to oral health having greater self-esteem and self-confidence.

While committee endeavoured to negotiate a date for implementation of the bill, committee could not find agreement with the department.

On August 3rd, 2023, committee held a clause-by-clause review of the bill with the

sponsoring Member and moved two motions to amend the dates for implementing the regulation of dental hygienists. Committee recognizes the challenges the department has identified to adhere to the timeline as proposed in the bill. Committee heard the challenges from the department regarding self-regulation but committee also heard there are options, and the NWT would not need to create its own association. Committee wants the department to move faster, to see concrete action to improve oral health for residents in the NWT and not wait until the end of the 20th Assembly to do so.

I would like to thank the stakeholders who engaged with the bill with committee. And individual Members may have additional comments or questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA Great Slave. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 80. MLA for Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this bill, I believe, is very important. The reason why I think it's very important is there's probably not many of you that sat in a room with a child waking up, post-anesthetic, after oral surgery. In my first career coming out of the nursing program, being a frontline nurse on the floor, that was one of my duties, was to -- when we had dental day, was we would try to get as many kids through the operating room as possible to deal with the teeth that are rotting in their head. You know, these are two-year-olds, and sometimes they're back again when they're eight years old for the same procedures on the remaining teeth. There are so many children that are going through oral surgery -- unnecessary oral surgery because of a lack of services in our small communities and our regional centers. And people that are developing these laws and these -- you know, and making sure that this is being done don't live in those communities. So they don't see it. And that is why I feel that they -- we can't wait any longer. We can't wait -- you know, we as a committee, we compromised. We wanted it done now. We want this done now. We wanted it down this Assembly. So we're compromising with, you know, waiting two to three more -- like, another two years. I think that's in the bill, is what we compromised. You know, and I think any one of us on this side of the House if it was said you want to put this in the operating budget to get more money so that we -- so health could get this done, we would say get it done, because it's going to save us money in the long run. It's going to save us from the medical travel that we hear about so much. All these children flying in and then having to go through surgery. Surgery is dangerous. It's not normal. But we've

normalized in the territories. This is not okay. This is not acceptable. And we need to do better. And we need to do better for our children. And so that's why I am fully supporting this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes. Are there any other general comments? MLA for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker -- or sorry, Mr. Chair. Maybe next go around.

Mr. Speaker, I'm quite frustrated with this entire process and how this has gone. You know, the decisions and reasons that were given to me, or to us as a committee from the department and the Minister regarding why this could not go ahead as of now or even in the two years that we've compromised on, they don't wash with me. Some of these things are things that -- such as well, no dental hygienist brought this forward. Well, they're busy. They're working. Everybody's trying to get into dental appointments. So just because they didn't come and initiate this program does not mean they did not show interest. And every single one of them told us this would be a great thing. I had a dental cleaning in the meantime while this bill was going on and my hygienist told me she used to work independently in the south and didn't understand why she wasn't able to do so here in the North. Another reason we were given was that the -- there needed to be time to do culturally-appropriate standard operating procedures and protocols. However, standard operating procedures for this type of work are available across Canada, and that includes in the other two territories, I'm sure. So to me, it would have just been a matter of taking things that already exist and adapting them for our territory. To put it off as waiting for it to be done culture -- in a culturally-appropriate manner when all it is doing is impacting Indigenous children is quite laughable, actually, to me. When I look at that as a reason, we're going in the meantime sacrifice the confidence and the self-esteem of Indigenous children. I've seen children in this House, pages come in, who smile like you wouldn't believe at me until the camera comes out. And when it's time to take the picture, the teeth go away because they don't want people to see their teeth being recorded looking that the way that they are. I noticed that, because I tried to take a picture a couple times with a young page who I knew his family and he wouldn't smile the way he'd smiled the whole week before. I've had braces. I've had numerous fillings. I have teeth that are not great. I can thank my dad for that. And I can tell you that it has impacted me as a person my entire life, to have had teeth that didn't feel like everybody else's and were not the same. And I am lucky because I had parents that had

benefits. I had orthodontics. I had cleanings. I had everything. So how do you have that when you have poor health already, because you're living below the poverty line given that everything seems to be here in Yellowknife, including dental services, so now you have all of these issues that lead to medical issues. Like my colleague said, surgeries that are unnecessary, other things that can be determined by dental hygienists. I currently am waiting on something to be investigated from my -- that my dentist has identified. And now I'm in the bog down of health and social services waiting to get that looked at. So if I'm a person who can advocate for myself, I'm a white, professional woman, an MLA in the territory's capital and I find our services lacking, what does that look like in communities? And, you know -- and it comes back to the same thing as mental health. When we're continuously triaging things because we're so far behind, we will never get to the chronic cases. We will never get to the backlog because we are constantly just fighting to stay ahead of the game of where we're at. And that means, like my colleague said, everybody that's an emergency will get what they need -- then they're not even getting what they need. I shouldn't even say that. But the people in emergency will get prioritized, and the other people will not, and their issues will escalate. And when I look at this, this could have been an opportunity for this to have been quite creative because this could go out to engagement with the other professions Acts that are on the table for the next Assembly. There are ones that this department will be going out to do engagement on. So how hard is it, Mr. Chair, to add one more on to that where everybody agrees that it needs to be done? They could have just brought it along in the next one, but instead we actually not only did not have a compromise, we have something that is being actually rolled back even further by a Member that isn't even going to be sitting here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA for Great Slave. MLA for YK Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Chair, I'm here as the Minister of health to discuss this Private Member's Bill, Bill 80, the Dental Hygienist Profession Statute Amendment Act. I would like to thank the Member for Kam Lake and the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes for their efforts to advance a modern regulatory framework for dental hygienists. I'd also like to thank the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Development for the time they have taken to hear the department's concerns with the approach taken to this bill, and specifically the time it will take to create new profession-specific regulations for dental

hygienists under the umbrella Health and Social Services Professions Act.

The department recognizes that there is a significant gap in the provision of preventative dental services in our communities and agrees that expanding the scope of dental hygienists is one potential solution. We also acknowledge that the current regulatory framework for dental hygienists is outdated and unnecessarily restricts their scope of practice.

Mr. Chair, this bill will not fix this problem. Dental services are not part of the NWT health plan. In small Indigenous communities, dental services are funded by the non-insured health benefits program, which is, in turn, funded by Indigenous Services Canada. The fact is the federal government isn't allocating enough money to attract providers to travel to the small communities to offer services.

All the dental contracts we had expired on March 31st, 2023. And prior to that, we advertised for new regionally-based contracts. What we got out of that was two regions did not receive any bids. Two regions received a single bid however both proposals were noncompliant.

The department and myself, in particular, have been advocating for changes to the requirements of working with Indigenous Services Canada to determine next steps. But until the contracts are awarded, if and when, access to dental services outside of the home community is being assessed by Indigenous Services Canada on a case-by-case basis. We need our partners at the federal government to come to the table to understand the challenges that are preventing the delivery of these services. This includes reviewing rates offered to providers for services and working to improve communications on how residents who qualify can access services while they are not available in their home communities.

We agree that the regulatory framework for dental hygienists should be prioritized for modernization. However, we remain concerned about the legislated timing for completing the new profession specific regulations for dental hygienists. Pharmacists and midwives have both applied earlier than this bill arrived to be regulated, and those -- we are prioritizing those.

There are risks to missing the legislated deadline. If that were to happen, dental hygienists would not be regulated and without regulation, they probably could not obtain insurance. The department would prefer more time in order to manage this risk and looks forward to working with the NWT dental hygienists to update their practice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Minister of Health and Social Services. Are there any further comments? MLA for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I support this bill too because prior we used to have dental therapists and dental assistant workers in our communities working in our school with elementary to higher grades doing more of a preventative work. And it wasn't just only open for the school, but it was also open to the communities at large. You know, a lot of community members took advantage of it because they're -- they're there, they provided the services. And now when we look at it, the only people that benefit from dental services are children of GNWT workers or other workers with a good dental benefit plan. And others with no benefit, they're denied a lot of services. And this is where we see -- especially in small communities where we see a lot of young children with poor dental hygiene, and this has to stop. We got to do something to do more of a preventative work because those with a dental plan, the medical travel covers their expense. I am not too sure if NTHSS medical travel covers for those with no benefits. So I do support this bill because it will benefit a lot of small communities that cannot afford to fly into Yellowknife or to other larger regional centres with the dental services. So therefore I do support this program -- I mean I do support this bill. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA Monfwi. Are there any other general comments from committee? MLA Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, I support this bill as well. I guess it kind of brings back memories, I guess, to when I was a child and I had to go into the dentist's office and sit in the chair and, you know, and deal with the pain that came with it. And, you know, that's due to lack of oral dental health opportunities or -- that were available to us at that time. And, you know, and that memory never goes away. You know, and because of that, I made sure that my children didn't have to go through that. I made sure that their teeth and their dental was looked after and, you know, they got what they needed.

You know, it's unfortunate that, you know -- and that was many, many years ago. And now we're in 2023, and we're still talking about it. It's still happening in small communities where -- which are predominantly Indigenous. And, you know, we talk about -- the Minister talked about NIHB. Well, you know, that's got to be one of the -- you know, if we're -- when it comes to dental health, it's not great for Indigenous people. You know,

I endured it when -- you know, with -- you know, with not having oral health opportunities or being able to get that type of service. So now today, you know, like, a month ago, I went, and it cost me \$8,000 to -- you know, to get bridge work done. And, you know, if I would have probably had -- you know, been able to look after my teeth when I was younger and had services available, I probably wouldn't have to do that. But that's what happens when you're under NIHB. And it's unfortunate that's just the way it is. And we have to do something different. You know, and I understand that, you know, the federal government has a responsibility to Indigenous peoples but at the same time if they're not going to do anything, somebody has to do something has to do something. Somebody has to step up. You know, I'm tired -- I'm sick and tired of hearing that it's always somebody else's problem. As long as we're sitting here, it's our children, it's our problem. It's not somebody else's. So I support this bill, and I'm glad that the Member for Kam Lake brought it forward. And thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA Hay River South. Are there any -- MLA for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I want to thank the chair for recognizing me. I just want to make a couple comments.

Fort Smith is a regional centre, and we have no dentists or no dental anything there right now. The dentist that used to come has stopped coming since I think way before Christmas of last year. That's a large community and, you know, we have a lot going on there, and I'm very concerned about the dental services that we need in that community and have, you know, the absence of the oral health that is required and, you know -- and we have to also look at the whole issue of ways of life and people -- people who do -- or have substance abuse. The decay in their -- within their health system is -- it's just not there. They don't -- they have -- they don't -- they're not even covered to get their teeth fixed properly when something -- and they want to change their lifestyle. It's always there. And so, you know, dental health is probably one of the most important things that -- to make sure that a person is healthy and well. It not only affects Indigenous people. It affects everybody. You know, I have a big population in -- in the community of Thebacha and Fort Smith. And dental services are lacking, and we have no -- the chair is there. There's an office there but there's no dentist. And it's a major problem that we face for the community. And so with this, I'm going to be supporting the bill that has -- the Private Member's bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA for Thebacha. The MLA for YK North.

MR. JOHNSON: (audio).

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): The MLA for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I love Private Member's bills. I'm 50/50. I appreciate the comments from the Minister but sometimes if we don't have deadlines, things just don't get done. And I'm just going to leave it at that. I support the bill. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA for Frame Lake. MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank Caitlin Cleveland for putting this Private Member's bill forward. And I agree with my colleagues, the issue of dental hygienists in the communities are needed. And I come from small communities and, you know, it's welcome. This should have been done a long time ago. And, and -- so, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that I will be supporting this bill. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Are there any other general comments? Seeing none.

Is the committee agreed that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, we will defer the bill number and the title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 3 of the bill.

Clause 1, does committee agree? Minister of Health and Social Services. Pardon?

My apologies, committee. Does the sponsor wish to bring in witnesses?

MS. CLEVELAND: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the House.

MLA for Kam Lake, please introduce your witness.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right is Ms. Christina Duffy, legislative drafter.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Committee, we will defer the bill number and the title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 3 of the bill.

Clause 1, does the committee agree? Member for YK North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question for the witness. Clause 1 is the one that requires this Act to be effective December 1st, 2025. I heard a lot of talk about, you know, the importance of dental work, and the Minister agreed there's work to be done with Indigenous Service Canada. No one's disputing that. Can I just get the Member to speak a bit more how we landed on December 1st, 2025. The conversations she had with committee in accepting the committee's motion to amend this and then any conversations she had with the department about this date. I'm just kind of wanting to get a sense of who all agrees that December 1st, 2025, is the date that this needs to be done by. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, MLA YK North. MLA Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the original date was a lot more ambitious in the original bill that I had proposed and -- proposed to committee and originally tabled. I can only speak to my experience with committee. My experience with committee was -- when I met with committee during clause by clause, they had proposed to me a new date that was more realistic, and I agreed to work with committee and concurred with the dates. As far as committee's discussions with the department, that would have to come from the deputy chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA for YK North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you. This somewhat gets to the very confusing nature of Private Member's bills where, you know, it's your bill but the committee has it but it's actually above the department.

Can the Member just inform me whether she had any discussions with the department or the Minister about this date? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Yes, I have had numerous conversations. I will say that the Minister was

very open to having conversations throughout the life of her tenure as health Minister with both myself and the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes. It has been reiterated to both of us that this is an ambitious timeline, especially given the legislative backlog and the legislative agenda of the Department of Health and Social Services. That said, I do believe that this work is very important work. And some of the things that we've seen in other departments within the -- or sorry, within the Government of the Northwest Territories is where they've actually contracted out some of their legislative work.

In previous correspondence I've with the Department of Justice on previous contracts, of course all contracts are different, but, you know, sometimes this -- this is roughly a \$50,000 contract that is tenured, and they're able to get their product at the end of the day. And when I look at, you know, potentially waiting much longer than the timelines outlined in this bill, I have to weigh the -- at the end of the day, the cost, and my concern for the access to oral health care for residents outweighs my willingness to push the deadline back any farther. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA YK North.

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Member bringing this bill forward as well, and it was interesting to be the deputy chair on a Private Member's bill and get to learn that kind of aspect of it.

The Member did hear me say about the idea of being maybe innovative and adding this on to sort of the engagement or the piece that would be done for other professions. And I'm just wondering if she would speak to whether she thought that was actually possible given that she's much more procedurally minded than I am, and I often go to her to answer my procedure questions. I'd like to get her thought on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I believe what the MLA is referring to is the ability to do travel and engagement on multiple pieces of regulatory work or legislative work at the same time. I mean, we as far as committee have done that, where possible, have kind of travelled on multiple pieces of legislation. That being said, it would depend on

how the department chose to handle that work. If it was different staff that they had on it or at the end of the day if they chose themselves to contract that work out. And so as far as, you know, how things work in department land, I'd have to leave that to department to speak to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): MLA Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Has the Member had any -- and this is probably quite a high -- or wishful question. But does she have any idea how much not having this dental hygienist practice or this ability to have preventative care is really costing us as a territory? Was there any work done around characterizing or quantifying how much money are we spending to send people either to Yellowknife, to the south? Why, when we're waiting for things that are preventative to become emergent situations? We obviously are paying more for that. Does the Member have any feel for how much money we would save by having this? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in the early days of this work, when reaching out to the department and asking for dollar figures on this, I was advised right away that the dollar figures would not be substantive as to the entire cost of it because you're also paying for preventative -- when you're paying for preventative care, you're also preventing things like heart disease, like diabetes, and so the costs like that really can't be easily measured. One of the things that I will say, though, is that one thing you can't put a dollar figure on is people's quality of life and their mental health. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. MLA Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. Yeah, I would definitely quantify or qualify that as immeasurable, really, the effects that this could have on people in those -- in those regions. I had a question, but I don't remember it. So thank you, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate the Member for her work on this. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Clause 1, does committee agree? Minister of Health and Social Services.

COMMITTEE MOTION 512-19(2):
BILL 80, DENTAL HYGIENISTS
PROFESSION STATUTES AMENDMENT
ACT – AMEND CLAUSE ONE,
DEFEATED

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that Bill 80 be amended in subsection in

(a) in subclause 1(2), by striking out "December 1st, 2025" in proposed subsection 5(2) and substituting "August 1st, 2027"; and

(b) in subclause 1(3), by striking out "November 30th, 2025" in proposed subsection 67.1(1) and substituting "July 31st, 2027."

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): The motion is in order. To the motion. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The timing set out in Bill 80 now provides the department with just over two years to develop professional regulations. The department remains concerned that they may not be able to meet this deadline. The timing set out in the bill leaves little room for delays that are frequently encountered during the regulatory development. It does not reflect the challenges that the department anticipates when engaging the dental hygiene profession.

Dental hygienists in the NWT do not have a territorial association or organization representing the profession, nor has the department received any explicit indication from members of the dental hygiene profession regarding what changes they would like to see in the regulatory framework. This makes it difficult to know whom to engage in the development of the regulations, the content, and the estimated time required to draft them.

The current regulatory framework for dental hygienists is significantly outdated and silent on many of the elements found in modern professional regulatory frameworks, such as standards of practice, continuing competency requirements, and complaints considerations. We know significant work will be required to move the regulation of dental hygienists from the Dental Auxiliaries Act to the Health and Social Services Professions Act. This work cannot be done without thorough engagement with the profession.

While the department is committed to advancing these regulations as quickly as possible, these external variables pose risk that legislated timings for regulatory development will be missed. Missing these legislated timelines poses risks to both the dental hygiene profession and to the public as I mentioned in my opening remarks.

If Bill 80 came into force prior to finalizing with the regulations, there would be no legislation governing the regulation of dental hygienists in the NWT. During this gap, dental hygienists could not be licensed to practice in the NWT. This means that the public could not make a complaint about the professional's conduct and existing professional license would not be valid and no new licenses could be issued and non-licensed professionals could provide services without a license. It's also likely that professional insurance for dental hygienists practicing during this time would be difficult to obtain.

While this gap could be addressed through an amending bill in the next Assembly, such an approach would take away from the work to develop the regulations. For these reasons, I'm proposing that Bill 80 be amended to allow the department additional time, which they may or may not need, to 2027, to work with the dental hygiene profession to develop a comprehensive and modern regulatory framework for dental hygienists in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. To the motion. MLA Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just don't accept these reasons that are being provided as to why this date needs to be pushed back even further. There's no reason that this could not be done with a professional association somewhere else. We have seen that in numerous other professions where because we don't have the people or the bodies to populate our own, we often will use others. For example, NAPEG uses the board of examiners for engineers in Alberta because we can't maintain that here on our own. So I do think that there was -- there is a method and a way that this could have been done by using, say, Alberta's association or others.

The people that did come and present to us told us that this is not going to be anything that's going to be rocket science as far as development of standard operating procedures. They're very general across the board. They -- what works in the south works up here. Really, I think that this could be done and, really, the want to move to back to even further to be four years I think really just speaks to the will to ensure the well-being of people outside of the capital. I don't think the will is there. I think that oftentimes communities are suffering as a result of a focus and a narrow mindedness about what we can do and what really is, you know, within the latitudes of this Assembly. This sound like it's going to be like we're regulating the profession of medicine itself, four years to develop. No. This is a standard piece of work

that the government itself has already carved out exceptions for itself. The IRC's already got people working. So this has been done. There are people -- dental hygienists working in this manner already. But it seems like it's okay to make those exceptions for GNWT when they want to but when it comes time to do that for everybody else, that's no longer the case. The will and the want is not there.

And I find that, you know, it really does go against the true nature of the consensus government that we came to a compromise. We heard the concerns from the department. And yet we still now in the 11th hour are having amendments made to push this back even further, four years so kids can just get a cleaning. It's shameful, Mr. Chair. And I will not be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. To the motion. MLA Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I listened to what concerns the health Minister raised, and I think that they're very valid concerns. And I wanted to address some of them here before I move on.

I think one thing that is very valid in the Minister's concerns identifying that there is a small number of dental hygienists that live in the territory. And most of them live here in Yellowknife. They're serving Northerners. There's a very small number of them serving over half of the population of the Northwest Territories. And so I agree that it's not fair to put all of this on them to draft these regulations. They're very busy people. They're cleaning a lot of teeth right now, and I very much appreciate it and thank them for that. And that's why where I think that some of the conversation about bringing in some additional supports, both to support the work that would be required of the department in order to draft these regulations and also bringing in some additional supports from elsewhere in order to kind of gain some insight into some of the challenges of other jurisdictions.

I'm not a health care professional at all, Mr. Speaker. And so when I was working on this bill, I actually reached out to some other associations across Canada to help me learn about oral health care and about some of the challenges that have presented within legislation in other jurisdictions and in regulation in other jurisdictions, things they wished they did different and things that worked really well for them.

Yesterday I tabled these letters here in the House, and they were very supportive and helpful letters from three associations across

Canada. There was the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, the Ontario Dental Hygienists Association, and the British Columbia Dental Hygienists Association.

The president and executive director of the Ontario Hygienists Association shared a four-page letter of valuable suggestions about what to include in this work and concluded the letter with, quote, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions as you move forward, end quote. So very supportive and willing to help.

The executive director of the British Columbia Dental Hygienists Association wrote in a three-page letter stating, quote, over the years, BC dental therapists and certified dental assistants have reached out to the BCDHA for professional support. In recent months, BCDHA has expanded membership for dental therapists and has developed a pilot membership program for CDAs through the CDA Alliance. Thus, we speak not only for dental hygienists in BC, we also carry the voices of both dental therapists and dental assistants. We invite you to speak with us so that our parties can both connect and discuss our perspectives in greater detail. And so not only that, but an organization looking at supporting additional health care -- or oral health workers and also operating in licensing additional folks too and willing to help out and lend their experience.

Lastly, the chief executive officer of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association and a six-page letter of support and suggestions, including CDHA is very pleased to hear that you're working to improve access to preventative oral health care. Please do not hesitate to contact our director of dental hygiene practice if you require more information or guidance in your quest to draft a proposed amendment to the Dental Auxiliaries Act to broaden the scope of practice of dental hygienists in the Northwest Territories.

So while there's limited dental hygienists here in the territory, there's an abundance of need to improve access, Mr. Chair, and to do the work. And I think that the big key for me that I think shows that -- and while the Minister said that they support this work, but the thing that shows to me that I think they can get it done in this timeline is in the 2018-2019 to 2020-2021 oral health action plan, which is the two-year action plan, the objective to establish systemic supports for improved oral health services has the number activity, which is to -- which speaks to the regulatory environment. And the deliverable there is revised legislation regulations to support the oral health professional role by 2020-2021. And so to me,

health has already acknowledged that they can get this work done in this action plan. They weren't able to meet it for 2020-2021. We're now three years later. And so I believe in their original action plan and their original goal to do this work and believe that they will find the support out there to get it done. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. To the motion. MLA Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a question about the amendment, and I want to ask the law clerk.

I'm just -- the Minister said that the -- if this motion is not passed that dental hygienists would be completely unregulated. And I believe that the motion actually is to the first part of the bill, not the second part, which is where you would remove the Dental Auxiliaries Act application. But thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Member for Frame Lake, we can't entertain any questions while the motion is on the floor. To the motion. MLA Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: All right. So I don't know, Mr. Chair. I would like to get some clarification of this. But my reading -- and I'm only a lowly Regular MLA that doesn't have access to the law clerk right now. My reading of this is that it's the next part of the bill that actually would remove dental hygienists under the Dental Auxiliaries Act. And the Minister, in moving, the motion talked about how the profession would be completely unregulated if this amendment is not accepted. And I don't think that that's the case. So I think -- if there's something the Minister wants to do about the next clause, that might be the place where that is dealt with. But I don't -- my reading of this is that I don't think that this is the case. But I can't ask anybody about it. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. To the motion. MLA Yellowknife north.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't try to answer that. Maybe I will. I think what the Minister said is that if this bill is passed and the date is not met, then you are all of a sudden under a new Act requiring regulation but they don't have regulation, so then you're just in this no-man's-land. But anyway, it had nothing to do with the specific motion or my understanding the whole bill as a whole.

My only comment was going to be, you know the GNWT is full of action plans and commitments to finish regulatory work and then we blow by them, and we don't get them done. We all know there's limited capacity in policy shops to get work done. I'm actually pretty

hesitant for the legislature to start prescribing dates in regulation to complete work. You know, I don't think we've done it anywhere else, and I'm not sure I would even start with the Hygienist Profession Statutes Amendment Act. There's probably a lot of bills I think need regulatory work done. But, you know, I think -- why not give it a shot, Mr. Chair. We've missed a lot of timelines, and the Member has shown that this has been an action plan for years and missed timelines. And, you know, if the department's sitting here in 2025 and isn't going to make it well, then the next Minister of health's problem is to bring a motion to amend the legislation, I guess. So thank you. I'll vote for it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. To the motion. MLA Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, every child matters in NWT, especially those in small communities with limited services. These young children, they have the same rights as children living in larger regional centre with regular dental services. And I thank my colleague for introducing the Private Member's bill. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we cannot wait four years for our young kids to have proper dental treatment. We have kids as young as -- like she said, as young as 12 years old needing dentures. That is unacceptable. That is unacceptable. And it is the year 2023. We should have all these services available in small communities, especially with preventative work. Thank you.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be quick. I just -- I don't support this motion. And, you know, I hear what the Minister has stated. I hear, but we don't need to recreate the wheel. We have this stuff. We are a small territory. We don't -- and she's mentioned we don't have a lot of dental hygienists now. And the thing is all this is going to do, you know, is it prolongs the inevitable. We continue to prolong it. This has been an issue. My colleague has mentioned, and I'm not going to repeat it, but, you know, like, the delay after delay of not doing this work and all that I've seen is this fall apart. The services fall apart. We cannot even create different types of programming that will service our small communities, our regional centres, to do health promotion. So, again, I will not support this motion. 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? Any abstentions? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Clause 1, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Clause 2, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Clause 3, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Committee, to the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Profession Statutes Amendment Act, is now ready for third reading as amended? No, not as amended.

Okay, does committee agree that Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Profession Statutes Amendment Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 80, Dental Hygienists Profession Statutes Amendment Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi to the sponsoring Member of the bill. Can the sergeant-at-arms escort the witness from the Chamber. Mahsi. And we're just going to have a quick recess to change out chairs here.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 973-19(2), the 2024-2025 Capital Estimates. I will remind the Members that we concluded consideration of all the detail within the document on September 29th. Does the Minister of Finance have any remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm obviously in support of the capital estimates for 2024-2025. I am. I'd like to give you some details as to why and to the process by which we've arrived here today. These estimates, Madam Chair, propose a total investment, as you know, of more than \$361 million for infrastructure in the Northwest

Territories and to continue the work that's already being completed on a number of key infrastructure projects across the territory. This includes some large-scale infrastructure needs like the replacement of the Frank Channel bridge, the extension of the Inuvik runway, and the construction of a territorial fire centre, while also still supporting smaller capital projects in communities across the Northwest Territories.

I want to reiterate how much of the planned infrastructure expenditures are supported by federal infrastructure funding programs, with almost 53 percent of this capital budget being eligible for reimbursement under federal programs. We know that capital investment, such as capital roadwork, provides ongoing work for small and medium-sized businesses across the territory. On the topic of roads, Madam Chair, I would note in looking back over the last three capital budgets, the percentage of the capital budget that's being spent on roads, roads that resupply and maintain our transportation connectivity across the territory that is larger than many European countries, that percentage has, in fact, decreased every year including to this year.

I am pleased that, once again, these capital estimates continue to address capital work that is realistic and achievable, within a departmental cap of \$260 million, while addressing the priorities and needs of residents through established funding streams on top of that, such as biomedical and information technology, as well as preserving funding available for planning to ensure that our future capital budgets are built on well planned and carefully vetted projects. This also provides better accountability for the projects that are moving forward because a stronger review process that involves and engages all departments is better equipped to ensure that the needs of the territory as a whole are considered. There is also less room for one person or one interest to move something forward that does not reflect a fair assessment of the risks and needs affecting the whole territory.

Madam Chair, this is the eighth budget that I have put forward in my role as the Minister of Finance, the fourth capital budget. The process for both capital and mains is similar. It includes an in-camera briefing with committees followed by ongoing in-camera discussions between the chair, deputy chair of Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and myself, all aimed at finding consensus towards the passing of the budget, be it the mains or capital.

This process is one that I believe reflects the values of consensus government. We share significant information with Members of the

House and discuss collectively what changes should be made to better reflect or advance priorities on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories.

In our recent discussions, many people's attentions are quite reasonably still on the impacts of the wildfire season and resulting evacuations. However, I will note I am not able at capital budget to increase operations budgets. In some past years, I made commitments during the capital process to bring forward an operational supplementary appropriation but being at the end of the 19th Legislative Assembly, there will not be any further operations supplementary budgets done or by the 19th Legislative Assembly.

That said, I can commit or redirect resources that are already available in department budgets. And I am pleased to announce that the GNWT is committing a total of \$200,000 to support food banks and organizations that support food security in communities that were affected by evacuations this summer. We understand the impacts the wildfires and subsequent evacuations have had on residents and on communities who were hosting residents, many of which were already food insecure.

The response to the GNWT wildfires and evacuations was comprehensive and substantial. We ensured there was accommodations, food, basic amenities, and travel supports, and we have also put \$550,000 towards nonprofit organizations who are often better placed to help individual residents with specific or personal needs, may have made them less able to rely on the supports that were otherwise available to all residents. Hopefully, these additional funds now to assist with food security will also help local organizations assist with individual needs.

Madam Chair, I am also very pleased to share with this House that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is expanding its support for businesses impacted by the wildfires and evacuations by increasing the amount of funding available under its Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Program up to \$2 million. The maximum amounts available to businesses will double for Yellowknife businesses, go to \$15,000 for Fort Smith, and up to \$20,000 for Hay River and K'atlodeeche First Nation, reflective of the lengths of times that each were under evacuation orders over this summer. Further, the period of eligible expenses will extend two weeks past the end of an evacuation order. A formal announcement with these details will be out as soon as possible, and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment will work

directly with businesses who may want or need to see a revision of any previous applications or amounts received.

These additions are yet another result of consensus government. Earlier in the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly through the process, the consensus process of discussing and negotiating every one of our budgets, we have collectively advanced other important initiatives, such as the early childhood infrastructure fund, increases to Housing NWT's operations and maintenance programs, and some of the initial funding for the homelessness strategy, just to name a few.

What is common throughout all of this, we are able to act collectively to increase funding strategically. We all have residents that we represent with needs that are not uniform across the whole of the Northwest Territories. And there are communities, and we all represent communities, in some cases we represent several communities, with needs that, again, are often different from one to the next. But we are collectively able, when we work together, to find areas of sufficiently common concern or agree on areas where the need is greater. I am proud to have been part of the consensus government of the Northwest Territories that has been so consistently represented throughout budget discussions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Did the Minister wish to bring witnesses?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: No, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Do any Members have comments? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I just -- a few things I guess I want to say that -- having sat eight years on this side of the House, one of the few points of leverage that Regular MLAs have is in budgets and -- both on the capital and O and M side. And, you know, I think Regular MLAs can and should and do use that leverage to negotiate what we believe sometimes should be priorities for our residents as well. Sometimes we maybe have a slightly different take than our colleagues on the other side, but that's how consensus government is supposed to work. People don't elect us here to agree with each other. They elect us here to get work done and try to find ways to work together.

I do want to say that it's been a privilege to represent the Regular MLAs for at least probably two -- two years in the budget negotiations with the Minister of Finance. It was

definitely a lot more collegial in this Assembly than it was in the last, and dare I say, and sometimes even fun if you can believe it. So -- no, you know, very seriously, I think it's been a good collaborative process on the budgets that I've been engaged and involved on in this Assembly. We have a responsive finance Minister who's prepared to go out and do work and work with her colleagues on the Cabinet side. And likewise, on my side, I bring, you know, reports back to colleagues on my side of the House and, you know, we manage to reach agreement on a bunch of additions to budgets. We even manage to agree on cuts in one case. I think it was the travel during the COVID pandemic as well. So we -- you know, it's not that we're always asking. Sometimes we try to find ways to save some money to pay for some of the things that we would like to add into the budget. And I would say that the things that we tend to try to add into the budget are for the residents of all of the Northwest Territories because we -- that's why we're here. We do represent our constituencies, but when we try to secure improvements in programs and services, it's for all of our residents.

So I want to thank the Minister for the commitments that she's made in terms of the -- you know, it's no secret, Members on this side of the House have raised a number of situations and experiences of our residents. You know, over half of our residents were evacuated. And I think it's fair to say that most people are quite thankful that we got evacuated. They're thankful for the work that people did to stay here and save our communities. But in some cases, residents didn't always get the supports that they needed when they were away. And in the cases of businesses, they've come back and they need our help now to try to recover. Some of them had not quite even recovered from COVID. So I do want to express my personal appreciation and thanks for the work that the Minister has done, certainly within her own department, with ITI on expanding the SEED program, increasing the amount of assistance that's available to communities, making it a tiered approach so that the communities that are more affected for a longer period of time, those businesses can access more money. I think the increase in food security's helpful. Perhaps it could have been more but it's a help. But I think it did highlight the need for some more work, perhaps in the next Assembly, on food security. The expansion of the period that can be covered, the eligible expenses that might be considered, those are all good things. And I would encourage the Minister to -- and I know that she would do this, is to encourage her staff to actually reach out to applicants that are already in the system to work with them

proactively to ensure that they can maximize the funding that they can receive under this expanded program.

So the one area that I guess I would have appreciated some more from my Cabinet colleagues is in making for a more adequate and equitable set of assistance for individual evacuees and their families. I know that the Evacuation Travel Support Program, \$750 per vehicle, that was a good start. And as the Minister, I think has said, we can never make everybody whole again but I think there's problems with the equity of that program not addressing some people that flew out, and those people that were on government charters, or drove out and could not receive assistance because of a whole variety of situations, not able to access evacuation centres or the programs and services there and so on. So a number of us have raised these issues. So I would encourage our Cabinet colleagues to continue to do some work on those areas. And, of course, all of this is rather unusual because we are talking about O and M expenses in relation to a capital budget. But that's, I think, something that this Assembly has -- that the Regular MLAs have had successes not just in capital and O and M budgets and, maybe getting some leeway in other area -- sorry, in a capital versus an O and M, but also in policy issues. I think that's something that's been a significant development in this Assembly. And I would encourage the colleagues that come after us, as Regular MLAs, to continue to use the leverage that they have to get policy changes that will improve life for all of our residents.

So, Madam Chair, I think that's all the comments I have. Again, my appreciation to the finance Minister and her Cabinet colleagues for trying to meet some of our interests and the collaborative approach that we've had in place for much of the budgeting in this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. If someone over there, who knew, would just tell me the price of the estimated building the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project, I would vote for this capital budget. I've been asking for four years. This House has approved tens of millions of dollars on that project never knowing how much it's going to cost. I think it's embarrassing for all of us that we're doing this. So one number, and I'll vote in favour of this. I don't even care if I like the project; I just want the number. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, Madam Chair, I know that the Members did receive the preliminary business case back in May of 2022. So I realize that that is a number. I don't know if that's a good enough number. But if the MLA wants to look back at his materials, he'd certainly find a number in there, add a little inflation, and maybe he'll vote for the capital budget. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Sorry, this is a question. I think that's a 2014 number, but -- well, now I'm talking about a confidential document and trying to get clarification on it in a public sitting as we vote, which we're not allowed to do according to our rules. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Did you have any further comments? Okay. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate, I guess, what the Minister had to say about the additional funding and the tiered approach for those that -- those communities that were impacted by flooding and fires over the past 16 months. You know, it's not going to -- it's not going to fix everything because, you know, when I look at it, you're probably looking at -- even if you look at a thousand dollars a day lost in revenue and, you know -- and in Hay River, people have been out for, you know, up to two and a half -- two and a half months. And then you take that -- you take the time into sort of go in and get your business back up and running and then you have to entice your clientele to come back. So you're looking at, you know, upwards of probably a loss of, you know, a hundred thousand dollars for some businesses. And, you know, it's going to vary. But it is a big chunk of change. So when we are talking the amounts that she noted, it's not a lot. It's something, though. And I'm hoping and, you know, I encourage the Minister as well, to go out there to the federal government and continue, you know, pounding the table and, you know, I'll do it from this side as well with our MP and see what we can do. Because right now, you know, we look at Hay River. We've had -- you know, we've had issues with -- well, with the fires and the flooding and now we've got issues with low water. So Hay River, I think, at the end of the day is going to have to reinvent itself. Manufacturing is a big thing. And right now our manufacturing sector has pretty well been decimated as well, so. But, you know, I'm glad that the, you know -- the

department is going in the right direction, and Cabinet's going in the right direction. At least we're not going backwards. But, again, like my colleague said, you know, funds there for some of the people who did take the initiative to go out on their own and especially, you know, those in Hay River. You know, I talk about them because they're the ones that had to -- you know, that went through the fire. They're the ones that, you know, lost vehicles. They're the ones that lost -- almost lost their lives, lost pets, lost livestock. And, you know, it was a pretty scary ordeal. And, you know, I'm just lucky I didn't have to go through it. I was fortunate to be in the community, I guess, for that -- most of the evacuation I was on the list of, I guess, essential or nonessential essential workers for not only Hay River but for Enterprise as well. And I was able to, you know, use some of the skills that I had operating equipment, setting up camps. I even, you know, swept the floor in the airport and replaced some of the toilet paper and stuff like that so people had that in the morning. But, you know, so -- so everybody, you know -- any MLA could have done that. And, but it's -- you know, at the end of the day we got to -- we got to help people get back on their feet, and the only way to do it is usually money and other programs as well that whatever we can do. And that would be through, you know, ECE, DAP, and that, so. Yeah, so that's it. Thank you. It was just comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Are there any other comments? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to make a comment, and I want to thank the Minister of Finance and the Cabinet for making sure that the fire centre is going to be constructed for the community and for the Northwest Territories. After this fire season, I think it's extremely important that we save all the data, and we support the people that work in that centre. We have some really incredible staff in that centre, and they work for the whole Northwest Territories and helped with the first -- with the first responders with -- especially with making sure that our communities were safe this summer, and we went back to our homes some of us. Some lost homes, and I'm very sorry that that happened to some of the communities.

Finance must be a tough job because I know how it is when things are, you know, not all in the -- in the black and you have to decide on what is important and what isn't. And I'm sure that people all -- when this budget was put together that people thought about it very carefully. And of course I like the budget. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Are there any further comments? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I just want to, again, thank the Finance Minister for this because I think this is the final payment for my school so I will be in support of my budget for Mangilaluk school in Tuk, and then there's other -- couple other few projects in the communities I represent. And, you know, just thank you for all the consideration and all the -- what we've been through with that project. And I just -- I really hope in the next go around, we get two trailers for the portables. I wanted four but there was supposed to -- they said they'll give me two, but I'm still waiting. But just for that -- for that in itself, I'm going to be supporting the budget. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I won't go on and on about the budget either. But I just wanted to say that one thing that I really like about this budget is all the roadwork that's in it. And what I really, really like about the roads and bridge work is a lot of it is 100 percent funded. And I think -- and will give kudos on that. I think any time we can bring in 100 percent dollars to our territory, it's only a good thing. And also just to point out, we can't take road money and build houses with it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Any further comments? Seeing none. Does committee agree that you've concluded consideration of Tabled Document 973-19(2), 2024-2025 Capital Estimates? Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 513-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 973-19(2), CAPITAL
ESTIMATES 2024-2025,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 973-19(2), Capital Estimates 2024-2025, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 973-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. The motion is just being distributed. I always jump the gun on that one.

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. Tabled Document 973-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in the formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: You know what, Madam Chair, since you've turned it back to me, I was remiss to not thank yourself and the chair of the AOC more directly. It actually has made the process -- let's go ahead and say fun. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Well, thank you. Committee, thank you, Minister. And there's no witnesses. So we'll continue with our next item.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 974-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2023-2024. And I will remind the Members that we considered all of the detail within the document on September 29th. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I do, Madam Chair. Thank you. Madam Chair, this is an unusual supplementary estimates request following a very unusual, and I hope unique, summer for the Northwest Territories.

Low water levels have made the annual barging resupply much more costly. Low water levels have also meant that we've been burning more diesel to provide electricity throughout the Northwest Territories, which is much more costly to the GNWT. And, meanwhile, early in the season, flooding also required emergency response.

Madam Chair, these emergency costs alone would not have required this supplementary request or supplementary estimates because we build in contingency when we put forward a proposed borrowing appropriation at the main estimates stage. In fact, even adding a difficult fire season would not have led to this request.

However, the dryness we are experiencing has contributed to the worst wildfire season we have ever experienced and lead to multiple evacuations for Hay River and K'atloodeeche First Nation and then, ultimately, to the evacuation in total of almost 70 percent of the population from eight different communities with most having to cross into other

jurisdictions. Madam Chair, this summer was beyond being merely difficult.

This level of emergency and emergencies and the amount of financial output required to pay emergency responders, for example, and emergency services was extraordinary. Therefore, to ensure that we continue to have adequate cash available to pay all of the invoices that will be coming in over the next few weeks, we are requesting this supplementary borrowing appropriation in order to provide a cushion.

This supplementary request, to be clear, is not a new approval to incur additional expenses. It is only to ensure that we would have the cash available to pay the bills that we have already been approved to incur. For example, during our one-day emergency session, the Legislative Assembly approved an appropriation to the Department of Environment and Climate Change for \$75 million to support the wildfire suppression costs. In order to ensure that we can pay all of the contractors and suppliers in cash, we are requesting this supplementary appropriation to the borrowing.

This request does not necessarily mean that we will end the fiscal year with significantly more debt than what was originally projected. We are expecting an advance from the federal government under the Disaster Assistance Financial Arrangement which will provide a significant cushion to our cash balance. We do not, however, know exactly when that cash will be received.

We do continue to monitor all of our expenses and revenues regularly, as we always do, as well as monitoring departmental variances as we have through the floods and previous fires. And as the costs will come in from this summer season, that work will continue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Minister, did you wish to bring witnesses?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: No, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Committee, do you have any comments? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I've got a couple questions if I can. Is this a one-time increase, or is this a permanent increase to the borrowing limit? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, this is not an increase to the borrowing limit. I'm happy to clarify that. So the borrowing limit that's imposed by the federal government is separate and apart, and I certainly do not have the authority to increase that, which is imposed by the federal government. And within our fiscal responsibility policy, we created our own internal limit to give ourselves room that if we come up upon our own internally imposed limit, which is the cushion below the federal limit, that would then trigger within our own processes a requirement to consider what we would then do lest we in fact get to that federal limit. And I can say that, quite intentionally, while we wanted to give enough of a cushion so that given the election period and given the blackout period that is associated with it, that the Department of Finance could go about their business paying all of our contractors and invoices. So we've sought a limit that is under our own imposed limit and does not approach the federal borrowing limit. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, sorry. I misspoke; I'm really tired. But is this a one-time increase to the short-term borrowing limit? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Also happy to clarify that, Madam Chair. I do think these are all questions that folks may have generally in the public. So the main estimates every year has included upon it is a page that has all of the borrowing and every year, including when we do the next main estimates process or when the next Assembly does the main estimates process, that page will have on it a new borrowing plan. That borrowing plan would take into account our cash balances for the -- in terms of short-term borrowing, it would take into account the cash balances that we're at once we know what advances we might have received from the federal government or what other financial supports we might receive from the federal government. So every year we go through this process with main estimates. It considers -- again, it considers all of what's coming in and all of what is expected to go out. So the main estimates is where you will see the new short-term borrowing year over year. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I think that was a detailed explanation of yes, this is a one-time increase. But maybe I'll just turn it back to the Minister. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: This is a one-time thing, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I love clarity. I want to thank the Minister for that. And, yeah, it'll be up to the next batch of MLAs to watch that line going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Committee, do you agree that -- sorry, are there any other further comments? Do you agree that you've concluded consideration of Tabled Document 974-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2023-2024?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 514-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 974-19(2),
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,
2023-2024,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 974-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2023-2024, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 974-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 974-19(2), we'll report it as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Committee, we've agreed to consider Committee Report 52-19(2), Committee Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for any opening comments. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Committee's report was read into the record on May 30th, 2023. In 2022, the Speaker, Frederick Blake, twice wrote to the committee regarding the rules and asked the committee to consider various matters including: Regular Member participation on Standing and Special Committees; Membership on Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight; dissenting opinions in committee reports; care of infants in the Chamber; the Rule of Anticipation; loss of quorum; petitions; committee reporting on the review of bills; and the best approach to make statutory officers' annual reports available to the public and standing committees earlier.

Based on these questions, Madam Chair, the committee has made ten recommendations to address the various matters identified in the review of the rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Individual Members may have some comments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Members, would you prefer to go into each motion or -- yes? Okay. Do you agree we can move straight to the motions? Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're going to -- this -- my rules committee was so good at doing what we did, we're just going to pass them all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): No, you've got to go through the motions.

COMMITTEE MOTION 515-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 52-19(2): REPORT ON
THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY: STATUTORY OFFICERS'
ANNUAL REPORTING,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Okay, thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the following be added after Rule 4.5: 4.6 A statutory officers' annual report received by the Speaker shall be communicated to Members and made publicly available within

seven calendar days when the House is not sitting. The Speaker will table the report in the House at the earliest opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): to the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 516-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY -
REGULAR MEMBER COMMITTEE
MEMBERSHIP,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the following be added after Rule 9.2(5): 9.2(5.1) each Regular Member shall sit on a minimum of two committees, in addition to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. This includes standing committees and the board of management. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So I'm -- I have some questions about this. So this is stating that each Regular Member shall sit on a minimum of two committees in addition to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. So it says every Regular Member shall sit on the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. And so if a Member is not sitting on the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, they're in violation of the rules I suppose. So I wonder what would be the redress if they were in violation of those rules? I know we don't have witnesses here but this is just something I wanted to bring to people's attention given some of the future recommendations. So I'll just leave it at that. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. This is debate on the motion but there's not questions. We don't have witnesses. So Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yeah, no, I mentioned we don't have witnesses. I just wanted to bring this to the House's attention. I'm not asking any questions as there's no one to ask. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks. Well, I'm not going to try to answer my colleague's question directly. But I guess the expectation coming into an Assembly is that Regular Members, Members who are not on the Cabinet side, would sit on two committees. This wasn't a requirement. And then this Assembly, that didn't happen, which increased the workload for the remaining Members. So this is, I think, in response to just try to lay -- not just lay out that as an expectation in the future. This is more of a requirement, dare we say, that if you're going to get elected here, you serve as a Regular Member, you're automatically on the AOC but you have to sit on two other standing committees so that we have a more -- tried to do a fair distribution of the workload. I think it's a good rule, and I'll be voting in favour of it. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, I was going to make a similar point to the Member for Frame Lake that when this occurred in this Assembly, it made for an unequal distribution of work which is not considerate of the other Members. And so it's a shame that we have to set it out explicitly, but I think it's a good idea. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 517-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY - REMOVAL OF MEMBER FROM
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the following be added after Rule 9.3(9):

(9.1) if the Member of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight acts in a manner that warrants discipline, which includes but is not limited to:

(a) violating any provision of the Legislative Assembly and executive council Act and its regulations that deal with conduct and responsibilities of committee members.

(b) disclosing confidential committee information without committee approval;

(c) attending a meeting under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other mind-altering substance; and

(d) being repeatedly absent from meetings without a valid excuse.

The committee may, by majority vote, suspend the Member from the committee for a period of up to three meetings in duration.

(9.2) if the Member has been suspended from the committee for a period of time, the chair of the committee will report the suspension to the House under reports of standing and special committees.

(9.3) the committee may, at any time, recommend to the House that a Member be removed from or reappointed to the committee.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we just approved a rule saying every Member shall sit on Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. Now this speaks to Members being removed from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, which would mean the removal of the Member would then put them in violation of the previous rule? I'm just a little confused about this. And, again, there's no one to ask these questions to I'm not quite sure what to do with this. But I guess that's a situation that will arise or we'll deal with it when it happens. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you. I have the same thought as well. There have been issues in each of the Assemblies that I've -- that I've been a Member of with attendance, and it seems counterintuitive to suspend someone who's not coming anyway. But at the same time, it draws attention to the problem that some Members are not doing their jobs. And I think it's important for the public to know about

that. But having said that, I take the point of the Member for Hay River North that we're sort of looking at both sides of the coin here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the motion. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regards to the question, it's only the House could remove a Member. So it's not removing Members. It's just reappointment. The committee may want him off the committee. He'll get reappointed to another committee, and they do a tradeoff. So that's, like I said, only the House could remove Members. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: No, thanks. The chair of the committee is right. Only the House can remove a Member. But that's not what this motion -- or this rule does. This rule just gives the Members of AOC an ability to discipline Members if necessary. And it's quite an elaborate process that has to be gone through. So it's providing tools to AOC to administer discipline if necessary. That's all this is. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the motion. Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yeah, thank you. And I'd just like to add to that there. It also gives AOC some tools. Right now, Cabinet, the tools, the Premier has. The Premier can make those decisions. But AOC would have to bring it to this House to do something. So this gives the tools to AOC to deal with their situation. It doesn't have to come to the House. So that's why I am supportive of this. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 518-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY- DISSENTING OPINIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move the committee recommends that the following be added after Rule 9.4(1):

(1.1) one or more member(s) of a committee may indicate that they dissent of a particular recommendation or comment.

(1.2) a Member or Members who wish to express the reasons for their dissent may do so in an appendix to the report.

(1.3) the chair of a committee will establish a reasonable deadline for any dissenting opinion to be shared with committee members before the report is presented to the House.

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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 520-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY: COMMITTEE REPORTS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the following be added after Rule 8.3(8):

(9) a bill reported by a standing or special committee as 'should not proceed' shall require a motion be adopted by the House to consider the bill in Committee of the Whole. 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. I'm not in favour of this motion. Right now when Committee of the Whole has to deal with their business, the chair calls it, and then we have a vote, and then sometimes Cabinet has to, you know, get something on the agenda -- we saw it today and last couple times over the last while. I don't know why adding this extra step would occur when it doesn't occur with anything else. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. To the motion. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. So right now there already is a vote. There's not a motion, but there's a vote, if there is a bill that is deemed not ready to go into Committee of the Whole. Someone will call that bill if they want, and then the committee will vote whether or not they want to bring it to Committee of the Whole. So, you know, during this Assembly, we have lengthened the amount of time it takes to get through legislation through additional, you know, public processes, Intergovernmental Council processes, the protocols that we've signed. And going forward in future Assemblies, I imagine that time will get longer. And there are instances where we need to get legislation through or at least have it debated. Give Members the opportunity to debate that legislation so that it has the opportunity to go through if that's the Assembly's wish. And sometimes that comes down to a day. You know, we need to get something done by this day and if we don't get it done by that day, it doesn't get done. And so what we're talking about here could add a day to that process. And so I have a concern that a committee could make a recommendation and similar to some -- you know, going back to some of these other motions we've discussed, sometimes the people doing the work on the committee might be two people. It might be two or three people. And so I don't want those two or three people to be able to deny the Assembly perhaps -- or you put up more roadblocks to the Assembly to do the Assembly's work. So I'm also opposed to this. We have work to get done, and this is just going to extend that timeline for us to do that work, slow us down, and that's not what we need to be doing right now. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the motion. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, this rule is being brought forward because it's a check on Cabinet. Anything brought forward in a motion could take up to one or two days in regards to getting it through the House and if it's not nayed going through. So this rule is just brought forward to keep Cabinet in check. Thank you, Madam Chair. That's why it's brought forward.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Like my colleague, who serves as chair of the committee, we did talk about this and I'm not sure I can share my colleague's characterization of committee reports. Committee reports are from a committee. They're not from one or two Members. And believe me, I've seen that -- how hard the clerks work to make sure that there is consensus from committee, and if needs a majority vote, it gets

a vote. Reports are not from one or two Members; they are from a committee. And that's the way it needs to be interpreted in this House so I don't feel very good about my colleague's characterization of committee work. But as it was said, this is really about, as I see it, a check on Cabinet's power. If they really want to call a bill, bring it to the House where we can have a formal debate and discussion about it and a motion to proceed in that manner, and then it's the will of the House. It's not kind of an amorphous discussion in Committee of the Whole about who's doing what. Thanks, 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? Motion carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 519-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – COMMITTEE REVIEW OF A
BILL – NOT READY TO PROCEED,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that Rule 4.4(8) be amended by:

Deleting the words "the Legislative Assembly e-petitions site" and replacing them with the words "an electronic petition site approved by the Speaker." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Sorry, Madam Chair, for that. I'm ahead of myself. Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Rule 9.4(4) be amended by adding the word "not" after the words "Committee of the Whole shall...." Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 521-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY- PETITIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Rule 4.4 (8) be amended by: Deleting the words "the Legislative Assembly e-petitions site" and replacing them with the words "an electronic petition site approved by the Speaker..." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? Motion's carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 522-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY- LOSS OF QUORUM,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that Rule 2.3(4) be amended by adding "all remaining business shall stand over until the next sitting day" to the end of the existing rule. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour, please raise your hand. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 523-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY-
ANTICIPATION,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Rule 5.6(2) be amended by adding the following after Rule 5.6(2)(C) "(d) shall not refer to any matter on the orders for that day." 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, please raise your hand. All those opposed raise your hand. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 524-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY-
STRANGERS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Rule 1.9 (4) be amended by adding the words "a stranger does not include an infant being cared for by a Member" at the end of the rule. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I feel like this is the icing on the cake of making this a family friendly workplace. Just to recap, when I first started working here, if you wanted to change a baby you had to change him or her on the bathroom floor. That was the only available place. So what a long way we've come from that to actually welcoming babies into the Chamber. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I want to thank the Member for Yellowknife Centre for the time that she gave of her own personal time, especially before this Assembly, in sitting down with people and answering a multitude of questions. I was one of those people that had a lot of questions about how being in this building, especially as a parent with young children might look, and I really appreciated having that insight.

I wanted to add though for my colleagues, because it's something that has come up in a lot of conversations, and even at board of management, is how do you make sure that this building is family friendly, and one of the things that I wanted to add, and hopefully people who are here next time will hear, is one of the things that COVID left behind was our ability to do a lot more meetings virtually. And as chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, my rule was always you take the meeting from wherever works best for you and your family as long as you participate. And I just wanted to add that in here because I think it's really important to be able to hang on to that so that people -- especially people from out of town can still participate. The other thing I wanted to say is that people need to consider if they're having a meeting on a Saturday morning, does it really need to be a Saturday morning, or can it be held on a weekday. So I just wanted to add those in. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And to answer my colleague's question, no, I won't be now having a baby in order to take advantage of these. My colleague from Nunakput, not Kam Lake, sorry.

I did want to say -- echo the sentiments as well that, you know, having been a part of this Assembly, to have this many women in and to see the changes that have occurred because of that, not only in our procedures but just some of the things that have happened where the conversations around earrings that we seem to have. We joke that the number 1 thing said here in this House sometimes is who made your earrings. And then a clerk coming in and bringing her child in while she was on mat leave was a moment for me that really struck me as a legislator that this is probably something that has not happened much in the past, and we not only see it in our Members but we're also seeing it in our staff, that there is a lot more representation. And so, yeah, I think it's an exciting thing. And I have to laugh. It's probably one of the most funny worded motions I think I've ever seen, but I love it. So thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. Sorry, I just drew a blank there. I was just thinking about Katrina having a baby maybe. All those in favour, please raise your hand. All those opposed, raise your hand. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you've concluded consideration of Committee Report 52-19(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 52-19(2), Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

Committee, we've agreed to consider Report 75-19(2), Report on the Review of Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 2. I will go to the chair of Standing Committee on rules and procedures for any opening comments. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures delivered a report on the Review of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, No. 2, to the Assembly on October 3rd, 2023.

With the 19th Legislative Assembly coming to a conclusion, the committee has reviewed the rules and made 22 recommendations that: Provide clarity and reflect current practice in the House, streamline administrative functions in the parliamentary process in the Northwest Territories, and recognize the adoption of the Consensus Government Process Convention on the Introduction and Enactment of Bills pursuant to the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol.

Individual Members may have comments, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Member, can we agree to go into discussion by each motion? Like, any comments to the motions? Can we go right to the motions?

MR. JACOBSON: (audio).

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 525-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO. 2: INTERGOVERNMENTAL
,, COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT
PROTOCOL,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Okay. Deemed as read. No, thank you, Madam Chair.

I move that this committee recommends that the Process Convention on the Introduction, Consideration and Enactment of Bills Drafted Pursuant to the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol be renewed in the 20th Assembly to maintain and further development relationships with Indigenous governments. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 526-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
PROCESS CONVENTIONS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that when the Process Convention on the Introduction, Consideration and Enactment of Bills Drafted Pursuant to the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol is renewed, consideration is given to further integration of the Process Convention into the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 527-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
NO 2,
ORDERS OF THE DAY,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that that Rule 1.6(3) be amended by deleting "Order Paper for the day" and replacing it with "Orders of the Day" and that the title of Rule 1.6(6) be amended to read "Distribution of the Orders of the Day." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 528-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
NO 2,
LAW CLERK,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that Rule 1.6(8)(c) be deleted. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 52-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Rule 1.7(3) be amended by deleting "immediately after the words are uttered or the events occur that give rise to the question" and replacing it with "at the earliest opportunity." 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 530-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
NO 2,
DEEMED READ,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the following be added after Rule 6.1(2)(m): "(n) to have a committee report deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety." 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 531-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND
PROCEDURES REPORT ON THE REVIEW
OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
NO 2,
DEEMED READ, FIRST TIME,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the committee recommends that the wording of Rule 8.2(3) be deleted and replaced with "When the Sponsor of the Bill presents it for first reading, the bill will be deemed read for a first time." Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 532-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee recommends that Rule 9.2(5) be deleted. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 533-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
QUORUM,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that Rule 9.3(5) be

amended by adding "with the exception of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, three Members are required for quorum unless the committee's terms of reference states otherwise." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 534-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
LIST AVAILABILITY,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that committee recommends that Rule 9.3(2) be amended by adding "and make the list available publicly" after the words "Board of Management." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 535-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
AGENDAS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the wording of Rule 9.3(6) be deleted and replaced with "the clerk shall notify all Regular Members of upcoming meetings and ensure agendas are available publicly." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 536-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
PUBLIC MEETINGS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the wording of Rule 93(12) be deleted and replaced with "all Members may attend public meetings of standing committees and may speak according to any limits imposed by the chair." Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like this rule to be called the Kevin O'Reilly Memorial Rule. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 537-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
120 DAYS,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that this committee recommends that Rule 9.4(5) be amended to read:

"the government will be required to table a comprehensive responses to the committee report, including all recommendations, within 120 days, or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days when:

(a) a report requesting a response is adopted by the Assembly; or

(b) a motion is adopted by Committee of the Whole requesting a response. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 538-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
CONCURRENCE,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that Rule 9.6(1) be amended by deleting "at the discretion of the chair" and replacing it with "with concurrence of the committee." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 539-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
CONCURRENCE NO. 2,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that Rule 9.6(5) be amended by deleting "through the adoption of a motion of approval by the Assembly" and replacing it with "with concurrence of Committee of the Whole." 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 540-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
POINT OF PRIVILEGE,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that Rule 1.7(3) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege." 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 541-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
POINT OF PRIVILEGE NO. 2,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that Sub-Title for Rule 1.7(3) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 542-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
,, POINT OF PRIVILEGE NO. 3,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: One second, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Sub-Title for Rule 1.7(5) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 543-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
POINT OF PRIVILEGE NO. 4,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that the Sub-Title for Rule 1.7(7) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege."

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 544-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT ON
THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
POINT OF PRIVILEGE NO. 5,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that Rule 3.1(5) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 545-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
POINT OF PRIVILEGE NO. 6,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that Rule 3.2(3)(b)(iii) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege." Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nunakput.

COMMITTEE MOTION 544-19(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 75-19(2), REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY, NO 2,
POINT OF PRIVILEGE NO. 7,
CARRIED

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, I move that Rule 6.1(2)(f) be amended by deleting "question of privilege" and replacing it with "point of privilege." So much privilege. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you've concluded consideration of Committee Report 75-19(2)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We've concluded consideration of Committee Report 75-19(2), Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, No. 2. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. And it might be my last Committee of the Whole chair. So thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Order. 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 was very busy this week, and it's been an honour to chair your committee. Your committee has been considering Bill 80, Tabled Document 973-19(2), Tabled Document 974-19(2), Committee Report 52-19(2), and Committee Report 75-19(2). And I would like to report progress with 34 motions carried and that Committee Report 52-19(2) and Committee Report 75-19(2) are concluded and that Bill 80 is ready for third reading and that consideration of Tabled Document 973 and 974 is concluded and the House concur on those estimates and that AN appropriation bill be based thereon be introduced without delay. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Frame Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 65:
BUILDERS' LIEN ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife South that Bill 65, Builders' Lien Act, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I recognize it's very late in the day, but I have to go on record as to how I'm going to vote so I believe that the bill was not particularly well crafted. There was a pause when it was -- the Minister kind of took it back and went back to Indigenous governments, tried to do some engagement. So I believe that there's really -- there was inadequate consideration of Indigenous rights in the development of the bill. I'm concerned that the bill doesn't bind the Government of the Northwest Territories, which is the largest contracting authority. What's the point of trying to do a bill that secures wages for contractors and employees if we don't bind this government? That's just wrong in my opinion, Mr. Speaker.

I also am concerned that municipal lands are going to be subject to seizure and sale. I don't think that's appropriate.

So as the Minister said at clause by clause, I prefer that it would actually go back and get redrafted so that it could be done properly. The motion to try to get a considered review of the bill also failed. Cabinet opposed that. So that was an opportunity to try to fix it up after a period of time.

So for all of those reasons, I don't believe this bill is the best that it can and should be to address the needs. And that's why I'm going to vote against it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I echo my colleague's concerns with this bill. There were a lot of things I think that could have been done differently. I have my regrets for how it all progressed in the sense of we did get bogged down on something, but it was an

important conversation to be had. I think it worked well as far as back and forth with the Minister and the department. It's just unfortunate for me I also believe that the bill is not where it should be and I will be not supporting the bill; however, I want it to become a priority and something that happens really quickly in the 20th with the prompt payment piece included. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Minister's requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): 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 Nunakput. 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. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote: 15 in favour, three opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 65 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third 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 Nahendeh, that Bill 84, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, be read for the

third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, merci, Monsieur le President. Again, I have to go on record as to why I'm going to vote against this bill. I've said, though, that there's good things in this bill like response to at least three independent reviews that were carried out. That work can and should have been done, quite frankly, years ago. So those are the good parts of the bill. The part that causes me a lot of concern is the name change. And I'm not opposed to the name change in principle. I don't personally think it's a great thing. But I think it's not a good -- I don't condone a process, Mr. Speaker, where we start off with a public engagement on one thing and then all of a sudden something's added into the bill that hasn't received any public engagement. And that's why there's a subtle distinction there. And I guess it's a principle stand, Mr. Speaker, but I can't condone that kind of process for doing public engagement for a bill, and then all of a sudden something props -- it just kind of comes up at the end. This is not about trying to meddle in what the board is doing. I want an independent board. But I'm just worried about the process that was used to develop this bill and having this jump out at the end. So that's why I'm going to vote against it. I have supported what BDIC has done. I said good things when they were here. I think they're heading in the right direction. That's all good stuff. I just can't condone the kind of process that led to the bill in the form that's before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Minister has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (MS. SATURNINO): The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The

Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Saturnino): The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour. One opposed. Zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 84 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third 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 am proud to move, seconded by the honourable Member of Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 85, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday during debate during the Committee of the Whole, I expressed many concerns that I had with the process to getting where we are with this bill today. And a lot had to do with the lack of meaningful consultation that our Premier, our Cabinet, the Executive and Indigenous Affairs, did not attend many assemblies to present this to every First Nation group in the Northwest Territories and many times many of them were at the Dene Nation Assemblies. This government has never showed up to any assemblies whatsoever in the Northwest Territories with Indigenous groups to have meaningful consultation. That didn't happen because there were some concerns with certain articles within the document. And those are the things that they wanted to discuss. And after a consultation with the Deh Cho First Nations Grand Chief and after consultation with the Dene National Chief, who informed me that this UNDRIP was opposed at last year's Dene National Assembly. And having said all that, Mr. Speaker, I will abstain from the vote today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. The motion is in order. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, first of all, say that myself and Cabinet, and many of the Council of Leaders, are extremely proud of this bill. I think this is the way of the future. It's exciting. It's scary. It's challenging. And it's about time that we took these steps.

I'd also like to clear for the record, Mr. Speaker, I was accused yesterday and today of not attending assemblies. Mr. Speaker, throughout my term as Premier, at any time that any Indigenous organization, government, has invited me to their assemblies, if I had been free I would have attended. As with other Members, if our schedules allow, we have attended. I do not impose myself as Premier into assemblies where I do not get invited. So if I was not invited, then I did not attend. That is just what I was learned growing up as basic manners - don't go to a party unless you're invited.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to clarify that this was being accused of my legacy. When I first started in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I never even knew what the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples was. I never put it as a priority. I never knew it. It was brought as a priority of all 19 Members. I soon learned what it was and became extremely proud of it and a champion of it as well because it is the right way.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not -- if this is passed, this is not my legacy as the Premier. This is the legacy of this 19th Assembly. This states that we believe in the rights of Indigenous people and forever I shall be grateful to all Members who support this bill and the work that was done on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Minister has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

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

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour, zero opposed, two abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 85 has had third reading.

---Applause

I'm going to say that again. Third reading of bills. Bill 85 has had third reading.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, October 6th, 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1578-19(2), Fire Management Policy Effect on Indigenous Culture
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Motions

- Motion 86-19(2), Recommendations of Integrity Commissioner Respecting Conduct of MLA Great Slave

- Motion 87-19(2), Dissolution of the 19th Legislative Assembly

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act

- Bill 75, Council of Women and Gender Diversity Act

- Committee Report 53-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Supporting Northern Businesses

- Committee Report 76-19(2), Moving Forward: Recommendations for the Incoming 20th Assembly

- 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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, October 6th, 2023, at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

