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**HANSARD**

**Friday, October 6, 2023**

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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

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

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**Mr. Richard Edjericon**

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**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

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

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendah)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister of Environment and 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*

**Ms. Jane Weyallon Armstrong**

(Monfwi)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, October 6, 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 10:00 a.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):**  
Colleagues, before we begin today, seeing this is our last day, I have a statement or two.

I would just like to start off by saying it was a pleasure and honour to serve with you all in the 19th Assembly. You know, we had a huge turnover and, you know, there's no shortage of challenges we faced in Assembly but at the end of the day, we worked through it together and here we are. I'll touch on that a bit more later.

I would like to start off by thanking the people of the Mackenzie Delta. You know, in 2011, even up until August, I wasn't even planning to run as MLA. It was until two former Members came to the community of Tsiigehtchic. At the time, we were having our Gwich'in Assembly and, at that time, a couple Ministers were at the Assembly taking questions, and that was R.C. McLeod and Michael McLeod. And at the end, after we were finished, they took a break and they pulled me aside and asked what I was up to because before that I was chief for four years. And they're like, so what's your plans? And I was like oh, no plans, just see what comes up. And they're like you should run for MLA. I was like oh, no, no, David's doing that. And they said oh no, he's not running. I said yeah, I'll think about it. And after a couple weeks there, I talked to a few people and decided to run and here we are today.

But, you know, it's so important, I think, like, a lot of times we, you know, because over the last 12 -- well, it's 16 years in leadership. It seems like most of the time we thank people is when it's too late, you know, because I've been to, oh I can't even keep track of the amount of funerals I've attended over the years, you know, paying respects. But I think it's so important to thank people, you know. Thank all those that gave me solid advice over the years and, you know, gave me their support. You know, people of the

Mackenzie Delta, it started with the community of Tsiigehtchic as their chief. There, too, I wasn't planning on ever getting into politics but, you know, we don't know what our path holds in store for us because I'm a firm believer that the Lord shows us the way. You know, growing up in Tsiigehtchic, even back then religion was big in school and even to this day, I have my bible with me and something to protect me, and that was from our new Member from Monfwi. Thank you for that. It's got me over the last couple years here, but mahsi.

Like I said, it's so important to thank all those that stood by you. My wife and my children, my mom, who is here this week. She's flying home today, but. Also my constituency assistant for ten years, Ms. Wright, thank you for your service and, you know, I hope you're doing with as a chief in Fort McPherson. I know you are, but I'd just like to thank you. And also my new constituency assistant, Diane Koe, thank you for all the work you've been doing. And also Manny Arey, Dean, is my contact in Aklavik. And before that was Eugene Pascal. Thank you very much for your service.

For the people of the Mackenzie Delta. You know, I have so many friends and constituents in the communities and family members, you know, they -- that's one thing I learned in leadership is you'll never get a hundred percent support but it's usually 85 percent are behind you, and that's what you focus on. Nowadays, especially with Facebook, there's 15 percent -- you know, they say -- and this was told to me by a former leader in the band centre, you know, 15 percent, you could move mountains for them but it's never enough but they're the loudest. But just don't focus on that, just focus on your 85 percent and keep doing what you're doing, and that's one thing I learned -- or since that day, that's what I try to do. And, you know, just moving forward, like I said, I thank the people of the Mackenzie Delta because without them, I wouldn't be here.

And one more thing is, you know, growing up, my mother was a chief before me and even back then, they always said, you know, our younger generation, it's time for them to take

over. And look at our Assembly today, you couldn't tell but Mr. Simpson is the youngest one here is I think -- or no, Rylund is now. But, you know, if you look around the room today, and about 30, 40 years ago, it was almost all our older -- the old school. But, you know, but it goes to show that, you know, what our elders wanted back then is happening here today and it's an honour working with some of the people I went to school with, Ms. Archie, Ms. Semmler, Jackie was before my time, but Paulie as well.

But before I move on to the speakers, I'd just like to thank Jackie. When I first got in, all the hotel rooms in the city were full and I had to spend two or three weeks with Jackie in his apartment. It was the longest two or three weeks of my life. No. Just kidding. I'm just kidding. But I never forget that. I'd like to thank Jackie. We had a lot of good conversations over the years.

And, you know, one thing that we were told in this Assembly was you can't become friends with anybody, like staff. You know 12 years in this facility with a lot of these staff, you know, you can't help but become friends with them, most of them. But, you know, it's almost impossible.

Even Members here, four years, and I feel like we've become good friends even though I never met you before, but that's just how it goes. And, yeah, it's challenging but, you know, end of the day, I think a lot of us have become good friends and stay friends.

So I'll just move on to some of the things in the Speaker's office. Every Speaker before me had a free ride up here. Oh boy. It was nothing but trips before I showed up. But, Members, I want to begin today's final sitting day of the 19th Assembly by sharing a few words on the challenges the Assembly faced.

As the 19th Legislative Assembly, we started strong, electing a record number of women to the legislature and to Cabinet. However, it was not long before we faced our first challenge - the arrival of COVID-19. As an Assembly, we had to stop our business mid sitting, resume sitting for a day to pass an interim budget, and then return home. The Assembly had to find a new way to work, including remote work, a new layout in the Chamber, and hybrid sittings. The challenges we faced were not only external but also internal. Allegations were made and investigations were conducted. It was a difficult and challenging time for all.

The Assembly belongs to the people and, for the first time, was closed to the public for

extended periods of time during COVID-19 and the wildfire evacuations.

The 19th Assembly was the first with a binding Kindergarten. It was a learning opportunity for us all, and this Assembly made changes to the process based on what we learned.

Wildfires and evacuations on our final sitting, and on short notice we held the sitting outside of Yellowknife for the first time since 1989. Not only was this sitting held in Inuvik, it was our largest hybrid sitting.

The membership of our Assembly changed during our term with two by-elections and the election of a new Member for Monfwi and Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The election of the election for Monfwi made our Assembly the first elected Assembly in Canada to a majority of female Members. I believe this is the first Assembly where the mace was transported by skidoo when the road to Tsiigehtchic was blocked and we had to haul the mace and staff by skidoo and sled into the community.

The Office of the Clerk saw significant changes. The clerk, sergeant-at-arms, and manager of finance retired taking with them more than 80 years of experience and service. However, we are moving forward with the new people in these key roles. We have made significant changes and progress in our office and the clerk works with it, development and implementation of the workplace review and action plan. We may have had some rough time, but we started and will finish strong. Just this week, unveiling a new permanent memorial of the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQIA people.

Colleagues, once again, it was a pleasure serving with you all, and I thank again the people of the Mackenzie Delta. You know, like I said, we don't know what's in store for us and if it's the Lord's will, I will be here again in the 20th, and I will just wish everybody good luck in the elections. And those that are retiring, I wish you well. Kevin, Caroline, Julie, and Rylund, you know, we had some good times -- well, retire from politics. But you never know you might come back. We had some great committee meetings in the last Assembly with Ms. Green and Kevin.

Kevin, I think R.C. McLeod said it best. Yeah Kevin. Kevin. But he said, it's one thing about Kevin, you know, he's got his ways but he is a man of his word. He usually tells you what he is going to do, and he does it and stands up for what he believes in, and there is a lot of people that really appreciate that. I would like to thank you you all for the work that you have done.

Some of you have been here only four years but made a good impact.

One thing about -- that I learned from territorial politics is things take time so maybe in eight years, you might see the DMV opened on a Saturday. Fingers crossed. But once again, thank you all very much, and I can't help but thank the people in the Mackenzie Delta as well for putting your trust in me. And just thank you very much. Mahsi.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

### Ministers' Statements

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 396-19(2): INCREASING STUDENT OUTCOMES

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a mandate of this government to increase our education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada. And we've taken a number of steps to advance this goal. This month, we began trialing an adapted version -- sorry, Mr. Speaker, last month. This was written before the evacuations. Last month, we began trialing an adapted version of British Columbia's curriculum. It will be fully implemented in all our schools over the next five years. This partnership has been years in the making, and I am happy to see it come to fruition.

British Columbia is one of the top performers in education among all the provinces. This modern curriculum focuses on deeper learning. Students will develop skills like problem solving, research, leadership, communicating, and public speaking. These are skills that will prepare them for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, we have also expanded education programs across the territory. In the life of this Assembly, the career and education advisor program expanded to every region. This resource encourages Grade 9 to 12 students to start thinking about what is next after high school. But, Mr. Speaker, it is much more than asking what do you want to be when you grow up.

Advisors work with students to explore their skills and interests. They connect students with people who are doing work that interests them and with learning opportunities they can take part in while they are still in school. The Schools North Apprenticeship Program, SNAP program, which provides high school students with work experience in the trades while finishing school, is one example of these learnign opportunities. And This program has grown from having no student participants in 2016, to 22 in 2022.

Mr. Speaker, northern distance learning has also expanded every year since its pilot. Twenty schools are now part of the program. It allows students in small schools to take advanced high school courses online while staying in their home community. This program helps students meet graduation requirements and allows them to apply for post-secondary school right out of high school.

Since junior kindergarten was introduced territory-wide in 2017, we are seeing consistent improvement in students who attend. We hope to see these beneficial effects continue as those students get older.

Mr. Speaker, as part of our commitment to improve student outcomes, we must also identify where there are barriers and opportunities for improvement. Over the life of this Assembly, we have taken many steps to address these challenges. We have developed a new way to calculate the graduation rate to ensure it is accurately counting all students who graduate and considers the unique realities of our communities.

We continue to release annual reports on the state of the education system, which provide crucial data to address students' needs. This year's report includes data on unplanned school closures related to the pandemic and, beginning next year, reports will reflect all school closures including those related to wildfires, flooding, infrastructure issues, etc.

As we have seen in recent weeks and years, unplanned school closures can have an impact on students and the education system. Monitoring these impacts will ensure we have programs and services to meet students and families' needs.

We have taken steps to address social passing and clarify that the NWT does not endorse free passes in education. Rather, we encourage parents and students to make informed decisions and provide supports to meet their specific strengths and needs.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we launched exciting initiatives during this Assembly to support educators' development and growth. We introduced competency-based professional standards, which establish the knowledge, skills, and values a successful educator should be able to demonstrate and transfer. We launched Certified NWT, a new online system for educators to easily apply for and update their teaching certifications. We also launched ConnectEd NWT, a learning management system where educators can take professional development online to further their skills and knowledge. We partnered with Douglas College

to offer a free pilot of the education assistance and inclusion certificate to support assistants in the territory. We are also seeing an increase in the number of educators here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, this progress would not be possible without NWT education bodies, Indigenous governments, the Northwest Territories Teachers Association, educators, families, and of course students. We will continue this crucial work toward improving student outcomes in the Northwest Territories and supporting our students in becoming capable people. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Colleague, before we continue, I'd like to recognize the former Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh Mr. Norn. Welcome to the Chamber.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 397-19(2):  
NWT ACTIVE LIVING FRAMEWORK 2023-2033

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that after several months of engagement and collaboration with territorial and regional sport organizations, the NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033 has been approved. The intent of the framework is to guide the investment of public funds to support the development of recreation sports and physical activity priorities for NWT residents.

Work on the NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033 began prior to the COVID-19 pandemic following amendments to the Western Canada Lottery Act. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has worked hard, in collaboration with its partners, to develop a framework that is representative of the northern jurisdictions, and it supports those who will be underserved or underrepresented in the sport sector. There were some delays experienced due to the pandemic, but work resumed in the fall of 2022 with engagement starting in December.

Engagement included more than 24 organizations and 49 individuals who provided input on what residents felt should be a priority action for the NWT. This engagement culminated in early July with the publication of the What We Heard report which summarized the findings. From this report, the NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033 was developed and has recently been endorsed by our partner organizations, including the NWT Sport and

Recreation Association, the Mackenzie Recreation Association, the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Northwest Territories, and Sport North Federation. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to these organizations for their input and guidance in advancing this project.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033 represents the interests and needs of sport and recreation programs in the NWT and will lead to the best outcomes for residents. The framework will focus on six themes that are of critically import to the NWT active living sector. They include

- Prioritizing Indigenous cultures and practices;
- Building sector capacity;
- Celebrating and supporting local champions;
- Improving access and increasing opportunities for participation;
- Promoting the value of the sector; and
- Investing in the sector with sustainable, flexible funding.

With the completion of this framework, the department will turn its attention to the implementation of these priorities going forward. This will be achieved by aligning funding agreements under the Western Canada Lottery as well as department budgets to this framework. A monitoring and evaluation strategy will be developed to support reporting on key performance indicators and evaluate selected programs on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033 could not have been developed without input and collaboration from key stakeholders, nor can the priorities be implemented without ongoing support of the many organizations that deliver sport, recreation, and physical activity programs to the Northwest Territories residents. Municipal and community affairs will continue to foster this collaboration to ensure the best results.

Once again, I extend my thanks to all those who contributed to this project. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the department to coordinate and manage this renewed effort that has resulted in a document that is broadly supported. I look forward to the implementation of the NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033 for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 398-19(2):  
" HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my statement yesterday, over the last four years I have consistently advocated to the federal government for funding to address housing needs across the Northwest Territories. This advocacy resulted in a significant expansion of the capital delivery program for the Northwest Territories.

Since the 18th Legislative Assembly, an extraordinary annual capital delivery plan of approximately \$136 million in this 19th Legislative Assembly in the 2023-2024 fiscal year alone. This annual capital delivery plan will include the construction and repair of approximately 500 housing units.

The capital delivery program in the 19th Legislative Assembly included a commitment to build an additional 100 new homes for the public housing program which are all either completed or under construction in the current fiscal year. The 100-unit public housing expansion represents the largest increase in public housing units that the territory has seen in decades, with units being built in communities across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier this week, even though significant schedule disruptions caused by evacuations from floods and fire to low water levels affecting barging season and throughout various supply chains distribute the 100 units, rollout is still on track for construction in the 2023-2024 fiscal year as originally planned.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the 100-unit delivery over my term as Minister, Housing NWT has invested over \$29 million in homeownership programming that has assisted numerous private homeowners across our territory with the purchase and repair of these homes, as well as providing much needed programming to assist seniors aging in place.

With the funding, NWT homeowners will be able to address needed home repairs before they became much more extensive and costly. Over this timeline, a further \$50 million was invested by Housing NWT to repair projects to preserve and maintain Housing NWT's existing housing stock.

We have supported new construction and renovation projects for approximately 100 senior units throughout the Northwest

Territories and provided 1,012 senior applicants across the Northwest Territories with funding to improve their homes and support aging in place at the beginning of my term as Minister as well.

Over the past four years, Housing NWT has provided 1,018 residents with support for emergency repairs, 198 residents with funding to support fuel tank replacements. 1,510 residents have accessed our prevention and maintenance program, allowing homeowners to do minor servicing and repairs, dealing with issues before they become more costly.

To support small communities in developing skilled trades, Housing NWT has leveraged every opportunity to help build and maintain this capacity to ensure the success of apprenticeship programs. Housing NWT introduced a requirement in 2020 for general contractors to hire at least one NWT apprenticeship in the new construction contracts. Since this time, Housing NWT's new construction contracts have supported 47 apprenticeship assignments. Housing NWT has also continued to work closely with local housing organizations to provide up to 12 apprenticeship within their staffing to support them each.

To further promote the increase of employment and skills development opportunities in small communities, Housing NWT, in their negotiated contracts with Indigenous governments and businesses seeking to build capacity Since the beginning of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Housing NWT has entered nine negotiated contracts increasing regional capacity in the residential construction sector across the Northwest Territories. These negotiated contracts have resulted in Indigenous governments, businesses, and contractors developing innovative programs to attract, develop, and retain northern workers to meet the commitments set out in our negotiated contract proposals and defined within our communities.

Mr. Speaker, inspired by Housing NWT's commitment to renewed ways of working together, Indigenous governments have had opportunities to participate in planning, design, site selection, and have been engaged in numerous construction contract opportunities. Over the life of this government, we continue to ensure that Indigenous governments are informed about current and upcoming delivery plans and continue to be engaged in key initiatives such as developing community housing plans. These partnerships help to ensure the local housing priorities and needs are considered during the planning process.

Mr. Speaker, while I have highlighted some of the government's housing successes, I want to be clear that this was not done without any difficulty. As I mentioned, the last four years have presented extraordinary challenges for the residential construction sector including disruptions with the material supply chain, the movement of skilled labour between construction sites, and the rising of fuel costs and construction material costs. The reality for remote communities have been even more challenging, which has required a high degree of creativity on our end.

I am so proud of the efforts of Housing NWT staff, Indigenous governments, partners at the community level who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, the natural disasters, and the supply chain issues to support our work of building a better tomorrow for the Northwest Territories. I would like to thank the staff of housing for their continued creativity to enhance programming and to address our housing crisis. While I am celebrating the construction of 100 new public housing units and supports that have been provided, I want to emphasize to my colleagues and residents of the NWT that there is still more work to do to sustain these successes.

Housing NWT will promote a culture of participation, innovation, and continuous improvement well beyond the lifetime of this 19th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to acknowledge Tom Williams, who was a former president of the Housing NWT, and former Minister Alfred Moses who held this portfolio in the last Assembly. Mr. Speaker, respectfully, I tried to carry their legacy forward and working with the people of the Northwest Territories and also enhancing our Indigenous file and working with the people at the local community level. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1654-19(2): REFLECTIONS ON THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, prior to starting my statement, I want to acknowledge Kya Wickens, one of the pages who is here with us today, and who has celebrated her 14th birthday with us in this House on September the 27th. I ask you to join me in wishing her a happy

belated 14th birthday. And I like that big smile and hopefully we didn't embarrass her.

Mr. Speaker, to close off this 19th Legislative Assembly, which I have to say has been an interesting four years which I am pleased to have been part of. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues who I have served alongside for these past four years. I thank each of them for sharing their wisdom with me, providing support, and providing leadership throughout this term. It was refreshing to work with a diverse group of individuals, all of whom I believe had the best interest of the residents of the NWT at heart.

Mr. Speaker, without the hardworking staff in this building, this government may well come to a standstill. Even though I show up for work around 6 a.m. when session is in, I often ask security who else is here, and it's usually the clerks, researchers, library, or support staff who I sometimes think they have staff housing built into this building which we don't know about. And if you do not hear it enough, believe me, your work is appreciated by myself and all MLAs.

The staff who support Cabinet and individual Ministers, I see the workload that you take on and that is not lost on me, and I appreciate all you do, and I appreciate all the baking that you provide to me as well in the mornings, so thank you.

Mr. Speaker, during session we have yourself, the clerks, sergeant-at-arms, translators, pages, security and maintenance staff, all who make sure session takes place efficiently, effectively, and safely, and for that commitment I thank all of you.

Mr. Speaker, government is also made up of many departments that provide diverse services to the people of the Northwest Territories. The delivery of those services requires employees with varying skills, experience, and education. Those employees are the ones doing the heavy lifting for us, and the residents of the NWT. And for that, I thank them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1656-19(2): APPRECIATION FOR FAMILY AND RESIDENTS OF INUVIK TWIN LAKES

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, it's been an honour to represent the Inuvik Twin Lakes constituents the last four years, and I thank you for your continued support. And I hope that I

met your expectations and represented you well in this House. Thank you to the individuals and the elders who have supported me when times got tough. They always had got advice for me and gave me the strength to continue on. Thank you to my friends that have supported me as well. They were always there when I needed them throughout the past four years.

But, Mr. Speaker, without family, I could not do this. I'd like to thank my family for their support. Many of them are here today. My husband Jozef, my best friend, who's always supported me and encouraged me with all my decisions, even the crazy one to run as an MLA. My children Mya and Jozef. As an MLA, sometimes it's hard for our children as they are also under the spotlight, and they didn't sign up for that. But my children were strong and always supported me as they know the work is very important. My grandma Esther, she is my rock. She is one of the strongest women I know, and I thank you for your continued support. My sister-in-law -- scratch that, Mr. Speaker, my sister. Thank you for always being there for me and my kids throughout this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, just like you, if I named all my family who have supported me, I'd be here all day. I would also like to thank my constituency assistant that -- I had two. I started the Assembly with Loretta Rogers. Thank you to you and your family for your continued support. Brenda Bernhardt, thank you for jumping right into the role. You have been amazing. Thank you.

Thank you to my colleagues. This has been quite the Assembly. I've mentioned many times we've had many firsts in this Assembly, some good, some not. Despite what some might think, we have all worked hard together, even with all the natural disasters, and got a lot of work done. Thank you to the clerk's office staff. You've been amazing. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a pleasure working with you as your deputy. Premier Cochrane, you sailed this ship through many storms. Thank you for your leadership.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to let my constituents know that I will be putting my name forward for the 20th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1657-19(2):  
REFLECTIONS ON THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today's the final day of the 19th Assembly. I know that some of the staff here have felt that this Assembly would never end. But, finally, we made it to the finish line in one piece.

Mr. Speaker, I know this Assembly has been long and eventful. Four years not only for everyone in this building but also for the people of the NWT. But as with life, there are always highs and lows and ups and downs. We all make good memories as well as bad ones but, regardless, the important thing is that we learn from our mistakes and our experiences and we keep pushing forward in a good and positive way. We cannot lose sight of what is most important within our lives, our communities, and within our broader society.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude the 19th Assembly, as the MLA for Thebacha there are a few people I'd like to thank on behalf of the people of Fort Smith.

First off, I want to thank all the interpreters that have served throughout this Assembly. I also want to thank all the current and former staff of the Legislative Assembly that have worked here throughout the 19th Assembly. I would also like to thank the Premier and Cabinet for their service in the 19th Assembly. And especially you, Mr. Speaker; love your sense of humour and your casual manner. I'd also like to thank each of the Regular Members for their contributions and perspectives during this 19th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give a special farewell to the outgoing Members who are not seeking re-election. That includes Premier Cochrane, Minister Green, Kevin O'Reilly and, of course, Rylund Johnson. Thank you to each of you for your work in this House and to the people of the NWT.

I want to thank Pascal Erasmus, Priscilla Lepine, and Colleen O'Connor for keeping me grounded.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the amazing constituents of Thebacha for placing their faith and trust in me to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly. It has been an honour of a lifetime to serve my community in this House, and I hope to return to the 20th Assembly to continue fighting for Fort Smith and all the people of the NWT.

And, lastly, I want to thank my husband Peter, my sons Jerry and Mickey, and of course my dog Rambo. I could not do this job without their full support every step of the way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1658-19(2):  
REFLECTIONS ON THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that I survived the last four years of the 19th Assembly. Mind you, it wasn't without its so-called battle wounds and paper cuts. It was a pleasure to serve with my colleagues on both sides of the floor, especially as history was made with the majority of women in the 19th Assembly; the first in the Northwest Territories and Canada.

Mr. Speaker, my time here has been a learning curve when dealing with legislation but well worth the lessons. Mind you, I've been in leadership roles for quite a number of years, so my past experience has served me well here in the Legislative Assembly.

There were many challenges in my role as an MLA, taking into account the two-year COVID spell and not making contact with constituents, especially the other communities in my riding of Kakisa, Enterprise, and K'atloodzeeche, that coupled with floods in the couple of years and the recent wildfires that KFN faced twice in a short period of time.

I may not have seen many of my constituents, but I have always reached out to the leaders by e-mail, text message, or phone calls. I may not have received replies to many of my messages, but I am okay with that. It was surely challenging to address issues without that rapport; however, we still managed to move on.

At this time, I will let my name stand for re-election and can only promise to do a better job in consoling, visiting, and providing better communications to all residents of the Deh Cho riding. Mahsi for all your support through all these tough times and all the tough times wear on the constituents who managed to stay calm and let the authorities do their work.

To my colleagues, mahsi for making my experience here at the Legislative Assembly an enjoyable one. To all the staff in the Legislative Assembly, a huge mahsi for your support and assistance as I navigated my way around procedures and existing processes. Mahsi, and you guys rock.

I would be remiss if I didn't include the Dene Zhatie translators for providing your voice for the residents of both ridings Deh Cho and Nahendeh, Sarah Gargan and Mary Jane

Cazon. And equally to all the translators for their time here at the Assembly.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, for your diligence with me throughout my time here and appreciate your advice and assistance on many matters.

I have to extend my extreme gratitude to my family and grandchildren. I truly appreciate their continuous support.

Mahsi to all the residents of the Northwest Territories. Please stay safe in your future travels and endeavours. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1659-19(2):  
KOSMOS 954 INCIDENT

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with heavy heart and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you in this House today. On May 29th, earlier this year, I spoke passionately about the pressing issue faced by the people of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and all those who live in the Mackenzie River Basin, and I called for a public inquiry into the crash of Kosmos 954, as well for the immediate action to address the ongoing environmental and health concerns that plague our communities. Today I rise to seek answers and accountability from our government.

I appreciate the attention and support that my previous speech received, and I want to thank my colleagues, the people of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, and concerned individuals across the country who have rallied behind this cause. However, it is not enough to merely acknowledge the problem. We must take decisive action to address them.

Since my initial speech, what concrete steps has our government taken to investigate the consequences of Kosmos 954 crash and the contaminant threats that continues to affect our homeland? What progress have we made in understanding the link between the crash and the alarming rise of cancer rates around the Great Slave Lake? Have we engaged independent experts to a conduct comprehensive inquiry into the health and environmental impacts as I strongly advocated? We must not let this critical issue fade into the background.

The people of Fort Resolution, Lutselk'e, Dettah, and N'dilo have been living with the consequences of Kosmos 954 for far too long without the support, compensation, and public apology they deserve. This is a grave injustice that we cannot tolerate any longer.

The Berger Inquiry, which played a pivotal role in shaping this history of the North, serves as a shining example of a government-funded commission that listens to the voices of Indigenous people and communities. We need to have a similar commitment today to address the health of our homeland and water and people. We need our government to listen, to care, and to take meaningful action.

The call for a public inquiry remains as urgent as ever. The health of our communities, the well-being of our environment, and the future of our people depend on it. We cannot ignore the consequences of the Kosmos 954 incident any longer. We must demand answers, demand justice, and demand action. I implore the Premier to provide a comprehensive update on the steps taken by government since my previous statement. Our resilient communities cannot bear this burden alone. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, colleagues. Our resilient communities cannot bear the burden alone. We need the unwavering support of our government at both the territorial and national level to ensure that justice is served, that harm caused is addressed, and that our communities can thrive once more.

Mr. Speaker, let us continue to stand together in solidarity for the health and well-being of our people, our land, and our waters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for Premier Cochrane at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1660-19(2):  
IMPACTS OF CARBON TAXATION ON THE  
COST OF LIVING IN NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my last Member statement is my favorite topic - carbon tax. I'm not going to let them go off this easy, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my last statement in the 19th Assembly, I want to speak again on the federally-imposed carbon tax and its negative effects to the people of the NWT, especially in my riding. Across our territory, 0.05 carbon, that's what we emit, which is nothing. They should be paying us for our fresh air.

Mr. Speaker, my views on the carbon tax are well known. The GNWT have signed off on this

tax. Our government should have pushed back harder against the carbon tax and not accepted it, which I stood up in this House and I fought for, and I fell short. There, we weren't going to them. We just pushed our government and took it lying down, not much of a fight. I hope this tiered system really works that what we're talking about and telling us. At the very least, we could have fought harder, more exemptions for assistance into transitioning into more green energy, for example, Mr. Speaker; more exemptions on such things as transportation, trucks, airplanes, home heating fuel, among others. Because the carbon tax, not only compounding pressures, inflation is adding up and skyrocketing costs and cost of living across our territory. And that's especially so hard for people living in the far north in remote communities what we represent.

Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is hurting people. It's hurting people's finances. It's making it harder for people to put food on the table. It's even making harder for people to go out on the land and harvest animals for traditional foods. In the future, we need to do better. I could go on and on about this, Mr. Speaker, but I'll leave it at that. But I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1661-19(2):  
CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't speak about one of my favorite topics one last time in this Assembly, Infrastructure.

When I say that word, one's mind often turns to roads and buildings, airports, and bridges. But really Infrastructure encompasses so much more than that. It is

- The pipes that bring you water and carry away your waste.
- The fibre optic line that allows you to instantly communicate or watch that sporting event in Europe.
- The solid waste facility where you take your garbage or the water treatment plant that provides you with fresh, clean water to drink.

One only needs to compare the budgets associated with the GNWT departments to understand the sheer enormity of the Department of Infrastructure and all they do for residents and the territory. This is the department that completes the community

resupply and ensures that heat and ventilation systems stay on in our buildings. They ferry us around, keep our planes in the air, and patrol our highways.

Over the last four years, I have been vocal about the extreme infrastructure deficit in our communities. Our hamlets and towns are in desperate need of funding to build new schools and recreation centres, roads, and waste facilities. However, what good is building new infrastructure if we're not properly caring for what we have? Everywhere you go in the NWT the eye is met with crumbling, aging buildings and roads in need of repair. Despite a new capital budget full of road money, the political will to address the infrastructure deficit has been missing in this Assembly. Every year that we fail to provide the funds to upkeep and properly maintain our assets, the costs for repair and replacement exponentially increase. To allow this to continue is negligent and poor fiscal management. One only has to look at the lack of movement, the lack of urgency, to address the shoreline erosion threatening the diesel plant in Fort Simpson for a prime example of this lack of foresight and planning by the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, I want to urge whoever sits in this Chamber in the 20th Assembly to immediately assess and create a plan to address the growing community infrastructure deficit and to properly fund municipalities so that they can operate and maintain their assets in order to ensure their longevity.

And one last thing Mr. Speaker, I want to urge them to build the Mackenzie Valley Highway - a needed lifeline for the Sahtu - if they do anything in the next four years.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1662-19(2):  
REFLECTIONS ON THE 19TH LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Four years ago when I decided to run for MLA in Yellowknife North, it was on a bit of a whim, and I didn't think I had any chance of getting elected at all, Mr. Speaker. So, firstly, I would like to thank the constituents of Yellowknife North for putting their faith in me, Mr. Speaker. They're a unique bunch, the Yellowknife North, and I truly -- truly, it has been the honour of my life serving them.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of my colleagues. Even through the rough times, it has been a learning experience. I am a

completely different person than I was when I entered this House four years ago.

And, lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my two constituency assistants I've had in this Assembly. That is Cathy Kirk and Ms. Sarah Kalnay-Watson. It makes this job so much easier knowing your constituents are in good hands.

Mr. Speaker, thank you, everyone. Best of luck to the 20th Assembly. Keep your stick on the ice.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1663-19(2):  
PRIORITY SETTING FOR THE 20TH  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my parting Member's statement is a gift to interpreters. It is going to be both slowly spoken, and it is going to be brief.

To the next Assembly, I wish you a long and uncomfortable priority setting exercise because that will hopefully mean that you land with less priorities than this and previous Assemblies. We often get lost in the weeds thinking that priority setting is an exercise to outline what the government does for every single item we want to see some form of growth on. But it isn't. It is a question of what you want your collective legacy to be.

Mr. Speaker, you've heard it said in this House before, you are better off to choose a few things and actually make marketable change than to choose many things and change nothing. So if you end up with a long list, stop, take a breath, take an extra day, and get uncomfortable, have hard conversations. Remember, this is your term and you, 20th Assembly, define the priorities and ultimately your legacy. And so to the 20th Assembly, I wish you a long and uncomfortable priority setting exercise. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1664-19(2):  
2023 NORTH SLAVE WILDFIRE  
EVACUATION ON TLICHO COMMUNITIES

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on August 16th, 2023, the GNWT issued an evacuation notice for Yellowknife, N'dilo, Dettah, and Ingraham Trail residents to leave by noon on Friday,

August 18th. This decision was made without consultation with Indigenous government and without even involving all MLAs. Left out were MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and Monfwi.

After August 18th, the four Tlicho communities were the only ones left in the North Slave. It became clear very fast that the GNWT had no plans on how they were going to provide basic necessities for our communities. There was a huge gap in services across the NWT for shipment of food, access to health and social services, and medical prescriptions. It was like the remaining 15,000 people inside the NWT were just abandoned.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho region is self-governing and has capacity to fill some of the gaps in services. I want to thank Tlicho government for establishing evacuation centres in the south. They worked hard to find and look after Tlicho citizens who were evacuated, especially the most vulnerable.

I also want to thank the community government, Tlicho Community Services Agency, the friendship centre, and all our local business. The Tlicho Investment Corporation flew groceries out of Edmonton to support the Tlicho communities.

Finally, I want to thank Sutherland Drugs in Yellowknife who stayed open so they could continue to fill people's prescriptions.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, I have spoken many times about the need for a Tlicho region separate from North Slave. Creating a separate region would allow us to make better decisions on behalf of our residents and more authority to support our residents' needs, especially during times of emergency. It took days before the GNWT had any meaningful discussions with this region and its leaders. This is the reason why I brought forward Bill 98. We need to move away from the centralized decision-making structures that fail to consider the needs of residents outside of Yellowknife.

God willing, I will be part of next Legislative Assembly where I will continue to work for amendments to the Emergency Management Act and the Tlicho region to be established as its own administrative region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1665-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES JOBS IN  
DEMAND 20-YEAR FORECAST REPORT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I am saving my mushy stuff for a little bit later.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has released a report Jobs in Demand - 20 Year Forecast on May 1st. It is full of interesting and information. The report is primarily broken up into categories of educational attainment that will be needed for projected types and numbers of jobs. These could be current jobs that need to be refilled because of turnover, retirement or death, or newly created jobs. By far the largest demand for new workers is for elementary school teachers, at 5 percent of new hires; nurses and secondary school teachers following closely at 3 percent each.

Examples of other leading occupations include doctors, lawyers, engineers, and financial managers. 27 percent of new hires will require university graduation. Trades make up 11 percent of future needs, with customer service occupations such as cooks, automotive mechanics, carpenters, and electricians leading the field. It is notable that it appears not many jobs are needed or will be created directly in the resource sector. The positions requiring college diplomas will make up 24 percent of total new jobs, and jobs requiring high school education or less comprise 38 percent of projected new hires. Now, compare these totals to current levels of educational attainment, and we are faced some unpleasant facts.

New jobs requiring university, college, and/or a trade certification will make up 62 percent of new demand. Today, only 49 percent of workers have attained this educational level, a spread of 13 percent whereas today, 27 percent of the workforce has trades, certificates or diplomas, the projected demand will be 35 percent of candidates to hold these credentials.

In all job categories requiring post-secondary education, Indigenous peoples' educational attainment is lower than non-Indigenous, sometimes dramatically so. Several conclusions come to mind.

First, we are not going to have enough NWT residents to fill occupations requiring advanced education. Many of these jobs will go to new hires from the south or will stand vacant thwarting well-being and provision of services for our residents. I'll have questions for the Minister of Education later today on this topic. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1666-19(2):  
YELLOWKNIFE DENE FIRST NATION CHIEF  
EDDIE SANGRIS

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, one of the unique features of our governance system in the Northwest Territories is the importance of Indigenous governments. Indigenous governments deliver programs and services to their members, run businesses, and engage in a range of intergovernmental activities. Being a leader is challenging, and today I want to acknowledge former Chief Eddie Sangris.

Chief Sangris was born and raised in Dettah. I remember him as a child coming to Yellowknife by dog team. He spent 23 years as a heavy equipment mechanic. I wish I had known that; I could have used some of that service over the time. He was elected as a councillor for the Yellowknife First Nation, a role that he held for 12 years.

In 2007, Mr. Speaker, he was elected as the Dettah chief, a role he remained in for four terms, 16 years. During this time, Det'on Cho companies have flourished. The Yellowknife Dene First Nation housing strategy was developed, and the community has weathered many challenges from COVID-19 to this year's wildfires.

Being a leader frequently means being away from family. Today, his family is here with us today as we recognize his 26 years of service to his communities. Eddie, we wish you all the best, and we thank you for your tireless advocacy for your community members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1667-19(2):  
THANKS TO STAFF AND INTERPRETERS

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my reply to the Commissioner's address, I thanked people, but I left these ones out specifically for today, the last day.

Again, I would like to thank the Legislative Assembly staff. Clerks -- sorry, I'm reading my writing -- researchers, librarians, and support staff. I ended up in Cabinet this time, but I was able to still work with you on a number of projects as being part of the rules committee and in the transition matters. Your advice and support through this time was greatly appreciated, and I thank you for that.

To the MSAs and CAs or EACs of the Ministers, thank you very much for taking my thousand briefing notes and having to deal with them as we moved forward. I greatly appreciate your work, frankness, and compassion for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

To the CAs of our Regular Members, or all our MLAs, thank you very much for the work you did for the residents of the Northwest Territories. You are our frontline people that our constituents get to come into and talk to and, nine times out of ten, tell their stories, and there were some heartbreaking stories that you got to share it, so thank you for that.

And finally, to the translators, you've done an amazing job. Sometimes some of us spoke a little fast. We have a number of speaking notes here. It says slow, and I bet you appreciate it when we were using those. So I would again like to thank everybody.

And to the Regular MLAs, again, thank you for the work you've done for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1668-19(2):  
REMEMBRANCE FOR RCMP CONSTABLE  
CHRISTOPHER WORDEN

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today, residents of Hay River will gather, as they do every October 6th, to remember the life and honour the sacrifice of Constable Christopher Worden.

Sixteen years ago today, on October 6, 2007, at 5:03 a.m., Constable Chris Worden of the Hay River RCMP detachment responded to a call for service. In the tragic events that followed, Constable Worden lost his life in the line of duty. He was just 30 years old, with a wife and 8-month-old daughter at home.

According to his wife, Constable Worden would often say that he loved being a Mountie, and there was nothing else he'd rather do. He was described as a sheepdog, fearless when it came to protecting those who could not protect themselves. Mr. Speaker, for his sacrifice he proved his commitment to protecting others and serving his community. His commitment, as he proved, was unwavering and unquestionable.

Constable Worden was posted to Hay River in 2005. He was very community-minded and quickly became a member of the community, not just somebody passing through town. The impact he made on the community in the two years he was in Hay River is undeniable. This



is evidenced by that fact that 16 years later, dozens of residents still gather for an annual vigil.

This year, the vigil will commence at the community centre at 12:30 p.m. and make its way to the Hay River RCMP detachment where there will be a brief dedication of a new plaque. Unfortunately, the House is sitting today so myself and the MLA for Hay River South are unable to attend, but on behalf of both of us I want to extend our condolences to Constable Worden's family, his friends, the RCMP, and the community. We thank and honour Constable Worden for his sacrifice. It will never be forgotten. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Our continued thoughts and prayers with the family and all RCMP throughout our territory for the work they do. Mahsi.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

### Returns to Oral Questions

#### RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 1578-19(2): FIRE MANAGEMENT POLICY EFFECT ON INDIGENOUS CULTURE

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by the Member for Monfwi on September 27th, 2023, regarding fire management policies effect on Indigenous culture.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is in the process of gathering information from departments, community governments, and other jurisdictions on the actual costs to date. Anticipated projections of the evacuation and fire mitigation measures will be reported to the finance management board in the Standing Committee on Government Operations on a quarterly basis. Until this information is gathered, I cannot confidently provide an estimate at this time.

The cost of actions taken to protect communities and infrastructures during an emergency response is separate and distinct from the work that is done on a yearly basis to prevent and mitigate the risk of wildfires to protect communities or wildlife habitat from wildfires.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change, or ECC, works closely with communities on an ongoing basis to provide advice and recommendations on wildfire

hazard assessments and risk mitigations, which can include firebreaks, FireSmarting, and other measures to help protect their communities from wildfires.

Officials from ECC recently worked with all 29 forested communities in the NWT to update their community wildfire protection plan and the department regularly provides advice on implementation of their plans, including local fuel breaks or firebreaks.

Fuel breaks are one of the many tools used in wildfire prevention, mitigation, and response. It is important to note that they are not intended to stop the direct spread of wildfire. Rather, fuel breaks are intended to slow fires and can also provide fire personnel a control line to safely initiate forms and then possibly to remove fuel between the community and the remaining fire, or the main fire.

It is also important to note that with many groups and organizations involved, this work needs to be planned and coordinated. Local emergency management and community protection is a responsibility of community governments and those costs should be included in the community budget. It is also important to engage with ECC to ensure that any fire prevention work is consistent with the community wild protection plan.

Community government funding is provided annually and may be used for fire protection. The NWT, under the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, supported by ECC, was successful in obtaining federal funding to create firebreaks in the NWT communities.

2023 was an unprecedented wildfire season in the NWT and many places across Canada. The NWT saw record temperatures, severe droughts, extreme wind events that resulted in extreme fire behaviour. This resulted in many aggressive fires that burnt deeper, hotter, faster than we have seen in the past and where we -- and were very challenged -- challenging to manage. I'm proud of all the dedicated experience and well-trained firefighters who worked so hard to protect our communities and critical infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Frame Lake.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I have some family in the gallery today. Renee O'Reilly, my wife Suzette; they've had to put up with my ravings over eight years. So thanks for

being here today, I and couldn't have done it without you. Thank you.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my son, Jozef Semmler, my husband Jozef Carnogursky, my sister Krista Carnogursky, and my grandmother Esther Semmler in the gallery today. Thank you.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Mr. Speaker, it's not too often I get visitors here but I'm so honoured to have my wife, my rock, in regards to what I've been able to do in this House. She's so steadfast. And I just love her to -- I love her to pieces. But welcome to the House. And to my CA Vince Teddy. It's been an honour and a privilege to work with him and been really blessed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize my beautiful wife Elina Edjericon. She's here today and I didn't know she was going to be here, so I just want to recognize her. And I want to say I love you, my wife. I'm also -- I want to recognize the former MLA Steve Norn, who is also here. Welcome. And your daughters, Cynea and Deliah. Also, I want to recognize former chief Eddie Sangris as well and his wife Beatrice and family. I want to say welcome. Also the newly elected chief for Lutselk'e is Chief James Marlowe. I want to say welcome, mahsi. And I also want to -- I see at the back Manuel and Marta Jorge. I want to say welcome. I want to recognize you. And everybody else in the gallery, mahsi for being here. And also, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to all the translators for being here today and all the ledge staff. Mahsi.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've got the names of everyone up there, and I want to go through them one by one. No, seriously, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my wife Bette and my daughter Kayln who are in the gallery today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Many White who has been filling in as my ministerial special advisor for the last two weeks. I'd like to thank Shaleen Woodward, Martin Goldney, and James Tulley, for all the work they do to support the executive council. There are a lot of people here who support the executive council. Thank you for everything that you've done.

Kenzi, you're here today. Thank you for being a page; I really appreciate it. And I would also like to thank Craig Yeo, my constituency assistant through most of my time in the Legislative Assembly. He's done a wonderful job of helping constituents. And finally to my friend Kevin O'Reilly, who I've known since before I moved to Yellowknife because he was talking about mining reclamation in Labrador when I lived there. So Kevin, thank you for this journey that we've taken together.

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

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my ministerial advisor Robert Collinson. He stood beside me for the last four years. Quyananni. He's in the gallery wearing his vacation shirt. When I walked in the office this morning, I said where the heck do you think you're going? One more day. So thank you, Robert. I also would like to recognize Valerie Daniels who's my EA, and also Corrinne Sanderson. Thank you for being with me here today. She was my previous EA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unlike the Member for Nunakput, there's quite a number of residents that actually, I think, are from Yellowknife South. I'm not going to recognize you all. I'm going to do one thing. I'm going to highlight that we have these nice little forms -- people can fill these forms out when they come and visit us here in the Legislative Assembly -- and they can tell you where they're from, which constituency they are. So if you are from Yellowknife South and you didn't fill it out, I'm sorry, I'm not going to get to you. But one person did. Mira Dunn filled out this little form this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I do have a few more though.

Mr. Speaker, also in the gallery, and maybe not quite residents but nearby and near to my heart, are a few folks who have helped me in my ministerial office this -- not just this year, these last four years. Kelly McLaughlin, Mr. Speaker, she was one of the first people that walked into this building with me and if she hadn't, I think I might have turned around and walked back out. Solidad, she's been my EAC for the first three years of my time and, again, really, if I hadn't had her keeping me organized, I'm not sure I would have made it. Since then, I've had Etenda Yakeleya join the office and, Mr. Speaker, it's a lot that comes through our office and very grateful to have her. And Drew Robertson took over as my ministerial special advisor. He is a resident of Yellowknife South so I can recognize him doubly. And, Mr. Speaker, the amount and volume that comes through my office, as all of our offices, honestly, I don't know how I would manage but for these folks.

One last one, Mr. Speaker. Sarah Kalnay-Watson, the MLA from north and south for Yellowknife share a constituency assistant. As a Minister, I really don't know how I'd do my job without her managing what happens at our constituency office. I am deeply grateful for her work for our constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to read out a whole bunch of names today. I want to start by recognizing the family of Edward Sangris that are here to acknowledge his services as a Yellowknife Dene chief for the past 16 years. I apologize if I say some of the names wrong. I'm going to try my hardest.

His son is here, Gordon Sangris. His daughter-in-law, Roseanne Sangris. His daughter, Vanessa Sangris. His son-in-law, Heston Cardinal. His grandchildren, Alicia, Sysa, Maddie, Daylina, and Gordon. I also see his wife in the gallery. Welcome. We also have his in-laws. Elaine Baillargeon-Betsina, George Betsina, Randy Baillargeon, Cyna Dauherty, and Afrie Baillargeon. Thank you, Vanessa, for providing the names, and I apologize if I said some of them wrong. But thank you; it was an honour to work with your father and your relative.

I also want to recognize one of my favorite nephews in the whole world and a city of Yellowknife councillor, Mr. Garrett Cochrane. Thank you for being here on our last day; end

of my political career, beginning of yours. Go boy.

One of my best friends is here in the gallery. Ms. Arlene Hache, who has been strong with me for many, many years and one of my strongest supporters. I am so looking forward to regaining our friendship, being able to go for coffee again. It's been a long time. My heart is with you.

My staff, Brenda Fowler. I ask for a bodyguard all the time since I've been here, and they never gave me one. The closest I could get was Brenda Fowler. She's my bodyguard, and she's the keeper of my calendar. Trust her with my heart. Alex Kincaid is our hockey STAR. She needed those skills to be able to keep up on the BFs coming through the Premier's office. Kenna Gosselin, our go-getter. She's going places. She's young and dynamic, and she will go far in the government. Keep her. Shaleen Woodward, my right hand. James Tolley, Shaleen's right hand. Mira Dunn, another treasured friend of mine, the daughter of Arlene Hache, the woman that I worked with for many years in the Yellowknife Women's Society, a woman that cares deeply about people and honoured to have been able to spend time with her. Going to go for coffee with you too after. And Miranda Bye. Is Miranda here? Miranda worked with me as a ministerial advisor in the Legislative Assembly. This woman is dynamic. She's an Indigenous woman from the Northwest Territories. She will do wonders for the Northwest Territories in whatever position she fulfills. So thank you for being here, Miranda.

Communication staff, many of them, and phenomenal people. They took a beating through this Assembly. Everybody kept saying more communications, more communications, more communications, working day and night. You look pretty good, though, actually, working for all that time. And, again, some of them I might say their names a little bit wrong but I'm going to try my hardest. Egatta Aggie, is he here for me. Gokenska -- I should have that down. We were on every night on the TV but I'm still pronouncing that wrong. Jackie McKinnon lent me her red shall. I'll never forget. Jack Miltenberger, a newer Member to the Assembly. Great addition to the team. Nicole Bonnell filled in for Andrew when Andrew left. I didn't think someone could fill his shoes, but you got big feet. You've done a good job. And Kenneth, who also works in communications. Again, a go-getter. Like I said, she started in our office, moved over to communications. She's going places. And Krysta Pidborchinski. I'm sorry if I said your name wrong. I try my hardest. But the communications team was so vital throughout this government. The staff was so

vital. Those who have come, those who have left, sincerely owe you a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you for being you. Thank you for working with us. Thank you for serving the residents of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's such an emotional day. It's our last day. The four years we've made complete history in the Northwest Territories and within Canada. I don't want to make this a Member's statement, but I want to recognize Bernice Neyally is here, of Deline. You give me a lot of strength with you being here. And just knowing what you've been through in the last year. Thank you so much for being here as well. It means a lot.

I want to thank also my staff. My staff, my strength, my pillars, they've seen me through so much. They've supported me professionally, emotionally. They've been my cheerleaders. Thank you to Kevin Whitehead who had joined me about a year ago. Great skills. Somebody to strongly rely on. Larissa Stewart for getting me ready, getting me organized every day. But when I first started this position, I did have a different team. I don't know if Heather Neykako is in the audience and Jean Yuris. When I first had started the portfolio, the strength from these ladies, extraordinary. And to get me prepared every single day, reading 800 pages a night, getting briefed constantly, and all of a sudden my brain can't even fill that capacity but then you learn how to speed read. I remember the Premier telling me that's a skill you got to learn, learn that basically overnight with -- you just had to.

And also, I just wanted to acknowledge that as Minister I tried to make the position available to people in small communities. I tried to give them the experience because working in this Legislative Assembly, it's pretty much based on who you know to work in the Minister's seat. I want to thank Joelene Menacho of Tulita, and I want to Felicia Bavard of Norman Wells. Both came up from the Sahtu office to come and support and maintain my desk while my employees were off on leave.

And also, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Natasha Takazo who was my constituent assistant as well too, that has been supporting me for the past couple of years. We've seen a lot happen in the region. There has just been extraordinary events that have happened in this last four years. But, also, Mr. Speaker, I need to acknowledge my constituent assistants that had worked for me. Like I said, I tried to make

the opportunity available for everybody to be included in this position. Erin Goose of Norman Wells, Donna Erutse of Fort Good Hope, Les Baton of Deline, Sandra T'selle of Fort Good Hope, and Carrie Campbell of Norman Wells. I want to thank each and every one of you for supporting me and making this position as strong as we're able to make it become. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge Chief Edward Sangris. He will always be the chief of the Yellowknives to me. I also sat with him on the Akaitcho Territory which was when he was grand chief. We had lots of discussions. And, you know, the way the government is today compared to when it was at that time -- and I never had a lot to do with Government of the Northwest Territories at that time. It was mostly federal. And but what we had to do with government at that time was not as nice as it is today, so. And I'd also want to thank his wife Beatrice. She prayed for me a lot and kept me going, and I'm great friends with that family and will remain friends always.

I also want to recognize Chief Marlowe who is also part of the Akaitcho Territory. I look forward to a signed agreement in the near future because that's their goal, and I wish them all well, but especially the Sangris family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize all of the Yellowknife North constituents in the gallery. They are actually very well represented in both GNWT staff and the Assembly, so I won't name them all. And I'd also like to recognize Yellowknife North constituent Arlene Hache for all of her work. And Yellowknife South constituent Sarah Kalnay-Watson for being a great constituency assistant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize some people I have in the gallery here who I've been working with at the Assembly for four years. My ministerial special advisor Rona Sherigan, my EAC Sheila Kotchille. They were a team that was already together when I became a Minister, and I was so happy that I was able to hire both of them. Working with them in the last Assembly, I knew

that -- you know, I knew what a good team they made. I think all Ministers probably think this, but I'm sure we have the busiest office here in the Assembly of all the Ministers, and they manage to keep it organized somehow with ECE, justice, and my Government House Leader role. It's a lot of paper, and they do an amazing job.

Speaking of Government House Leader, in that role I worked with Kelly McLaughlin, who was mentioned, and with Heather Rivere, and I can't say enough good things about them as well. This job is -- you know, there's a lot of work that goes into this but we -- we can't do it alone. And if you don't have good people around you, you're going to fail and, you know, that's not acceptable at this level. So I really appreciate what they've been doing. And someone who never gets acknowledged here as well, it's Andrew who works the mikes here. I don't think anyone's ever acknowledged him. But, somehow, he keeps up with everything we're saying, knows -- you know, and knows what to do. So I appreciate his work as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that Yellowknife North and Yellowknife South like to lay their claim to fame to Ms. Sarah Kalnay-Watson but she is, in fact, a Kam Lake resident. I've known Sarah since we were in grade 5 and her parents moved her from Ontario to Yellowknife, and I reaped the benefits of that.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge in the gallery Taylor Maxwell. Taylor Maxwell, I've known since she was a preteen. She is our committee clerk intern, but we like to call her clerk of everything because we have a lot of expectation on our interns, and she has fulfilled all of them. So huge thank you to Taylor for that. I'd also like to acknowledge Larissa Stewart and Kevin Whitehead, also known as team housing. And we all know I've not been kind to housing over the course of this Assembly, so thank you to them.

I would also like to acknowledge in the gallery today, and welcome, Manuel and Marta Jorge who are here. They have been huge supporters, and they have been huge advocates as well for the business and manufacturing community. So thank you very much for being here today. And to my surprise, my husband Jeffrey Bowden has joined us in the gallery as well. Thank you.

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

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I will probably miss some Great Slave residents in all of this. I can't see much of the gallery, so I apologize in advance.

First, I'd like to start with recognizing my friend and constituent Garrett Cochrane who is a city councillor and a resident of Great Slave. I would also like to welcome Mr. Ollie Williams. I'm not quite sure if he's always my friend but, you know, I do appreciate the work that he does and the relationship that we've had over the last four years as well as recognizing the efforts of his team and the other media throughout the evacuation. So thank you for that, Ollie.

I've been lucky to work with people here. Many of my constituents actually work in this building as well. So I would like to recognize Nicole Bonnell and Jean Yuris as my constituents as well. I think Corrinne Sanderson is my constituent, but I don't want to put her on the spot if she's moved in with her partner yet. So I'll just recognize her and say welcome back. So thank you so much to everyone that's here and anybody that I've missed -- I can see Jozef there as well. So thanks to everybody, and it's just been a wonderful four years. I've had ups and downs, but -- oh, I would be remiss to not thank the translators. I am going to do my mushy one later as well, but I am the biggest probably transgressor of fast speaking and trying to cram it all in. So I want to thank them. I will say this very slowly. I appreciate everything that you've done for me over the last four years and getting my word out to the small communities. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today you heard me talk about my Minister's statement about the NWT Active Living Framework. Up in the gallery is Aaron Wells, the executive director for Aboriginal Sports Circle. Billy O, or Billy Othmer as people call him. I just call him Billy O, executive director for Sport North. NWT Parks Association, Tim Van Dam, interim executive director. I just found out that Sheena's out there so he's covering for her. That's great. And the Mackenzie Recreation Association, Delanie Vale, program director. And I've known Delanie since about there, but we won't say anything about that. But I appreciate these four people. The work they're doing. I was a colleague with them and spent a lot of time asking them a

whole bunch of hard questions and getting good answers. So I thank them for that.

For the team that I was able to get, when I first started, I was told to find somebody that you trust. So I become your Minister of special advisor and I got Jeff Raitte, and then my EAC is Krista Ingram. We were able to tap into her, very lucky. But also Mr. Michael Gibbons, our communications specialist. We got a little bit busy this last couple months, so I thank him for the work there. There's three other people I'd like to thank. Pierre Cochrane, former CA for Mr. Kieron Testart. But he's now a city councillor and all the best with that. Steve Norn, a former colleague here. And my own personal pilot, every time I seem to get on the First Air flight that I have, see Mr. Jeffrey Bowden there. So thank you very much for my personal pilot. Thank you.

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

I'm feeling left out here, so I'll recognize a few people as well. I'd like to recognize Jozef Carnogursky. He also attended school with Diane and Lesa and myself. And to this day, him and Lesa are still together. But one thing I'd like to thank is all the staff. You know, there's a lot of them joining us here today and, you know, we've -- it's a hard job to make all of us look good here but you do a wonderful job. You know, a lot of people don't know what happens behind the scenes of what happens in the Chamber here, but the staff are such a big part of it. And, you know, when I first got in, I was told, don't recognize the staff but, you know, right down -- like, when I was a Regular Member, research played a big part because, you know, a lot of the things that are brought up as Regular Members, they do all the research. Like, if you use the -- what's offered, they bring up all the history. You know, that's such a big help for especially new Members. And I know it's really appreciated. And all the staff, our clerks, Ms. Wickens, Mr. Rutland, Mr. Ball, and everybody in the back, yes. And our new sergeant-at-arms, Mr. Powder, doing a great job. Keep it up. Keep everybody on their feet. And also our interpreters, you're doing a wonderful job. You know, it's a great honour to have you all with us here in the Chamber and carrying on our traditional languages. You know, a lot of people throughout the territory appreciate it. We all do as well. And all the supporters of the Members, you know, it really helps to have that support. I know we wouldn't be here without your support. I'd just like to thank you all once again, and I hope you're enjoying our proceedings.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. On that note, colleagues, we will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Let us begin. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 1631-19(2): WILDFIRE CREW STAFFING AND DEPLOYMENT

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Members of this Assembly have spoken at length on the importance of hiring Indigenous people. Will the Minister at ECC tell us how many ECC firefighters there are in total and how many are Indigenous? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question. NWT fire crews type 1 firefighters, we had 34 crews, which is 12 person crews, for 136 extra firefighters, EFFs were 324, for a total of 460. So if you look at the breakdown of Indigenous populations of the Beau-Del was 89 percent. Deh Cho was 100 percent. North Slave was 100 percent. Sahtu was 99 percent. And the South Slave was 97 percent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very impressive numbers, and it's good to hear.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard about the challenges of certifying type 1 firefighters who were the frontline firefighters during the summer. Will the Minister tell us how ECC utilized these firefighters who were trained but not certified? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about certifications, it's type 1 firefighters. Those are the firefighters that we certify so that if we have to export them, then it's a standard thing across Canada. So we had, like I said, 136 that were certified that were able to then be exported. We didn't export too many firefighters this year because of the season. But the 324 other ones that were trained, they were EFF, so they're our type 3 firefighters. So they mop up things. You see them out there working just as hard as our type 1 firefighters. So that's where we did. So

when people took the training, we still utilize them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, we have heard about retired ECC firefighters coming back to this fire season to help with firefighting efforts, which I know we all appreciate. Will the Minister describe how many retired firefighters returned and what their roles and responsibilities were? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, due to this fire season, we actually brought ten retirees back in. Seven of them were Indigenous people. So most of these people, actually of those ten, were incident commanders. So they were actually the ones that were working on the fires. They were the ones giving the direction, how they were going to fight the fires. So we were able to do that. But I had an opportunity to talk to one in Fort Smith and a couple in Yellowknife and as well as one in Hay River. And I talked to them about the work there. And they appreciated that, you know, that they were able to come in. They saw what the fire situation was going to be, where the weather was, so they came up and they volunteered their time.

I also have to recognize there was one Indigenous contractor who is doing work this summer, and he saw the fires and the impact on the roads. So he actually came to the office in Hay River and volunteered his time. So his business, actually, got put to the side and he started fighting fires as a crew chief. And so he was out there doing that work there. And I know we can't recognize people's names and that, but I have to say thank you to all 11 people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I know who the Minister is speaking about, and I thank him for his service as well in volunteering.

Mr. Speaker, has the Minister received any feedback or is he expecting or asked for feedback from those retired firefighters on their experiences and observation of this year's fire season and how will that feedback be used? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did talk to them. I've actually had, like I said, conversations with five of the -- or sorry, seven of the ten retirees. And the first thing, without even me prompting, you know, I just asked them why, and they said because we knew the season was going to be bad. We had an individual in Fort Smith who

was retired and saw the situation and he already, before the evacuation, was getting ready to leave. When the officers -- the regional office superintendent reached out to him and asked he said, yeah, let's get to her. And he said look, it was a severe drought, the weather conditions, he said fires didn't act the way they normally do. And he said that the work that these people put their lives on the line and, unfortunately, we did lose one firefighter and we had a number of people injured, these people were fighting the fire situation that was different. We will be engaging them with our after-action review plan because this was very knowledgeable. They had some of them 40 years of experience, and they've said they could not ever see this situation as bad as it was. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1632-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES JOBS IN  
DEMAND: 20-YEAR FORECAST

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the recent jobs and demand report. As I noted in my statement, there's a large gap between what will be required for new jobs and where our residents stand in terms of educational attainment. So can the Minister tell us whether the department has reviewed this new report and what is the plan to close our educational gaps for jobs in demand? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member will be happy to know that nobody is more excited about this report or nobody uses this report more than the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. It's an essential document. We always talk about having data, making data-informed decisions. Well, this is that data. So I'll go through some of the ways we use it here.

First, it's open to the public. So the public can look at this and they can make a determination of what they might want to do. So as the Member stated, school teachers are in high demand, the most high demand job over the next 20 years. And so, you know, that can drive people's, you know, paths in life.

The report is also used by post-secondary institutes. So the Aurora College's strategic mandate agreement document references labour market information and the need to align

its program offerings with the labour market information. So that's actually right in the -- their mandate. The report is also the foundation for our skills for success initiative. And the two priorities in there are increasing skill levels through relevant education and training, and bridging education and employment gaps through targeted support. So it allows the department to tailor its programs based on that report.

In addition, we have our career and education advisors, which I've spoken about many times. These are the people who go out and they work with students, grade 9 to 12, to help them figure out how to get to that next point in life after school or what further school to take. They use this information, Mr. Speaker. And we're renewing the JK to 12 curriculum. That information is also useful in those efforts.

So, Mr. Speaker, that information is being well utilized across the department. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. The Minister's got me convinced. It's good. This is a good and useful report, and I commend it -- commend it to -- and those that prepared it.

In terms of educational gaps, a number of them come to mind between what our residents have currently achieved and what will be in demand. So can the Minister tell us how this report will influence our post-secondary education planning and work currently underway to close gaps between educational outcomes in regional centres and smaller communities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Member's pointed out that, you know, there is a gap between what the jobs that are going to be in demand that are needed and the education and skills of a number of our residents. And the fact is that has been the case for a long time. We bring a lot of people up from the south because there are a lot of jobs here already that our residents can't fulfill. So, really, this is the land of opportunity. You talk to people who come up here from the south, and they'll tell you oh, I can't believe, you know, the opportunities. If you want to work, if you want to work hard, you can make something of yourself in the North. So -- and sorry, getting back to the Member's actual question here, as I've already mentioned how the college, it is intending to use these -- this report to ensure that its offerings are aligned with the jobs that are in demand. We have other institutes in the territory that are emerging, organizations offering programming. They can look at this when they're designing their programming. And we also have -- you know, maybe I'll leave it at that. I could just go

on and on, but I'll let the Member ask his questions. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for his enthusiasm and passion. It's clearly evident.

So one of the interesting takeaways of this jobs in demand report is that not many jobs seem to be found or will be created in the resource sector. So can the Minister tell us what, if any, adjustments are being made to teach training programs, such as Skills 4 Success, in light of the jobs in demand report? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Skills 4 Success isn't a program. It's sort of an overarching framework. And within that framework, we can make adjustments based on things like these jobs in demand reports so we can tailor programs. I will say that a lot of the labour programs that ECE delivers, they're delivered using federal funds, and so there are parameters around those funds. But that being said, those are continuous -- we're continuously working with the federal government to adjust those parameters based on things like the jobs in demand report and what we hear from employers and from employees as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Obviously, effectiveness of our Student Financial Assistance Program is a cornerstone of post-secondary success. We say our program's among the best in Canada. But actual graduation or completion numbers tell perhaps a slightly different story when it comes to results. So can the Minister tell us whether the effectiveness of the Student Financial Assistance Program has been reviewed recently and what, if any, further changes might be coming in light of this new jobs in demand report? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department actually recently completed a review. I guess we completed it back in June. It came to this House. We came looking for more money. We found more money internally, and we really enhanced the SFA program. The Member speaks to completion rates of post-secondary students. So one of the things that we've done is we've removed the barriers to completing programs in terms of the financials. So sometimes residents, they might not do very well in a semester. We're not going to punish them for that. We're going to continue to fund them so that they can move forward with their education. Some people need a bit more



time. Mr. Speaker, I know all about that. I spent a few more years in post-secondary than maybe I should have but in the end it was all worth it. But, you know, the cost of going to university and going to college, getting post-secondary, it can be prohibitive for people, especially from small communities where, you know, there's maybe not jobs for students to save up to go to school, where the cost of living is very high. So we've also increased those amounts as well. So we have done our best with this last program review that we just finished to reduce those barriers to the greatest extent that we can. And the students going to school this semester are the first to avail themselves of these new rates and this new program. And so I hope that we see some great results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1633-19(2):  
KOSMOS 954

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement earlier, I brought this up again because I wanted to follow up as to what was happening in regards to Kosmos 954. You know, the chief was here earlier, Chief James Marlowe. I had breakfast with him the other morning, and we were talking about it again. And, you know, when this thing happened back in 1978, when it came down, you know, we used to have a vibrant little community in Fort Reliance, and along the corridor into Lutselk'e, Fort Resolution, and the town of Hay River, in that area, the corridor, where the satellite came down. And, you know, a lot of people that were around at that time, you know, are no longer here with us today as a result of the uranium that was in that satellite. I know I talked about this with the Premier, and it was mentioned that the -- you know, the satellite burned, and there was really no evidence that this stuff is around.

But, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier provide us with an update on the response from the Government of Canada to her request for information regarding Kosmos 954 crash and the potential health impacts and clean-up and participants in the local land users? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by thanking the Member for bringing this issue to my attention. As I stated when he first asked me the questions, I hadn't heard of this incident. So it's always good to learn more. I always say that,

you continue learning for the rest of your life. It's important. So I do thank you for bringing that to my attention.

At that time, I made a commitment to the Member. I don't know if it was the first time he asked or the second. But for sure, I made a commitment that I would bring it to the attention of the federal government. I take it to heart when horrible things happen to anyone, especially the residents of the NWT. So I did, took the time, sat down, and penned a letter to the Prime Minister. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that was before the evacuation. It's been fairly busy, and I haven't heard back from the Prime Minister's office on this topic to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was in my community tour in Fort Resolution about two weeks ago, I had a chance to meet with an elder, Angus Beaulieu. And when I was meeting with him and his wife, we were talking about this Kosmos 954, and he talked about, you know, when that satellite came across, there were debris found on his house and in that area as well. But he had a dog that some of this debris fell on, and it wasn't too long that when the dog would start limping and walking and eventually passed as a result of that debris that was found.

Mr. Speaker, has the Premier had any discussions or collaboration between the GNWT and Government of Canada to initiate further research into the effects of Kosmos 954 crash and the subsequent clean-up and suggestions in her letter to the Prime Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member stated, I did write to the Prime Minister. I did ask him for more research on it or the research that they have. The Member shared his story with me, the story of community members. But I know that there must be some research out there. So I did ask to see it. Again, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the last time I met with the Prime Minister -- it's really hard to get meetings with the Prime Minister to start with, but the last meeting I had was in Edmonton and it was during the evacuation. And unfortunately, I focused on the fires and the lack of infrastructure and the needs of the North. So I do assume that before the end of this government, I will meet again with the Prime Minister, and I will follow up to see if there's any research that he can provide us or any work that they're doing to address this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Premier. 1978, when the satellite came down, it was a year later that

another Russian satellite that came down -- I can't remember where it was in -- I think it was in South America, in and around that area. You know, and it happened not just once but twice. And it's -- I think we need to -- you know, the Prime Minister of Canada really needs to take ownership of this and listen to what the people are saying here in the Northwest Territories. Listen to what my constituents are saying here in our riding. And, you know, it's -- the evidence are there. The proof is there.

So can the Premier inform the House, this House, of any measures that the GNWT is considering or has already taken to address concerns about the higher rates of cancer among clean-up participants and local land users in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have information on hand of specific things we've done for specifically for the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh righting regarding cancer. But I can say that I do know that the stats of people in the North, the stats of Indigenous people, do have higher rates of cancer. And that's concerning. It's concerning to me. It should be concerning to all of us in the North. The direct reasons for that could be varied. Definitely a link to smoking. You know, it was a lot of people back in the day that -- mining has always been a critical resource in the Northwest Territories. There were a lot of people that were exposed to substances that we didn't know much about, arsenic in the capital city. My father worked in the uranium mines and actually died of cancer himself, so. Never did tracing of that. But there were many things. So I think that what I want to say to residents is that it's really important that you do regular checkups. And, Mr. Speaker, I hate to preach, you know, and not do it myself because I'm conscious that I'm not -- the worst of taking care of myself but as soon as I'm done here, that will be one thing I do is a full checkup. And I would support any resident, especially Indigenous people because of the rates of cancer, please get regular checkups. Early detection when it comes to cancer is the key. So, Mr. Speaker, that's what I'd like to say. Thank you.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** It's our last day; we can't keep it short. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know, when I was chairman for the impact review board, I chaired the Giant Mine Remediation Project. And, you know, that was a really big file for us and the impacts of

that, the arsenic trioxide and, you know, even it was said that arsenic was underground. There's 237,000 tonnes of that, equivalent to seven and a half storey buildings in Yellowknife. But anyway, they called it the boogie man during the public hearings. And, you know, when we were going through that process, we brought expert people around the world that know arsenic trioxide, and it was a really good public hearing and process that we went through.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, in light of the ongoing public concerns about the potential presence of radioactive material from Kosmos 954 crash, what actions are the Premier planning to take to ensure the health and safety of the people living in the affected area and to provide support to those who may have impacted by these intergenerational events over the 45 years? And to fix that, we need to bring this also -- again, you know, I'm calling for a public inquiry. I just want to know what the Premier thinks about this. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I committed to earlier in the line of questions, I will follow up with the Prime Minister. I believe things that fly out of the sky are not the territorial government's responsibility. It's the federal government's responsibility. Again, it's -- it was horrible to hear the story of resident in Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and what happened to them. As for a public inquiry, Mr. Speaker, on that I can't make a commitment. This is the last day of session. There's a protocol that no new initiatives unless given notice to Members. So I respect that. But I think that it is something that perhaps the Member, when he's re-elected again, should be asking the next leaders in Cabinet, if he's not a Member of Cabinet. If he's a Member of Cabinet, he's going to have to ask himself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1634-19(2):  
COST-OF-LIVING IMPACTS OF CARBON  
TAXATION IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the finance Minister explain to me why our government did not push back harder against carbon tax being imposed on the NWT at the time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Member

wanted me to run down this clock for 35 minutes by describing all the efforts that we've gone into, I'm certainly happy to do that. I won't, Mr. Speaker, though it is tempting.

Mr. Speaker, there was an extraordinary effort by a number of Members of Cabinet, and a number of Members of Cabinets across this country, asking the federal government to make changes to their policy not the least of which would be to allow heating fuel to continue to be exempted for residential homes, which would make such a difference in northern, rural, and remote communities. They denied that request, Mr. Speaker, or frankly, just simply ignored it and didn't respond to it. Mr. Speaker, we asked also about having different forms of allowances to exempt the North. Again, the best we could do, Mr. Speaker, is be able to hang on to our own program, which we also had to go and do and had to negotiate just to hang on to our program, which would give us the flexibility to be able to tier our own cost of living supports and give us the flexibility in order to ensure that we could continue to maintain a system that would respond to our industry in a way that is very different from what's happening down south. So those are just some of the efforts, again, Mr. Speaker. I've talked about them at length. We've written letters. I've shared those letters. I've raised the issue on numerous occasions at FBT meetings that are public or that are attended by groups. I raised it directly with Ministers. And here we are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was the one that brought up the tiered system in regard to try to push it forward for having that in our territory under the carbon tax. Can the Minister explain to me why there are no -- virtually no exemptions on any of the items relating to the carbon tax in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I most certainly will not attempt to describe or explain what the federal government did or did not do with respect to the carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, I can say, just for the sake of information, that community electric power generation for communities is exempted. And obviously, again, our cost of living offset is meant to then adjust to the fact that we know that not only will expenses for -- in a household be going up, but business expenses go up and some of that will then spill over into individual consumers. And so what we tried to do was adjust our cost of living offset to acknowledge all of that. And, again, I have said before the consensus system here is such that we can make adjustments like having the tiered system. I think that was to the benefit of our system, and I'm glad that we have control of our

system to be able to make that change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain why the government is no longer allowing rebates of carbon tax to be given to NWT residents? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the changes that the federal government made was to remove the ability for point of sale rebates. We were not allowed to affect anything that would negate the carbon signal is what it is. So, essentially, they no longer want it to be a hidden thing. They want everyone to know exactly how much the carbon tax is. In theory, I believe, again, not wanting to certainly speak for the feds, but is the idea that this then makes us all more aware of how much fuel you're using. It doesn't do much good when you don't have any other choice of what you can use other than fuel to heat your homes. But there we have it, Mr. Speaker. Again, what we've tried to do is build it in to our cost of living offsets and our rebate programs, including the community government grants, something that will help offset those increased costs that we're no longer allowed to have a point of sale or the negation of the point of sale on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain why there's no exemption on the carbon tax such as for transportation of food, airplane fuel, home heating fuels, and the federal government blaming everybody but themselves for this carbon tax when you got the biggest emitters, such as India, China, and the US not paying carbon tax, and Canada's paying the carbon tax and putting the burden on the people. I know this is out of our control but everybody's being blamed but the federal government. This carbon tax should have been a no-go in this House. And in regards to when we brought forward and we brought the big -- the argument, I guess, on the vote to take this on, there should have been a tiered system in place. There should have been airplane fuel, heating fuel, and the transportation being supplemented. But it's not.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister just explain why there's no exemptions on carbon tax on such these -- transportation, airplane fuel, and heating fuels in our territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, aviation gasoline

and jet fuel is exempted still for now. Who knows what the feds might do next? But it is exempted for now. But most certainly diesel, gasoline that powers all the trucks that carry a lot of our cargo, that carry the other fuel to heat the homes, that power the barges that bring our -- much of our resupply to communities, those fuels are under the carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, I've said this before, that the federal government does go to international conferences, acknowledges the fact that other developing countries, developed without access to the kind of industrial processes that have benefitted western nations and is acknowledging that maybe there needs to be an adjustment on an international scale, and yet, here we are in the North where the more southern parts of Canada have benefitted from the ability to industrialize when they did and using all of the carbon fuels that they did, and in the North we don't have the same level of infrastructure, we don't have the corridors that they do, we don't have the energy corridors, we are disconnected from the northern -- North American energy system, and yet here we are paying that tax. I share the Member's frustration, Mr. Speaker. But in a jurisdictional system, the carbon tax was going to get imposed whether we liked it or not, and they would simply take it. So we've held on to our own system. We've carved our own path. We're not going to start finding ways to reduce our carbon usage because that ultimately is going to save money, but we're going to need the feds to step up and help. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1635-19(2):  
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We spent four years talking about the procurement review. We've had a number of recommendations to change the Business Incentive Policy over those four years. So one last time, for the Minister of ITI, will we see any changes to the Business Incentive Policy in the life of this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all of the proposed revisions that were in the recommendations from the panel are going to be captured in a revision to the BIP. Thank you.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that means we are getting a new definition of a northern business. Can the Minister just confirm that and, if so, what that division will be? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that does mean that we are getting a new definition, but sometimes what's old is new again. And so, really, what has happened, and what the recommendation of the panel was, is to go back to an earlier form of definition. So that definition will consider -- well, and it has to adjust the BIP to the definition of a northerner, what defines someone who's a northern individual. And it's meant now to be for six months of residency, not 12, which is really looking at a way of increasing people moving to the North and opening businesses. We had some instances that came in the course of the review of people saying that they took their business elsewhere because it simply would be too long to be recognized as a resident here. But more importantly, to the point, Mr. Speaker, what we have now, in addition to the existing businesses, where beneficial ownership of 51 percent is considered, we are also now looking at businesses where the -- if it's a -- whether, you know, corporation, partnership, proprietorship, where the majority of the employees conduct operations here and there's a Northwest Territories based manager that oversees the operations. That's the change, Mr. Speaker. It really takes us back to what we were in a situation of before. Having gone through it before, we are well placed to know what was working with this old -- and now old version and what had worked previously. So happy to accept the recommendation of the panel on this. Thank you.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel quite confident that Walmart does not have the majority of its employees in the Northwest Territories or 51 percent of its owners do not reside here. And just to confirm, does this mean that Schedule 3, the old grandfathered southern businesses, including Walmart, are going to be removed from the BIP policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there will not be any need for a schedule anymore. However, whether the business is on that schedule, and there are a few, will or will now not be under the BIP, Mr. Speaker, they should go through the process if they want to fall under BIP, they should go back -- I, in fact, just received an e-mail this morning from a northern business but where the owner actually does live across the border, but it's an entirely northern-based business. I would encourage folks now to reach

out to their ITI regional offices, let's take a look at whether or not they will fall under this definition. I'm not going to go one by one with them right now here. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1636-19(2):  
EXCLUSION OF FORMER STUDENTS OF  
CHIEF JIMMY BRUNO SCHOOL FROM  
CLASS ACTION LAWSUITS

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is important for my constituents because many were left out of the process. So the question is for ECE, or it could be for justice as well, and it's the same person, so.

Mr. Speaker, students who attended Chief Jimmy Bruneau school from 1972 and those students who resided at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School residence from 1972 to 1974 and from 1992 to 2004 were left out of the residential school and day school class action lawsuit. The students who attended these school experienced the same abuse. I have heard these students have been excluded, but I am uncertain why. Can the Minister of ECE clarify whether these students have been excluded due to the Society Act or for what reason? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, I'm not an expert on those class action lawsuits but from what I understand, they were filed against the Government of Canada. Chief Jimmy Bruneau opened, I believe, 1971, and at the same time, it was -- there was the Rae-Edzo School Society was created. That was the first ever Indigenous run education board in Canada from what I understand. And that was the body that was directing and controlling the school. And so it was not the Government of Canada. It was the Rae-Edzo School Society. And that is why, from what I understand, they were not included. Thank you.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, the GNWT educated these students. What is the GNWT and ECE taking to take responsibility for the abuses that happened at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I just have to reiterate the Premier's comments from yesterday, when she suggested that anyone who feels that they have a claim against the

school should seek legal advice. That's the appropriate recourse in this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, yes, I understand. So, but I'm still going to ask these questions. What compensations or any help is being discussed to support former day school students and residential school survivors at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so I don't have any specific programs for former students of Chief Jimmy Bruneau that I can point to. But there's definitely a recognition in the Northwest Territories of the effects of colonization and residential school and just the Western ideologies that underpin, you know, the Northwest Territories. And so everything that this government does or tries to do has a focus on reconciliation and supporting the residents who were impacted by things like residential school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1637-19(2):  
COST OF TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION  
PROJECT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm feeling pretty good considering I got some answers to the changes to BIP. Maybe I can get a number now, Mr. Speaker, a number that will save me speaking for quite length of time at third reading as I vote against the capital budget, a number I've been asking for for years, Mr. Speaker, and is -- can the Minister of Finance give us a cost estimate of what we think the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project will cost. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I think I have said before, we do have a final business case. The final business case does go to our steering committee first. This is the Indigenous government partners who are members of that watershed of the Taltson region who are still choosing to participate in the steering committee process. Mr. Speaker, so that work has been done. It is a lengthy, complex, and detailed. When while we may be able to share documents like that through the confidential processes of the House, I will not be in a position to put those numbers out forward on the floor of the House. But obviously being able to share those kind of information and details should allow Members to ask questions in an

informed manner and to consider the issue in an informed manner without me having to necessarily speak to a number that, quite frankly, is a number that is a point in time on a very large project. So thank you, Mr. Speaker

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there's some argument not to share the entire business case. I think there is a zero argument not to give an updated cost estimate. What's going to happen is we're going to have an election and everyone's going to say should we build the \$1 billion Taltson Dam. And they say \$1 billion because we released the business case in 2014, and that was the cost then. And, Mr. Speaker, it is a lot more than a billion dollars. So when we go into a democratic election, I would just like people to say the correct number. I understand there's this confidentiality around the business case and who may be buying power and those negotiations, but can we update that number.

So can the Minister give me a date at which the government will feel comfortable giving us an updated cost estimate on the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Infrastructure and I sit on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories on the steering committee, but we are, really, Members of that steering committee. We don't -- we're not leaders. We're not the sole proprietors of this project. We are part of that committee. So I can't, and I won't, give a date without consulting.

What I will do, Mr. Speaker, is direct our departments to ask the steering committee members with which we participate whether or not we are in a position to share a number. But if not, Mr. Speaker, at the very least, whether we can share some update as to the scale or magnitude of the project. I can say there's still at least one fairly critical decision that needs to be made before we can determine the final number. And there's sort of an A choice -- choice A or choice B. So it's going to be difficult to say. I do think it is possible in the course of an election to speak to whether or not we are investing in a billion or more than a billion-dollar mega project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** You know, I -- well, I think it would be inappropriate to say during an election that we're investing in a billion-dollar project, Mr. Speaker, because it's going to be a lot more than that. And I'm very confident that the government's number is already outdated and underestimated based on construction inflation costs. So I guess I'll try one last time.

Can I get an over/under on \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, I do -- I guess maybe this is where we will disagree. So there was at one time an estimate of a billion dollars. There's been inflation. There's been the passage of time. There's costs of fuel. So it is pretty easy to see that we are looking into the stage of being well past the billion-dollar mark. And as I've said, there's still one critical business decision to be made by potential steering committee meeting group as to the routing, and that will impact the costs. So I'm not in a position to say on my own which of those two choices it will be. The steering committee needs to make that choice before the number can be finalized. As I've said, as far as giving a sense of what those two numbers estimated as of now are, I will commit to going back to the steering committee, asking if we want to put that out. But I do think that the members of the public in the territorial election should be talking about for the future of energy. They should be talking about if we want to invest in a billion dollar or more billions of dollars scale hydro project or if we want to be looking for other options, and what those options are and what the megawatts are, and what our megawatt needs are.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't put him up to it, but I'm talking about the Commissioner's address later so I'm going to stop now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1638-19(2):  
CAMERON HILLS GAS FIELD  
REMEDIATION AND LIABILITIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. You know that I couldn't squander this last opportunity to go back to my favorite Minister, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, on one of my favourite topics, Cameron Hills remediation. So here goes, Mr. Speaker.

You know, so I want to ask about -- the last report I can find of anything happening at the Cameron Hills abandoned sour gas field is dated March 2023 when well remediation at about 44 sites was winding down. There has been no reports about the court -- from the court-appointed receiver now for ten months. I want to ask the Minister what's been going on at the site since March of this year. 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. I'm going to take 16 minutes and 5 seconds to answer this question. I guess I can't. Mr. Speaker, phase 1 of the environmental assessment -- site assessments were completed on 20 wells. Inspection of the sites were conducted by GNWT and OROGO. Most of the production and significant discovery licenses have been surrendered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay. Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. So we've had some inspections done. But it doesn't sound like much work is actually happening at the site. So, you know, given this lack of activities and reporting on the site over the last seven months, I'm hoping that the Minister can explain the schedule and remaining work to be done at Cameron Hills. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, remaining work under OROGO order includes gas mitigation testing on 24 wells. Upon conclusion of the fire season, cut and cap four wells that require gas mitigation testing and removal of pipeline segment attached to two quad bridges, removal of bridges, a culvert, and main camp buildings.

All this may have been impacted by the fire over the summer. Removal of the intergovernmental -- or sorry, interprovincial pipelines. However, the Canadian energy regulator has -- does not want it removed yet. Conduct phase 2 environmental assessment -- site assessment and ground truth inventory environmental liabilities remain at the sites, such as contaminated soil, sumps, and site infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Wow, that sounds like there's still a lot of work that needs to be done. It's going to cost a lot of money, and we want to make sure there's some local benefits there. But when I look at the public registry for the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, there's still no submission of a final closure and reclamation plan or even a cost estimate of the environmental liabilities. So I'd like to know from the Minister when that plan and cost estimate will be submitted to the land and water board, and why it's been delayed for years. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Strategic Oil and Gas Limited has been under receivership since

2020, and the receiver is legally responsible for managing the site and all regulatory requirements. The receiver reports to the Alberta Court of King's Bench. The land and water board approved conceptual closure and reclamation plan in 2020. A revised closure and remediation plan with other work at the sites is required by June of 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Just one more question of -- for my favorite Minister, and I'm sending it with love, the site is located in the Northwest Territories but the first phase of the remediation work was awarded to an Alberta company with no local benefit requirements, even though some Indigenous governments wanted to do the work. So I'm going to ask the Minister if he can explain how GNWT is going to ensure local benefits moving forward, you know, -- we're trying to build a remediation economy, so how are we going to get local benefits from our remaining work? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I feel the love from the Member. I greatly appreciate it. And it's the last set of questions, so thank you very much.

On a serious side, Mr. Speaker, ECC is working with ITI and various levels of governments on building a remediation economy that includes capacity building for Indigenous businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1639-19(2):  
FAMILY DAY HOLIDAY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a big fan of four-day workweeks, and so I've really enjoyed these back-to-back holidays we've had creating two 4-day workweeks. And I'm a big fan of holidays especially in the dark cold months of February. And so for one last time, for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, does the Minister support his family by creating a family day holiday in February. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish the Member would have stopped when he got those yeses from the Minister of ITI earlier. It would have ended this on a high note. But the answer is no, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. I thought Frame Lake was going to get one more set in there for ECC. Colleagues, we will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, we will continue. Let's try this again. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Frame Lake.

### Replies to the Commissioner's Address

#### MR. O'REILLY'S REPLY

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Where's the Kleenex? Just in case. It would probably be easier to do this without an audience today.

It's been an honour and a privilege to serve the residents of Frame Lake and indeed all the people of the Northwest Territories. Frame Lake is an amazingly diverse riding. I have lived in the riding for 30 years, and I love it. I need to acknowledge some people that have supported me and indeed all of us while we have been here for the 19th Assembly, most importantly, all of our families that loaned us to this great institution to make decisions on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Thanks to my wife Suzette and our adult children Amber and Rene. You were often subjected to my debriefings and rants but also served as patient sounding boards. I could not have done this without you.

Thanks to all our fantastic staff that keep this place ticking over for all of us. They always tried to make us look good with varying degrees of success. They are the unsung heroes of democracy, and few will ever know the sacrifices and hard work they do for all of us and the public. I acknowledge that I can be hard on our staff but have always complimented good work and never asked for anything I wasn't prepared to do myself. I would also like to recognize and sincerely thank Craig Yeo and Michael Burchill who faithfully served as my constituency assistants and helped many residents with care and respect.

Thanks to my colleagues in this House. You have had to put up with a lot from me. I am the slowest and pickiest eater, have a healthy skepticism of some traditions, and rarely hold my tongue. That being said, I think you would have to agree that I do my homework and more; I've been honest and respectful, admitted mistakes, and remain open to persuasion and

new ideas. Like the Speaker said, I will tell you what I'm going to do. I'll give you notice first. I will tell you what I'm going to do. And then I do it. No surprises.

People do not send us here to agree with each other. Differences are healthy and lead to better decisions even if it is a difficult journey. I know that Cabinet thinks I'm rather sparse and miserly with my accolades for their work, so listen carefully. Although this Assembly was often frustrating, I felt and believe that this time around we actually had a Cabinet that was interested in working with Regular MLAs. So hats off to all my Cabinet friends for trying to work with us on this side. My sincere thanks.

Also thanks to our public service who faithfully carry out our direction no matter how crazy that may be at times. During the 19th Assembly, the COVID pandemic, floods, and then fires had a huge impact on our ability to get work done and to work together. Many important initiatives, legislation, and policy changes were delayed. The pandemic also changed the way we conduct our business. In my view, some changes have been positive while others much less so. Our reliance on video conferencing was helpful but came at the expense of personal relationships and communications.

We've had some difficult personnel matters that we've had to deal with in a very public fashion; however, as painful as that was, we learned from those experiences. Our systems work, and based on lessons learned, we put in place various changes to allow for faster but fair decisions and off-ramps. I urge all NWT residents to exercise their right to vote carefully and thoughtfully, send respectful, hard-working people from a diversity of backgrounds and interests and experience to ensure that public consensus government continues to work.

I especially want to recognize those Members who do not live in Yellowknife. You've carried a much larger burden. I have the luxury of going home every evening, and even if it's very late, being with my friends and family. But I want to thank you guys for the additional sacrifices you had to make.

I want to commend you, Mr. Speaker, for the promotion and support of the Assembly in all our official languages. Mahsi. I also need to recognize the progress that has been made in using all of our official languages in this Assembly and the dedication of our interpreters to make sure everyone can better understand what is said in this place. Merci, mahsi, Marci, Quana, and Thank you.

The OpenNWT website continues to provide a great record of Legislative Assembly debates.



That data shows that in all I spoke 350,000 words in each of the 18th and 19th Assemblies. Can you believe it? I believe the only ones who spoke more words than me were MLA Abernethy and MLA Wawzonek. A search of all remarks shows that the most-used word spoken by me was "thanks."

In this Assembly, my office provided services to 104 constituents needing help with GNWT-related issues. I brought forward three private members bills over two Assemblies, two which were successful or incorporated into government bills.

We have accomplished a lot together, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, and here are a few highlights:

We changed the way that resource management bills are reviewed so that it is a collaborative process with Indigenous governments. The only place in Canada and perhaps the world that does it this way. We have our first product of that process, a new and better Forest Act based on co-management and sustainability.

We changed the Fiscal Responsibility Policy -- maybe not as much as I wanted -- and practices to begin to limit perpetual over-budgeting on capital and increase transparency in our finances.

We improved the Ombud's authority through a Private Member's Bill. A special thanks to MLA Johnson for that initiative.

We improved Cabinet's carbon tax with mandatory public reporting and revenue sharing with community governments.

We passed legislation to better implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which will change the legislative and policy agendas for future public governments. More work is needed to ensure everyone is at the table and that Regular MLAs are involved.

We laid the foundation for an expanded and improved postsecondary education system for the NWT to help us build a knowledge economy.

Much work remains, including action on our climate and caribou crises, poverty, system-wide improvements to education, universal child care, improved services for seniors, completion of Indigenous land rights agreements, and getting our housing out of core need.

That's my advice on priorities for the next Assembly. Focus on one large infrastructure

project, the Mackenzie Valley Highway that connects communities, and do it in an incremental fashion to ensure that communities benefit. Treat housing as a large infrastructure project. Connect all of our communities to affordable and reliable internet services. Build community and household energy self-sufficiency. I think that should be your infrastructure goals for the next Assembly.

One of the first issues the next Assembly will have to deal with is a review of the fires and emergency management. Please make sure it is an independent third-party comprehensive review with public participation, resources, and access to expertise. A terms of reference should be collaboratively developed among the Council of Leaders, Cabinet, and Regular MLAs.

This is not about finding fault but learning and adapting to a changing world with a climate emergency and collaboration between Indigenous and public governments.

Throughout all of my time here, I applied a laser focus on transparency and accountability on legislation, policies, and processes. Public government has not just a responsibility but a duty to ensure the public has an opportunity to see important documents and decisions and to participate in decision-making. This lens can and must be applied systematically across everything this government does. We can and must do a better job of actually implementing the Open Government Policy.

One last challenge, Mr. Speaker, please find ways to better explain in plain language what happens here, how we make laws, how consensus government works, and the difference between the Legislative and Executive branches of government. Make more of the work that happens here public and accessible.

Never say never, but my current plans do not include becoming a candidate in the election for the 20th Assembly. It's time for a break and to spend more time with my family. I'm not going to go anywhere, and I'll probably poke my nose in here just to annoy you once in a while. If you ever want my suggestions or advice, just ask. I can honestly say that I've never worked as hard in my life. I did my best to bring my experience, integrity, and creativity to this job.

Thank you for the opportunity and challenge of serving as the MLA for Frame Lake. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Monfwi.

## MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG'S REPLY

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as an elected official, I believe it is my duty to utilize every avenue available to speak up and advocate for my constituents. For that reason, I would like to use this time to respond to the Commissioner's address before the end of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there is only so much time allocated to MLAs to make a Member's statement on each day during session so there is not always enough time to share information with my colleagues. Therefore, I'm going to share my view on a variety of topics that I have not yet had the chance to speak or expand on.

First, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say that my prayers and thoughts goes out to the people of the NWT and my constituents that have lost family members and friends over the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, when I got sworn in on August 5th, 2021, there were three elders who were here with me in the Legislative Assembly, no longer with us, 99-year-old Elizabeth Michele, 94-year-old elder Philip Dryneck, and my God sister and elder Maryann Football. It is in their honour I continue the work that I do.

Mr. Speaker, I know how difficult it is to lose people that we love. May the Creator help those that are grieving and help us on our healing journey. As a community, we need to continue working together to support each other so we can move forward.

Mr. Speaker, one alarming trend which I and other people have noticed in recent years is the increasingly high numbers of young people who are dying prematurely. We are all very concerned about what is happening in our communities and need to do more to support young people in areas of mental health and addictions. Our elders say it should be younger people burying older people, but in recent years it has been the opposite and this trend seems to be happening across the entire NWT. This should be a priority of the next Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there are some additional points I would like to share regarding the Behchoko fire, which is numbered Z7015.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, this fire was reported on June 28th. However at that time, ECC said it did not consider this wildfire as a threat. I believe that initial assessment by ECC was a mistake because if ECC had addressed that fire sooner, then we could have prevented a lot of damage. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT fire

management policy and control burns, the last one that I am aware of that happened in North Slave region was August 25th, has caused the NWT over 4 million hectares of land burned and that amounts to eight times the size of Prince Edward Island.

Outside of Yellowknife, the majority of the people are Indigenous. It is the Indigenous people who have a unique and powerful connection to the lands of the NWT. These lands have sustained us for thousands of years. Mr. Speaker, it's so disappointing that nowadays everything is measured in terms of dollars. We love our land more than money. For us, our land is priceless. We love our land along with all the plants and animals that live here. So it hurts us, it pains us, when we see such a giant swath of land burn due to wildfires. Not only do these fires destroy homes, cabins, and other structures, but the fire also destroyed sacred sites and traditional lands that are of tremendous value to many Indigenous people across the NWT. As I've said before, there are traplines destroyed. There are hunting grounds burned, millions of hectares of animal habitat lost, and countless animals lost in these forest fires.

Mr. Speaker, that is not even truly considering the human impacts that these wildfires have on people. To the communities who have had had to evacuate this year alone, I know of many people who feared for their lives when they had to evacuate. People did not know if they would get out of those situations alive. Also, Mr. Speaker, considering there is zero cell service on Highway No. 3 between Behchoko and Yellowknife, there were several people who failed to receive the emergency alert to evacuate when the wildfire was getting dangerously close to the cabins and homes along the highway. It is in situations like those, when cell service is essential to have, therefore the NWT is in desperate need of cellular service to be installed on that highway. If there had been cell service, maybe people could have prepared better prior to evacuating.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, when I ran in the by-election two years ago, there were several priorities that I campaigned on which I intended to address upon coming into office. The main issues I wanted to work on was housing and mental health and addictions.

I have worked closely with this government and the Tlicho government to improve programs and services to the four Tlicho communities and other regions as well. Since being elected, Mr. Speaker, I have advocated for a treatment centre to open in the NWT based on the needs of the people and in the regions, for more home ownership opportunities for NWT residents,

and for improvements to be made within the child welfare system, among others.

Mr. Speaker, in order to solve the problems facing the NWT, we all need to work together. We need to work together both within this House and with all levels of government, including Indigenous government. If we all work together, then I truly believe that we can all move forward in a good way. Only by working together and supporting one another can we make things better.

Looking ahead, Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of the 19th Assembly, I believe now is the right time for me to formally and publicly announce my intention to seek re-election in the 2023 territorial election as the MLA for Monfwi in Tlicho region. I know there is still much work to do. God willing I will be fortunate enough to be re-elected, I will continue to advocate for people and work on the issues that is most important to our regions.

Mr. Speaker, if elected to the 20th Assembly, I will continue to advocate for people's homes to be repaired, additional housing units to be built in Tlicho communities. I will also continue to advocate and find ways to make life better for children and families, mental health, their mental health and addictions, as I believe we must do everything we can to improve and the quality of life of our future generations to ensure they will have a bright future.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to add that the new collective agreement for the UNW, Union of Northern Workers, must be a good deal for the employees of the GNWT. Our government must look after their employees, ensure that they have fair pay increases because they have to be able to feed their families as well. As someone who worked within the GNWT public service for 28 years, I know that it can still be hard to get by and put food on the table. Even in a dual income household, there are still difficulties people face.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, with the utmost respect, all of the firefighters, Canadian Armed Forces, first responders, and volunteers who helped battle all of the wildfires across the NWT this summer. I know that I have been critical of the government on several issues but I do not put any of that fault on the people on the frontline. Firefighters put their lives on the line every time they go out in the field. So on behalf of the Tlicho region, I want to thank all firefighters for their efforts in protecting the people and communities of the NWT. Without you, there would probably be nothing left standing across our territories and regions in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all my colleagues for their contributions and collaborations during the 19th Assembly. While I may not have served a full four-year term, I have learned a lot within the time that I have been in this House. And I intend to continue to cooperate with Members on both sides of the House in the 20th Legislative Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank all the staff here at the Legislative Assembly who have helped me transition into the position of MLA midway through this Assembly and also to the interpreters/translators from all the regions for keeping our language alive. It is thriving.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my husband Kevin and families for being there for me. And I'd like to thank all my constituents and residents that have taken the time to share their stories and concerns with me over my term. It is hard to speak of our tragedies and trauma. I really do appreciate that they have trusted me enough to share them with me so I can do a better job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Kam Lake.

#### MS. CLEVELAND'S REPLY

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by honouring all of the artists who gave me permission to purchase and honour their work in this House. Mr. Speaker, I stand in front of you today wearing the same earrings that I wore my first day in this House. These earrings are vintage beads set one by one in tanned moose hide by local artist Jessie Lafferty. Jessie's work is pristine, with focused and deliberate skill. In every design, stitch, and finished piece, she carries the mastery of her great grandmother who passed her skills to Jessie. Art is beautiful, but it is far more than a thing of beauty. Art connects people to themselves, is a conduit of healing. Art connects people to one another. Art connects people to culture, land, and elders. Art is an important to our well-being as it is to our shared and individual histories, Mr. Speaker. And Jessie's art marks generations of love, storytelling, healing, and beauty through art.

I believe that art helped me solidify my journey in this House. While my experience as a public servant was invaluable to my understanding and knowledge of government, I believe it was my private industry business experience and the connections with residents afforded to me through my art-based business that solidified my honour in serving the residents of Kam Lake. Jessie's artwork were my good luck charms during the 2019 election and followed me from forum to forum and helped me start my

journey here. It's important that we never forget where we came from in these roles, Mr. Speaker, and celebrating northern artists every time I step into your House was, for me, an important reminder of my roots as an artist and entrepreneur and the intimate connections fostered with residents.

Mr. Speaker, my greatest gratitude today starts with the residents of Kam Lake who trusted me to serve them over the last four years. I want to sincerely thank every single one of you who reached out with issues, concerns, and lived experience through e-mails, phone calls, and in person meetings. Working with residents was and truly is the best part of this job. You have made me a better northerner, and I am forever grateful to you.

Mr. Speaker, during the Commissioner's February 2020 address, we had not yet seen a global pandemic or record floods and wildfires spurred by the climate crisis. And as the Commissioner reflected on the mandate of the 19th Assembly, she said, quote, our plan puts people first and recognizes that government succeeds when we support the success of every person in the territory. It is a holistic plan that takes into account the physical, social, wellness, and employment needs of residents. We know that people need a strong and secure foundation on which to grow beginning with the basics of food, shelter, and health. End quote.

This very core foundation was dismantled for so many residents during evacuation. So I would like to start there, Mr. Speaker. Residents' evacuation stories are drastically different.

First, Mr. Speaker, I have a tremendous amount of gratitude to the frontline workers. Folks on the ground did an amazing job both within the private sector and multiple levels of the public sector. For many, that grind has not stopped as they continue to plug away at this year's fire season that got a jump on spring, ravaged the summer, and pushes into fall. So thank you to firefighters, essential workers, volunteers, and all who stepped up. I'd also like to extend a thank you to many other parts of Canada who welcomed evacuees and even offered something special to those who found themselves spread from coast to coast, but especially to Alberta who went above and beyond for NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, yes, I have a tremendous amount of gratitude. But you can have both gratitude and at the same time anger, sadness, and frustration for what went wrong, the traumas, and losses of residents, and the numerous asks that went unfulfilled. Mr. Speaker, as this government still works on this year's fire season, the next one is only six months away.

The next Assembly needs to prioritize public safety and emergency management. Every year of this Assembly has been marked by unprecedented events but at what point does unprecedented become expected, and we accept that our changing world is marked by new highs and lows where the name of the beast might change, but the demands it places on this government are to be expected. In addition to a clearly required emergency business continuity plan to support residents, this government also needs to determine how it supports its workers who are the ones that show up to the frontlines time and time again.

The week of evacuation, I came across a handful of public servants serving different roles in our community. They were undersupported, they had not slept all week long, and were all at their breaking points. People who should have stayed did not, and this left multiple public servants in dire positions, from nurses sleeping at hospitals with no relief, to public servants working solo trying to operate critical infrastructure without the staff, to staff working without tools to serve residents or the authority to create them. But the term essential worker, Mr. Speaker, does not mean lone wolf, working 30 days straight with no reprieve, and then expected to return to work as normal on the 31st day with compensation no different than colleagues who didn't work. This government has a number of public servants who have shown up crisis after crisis in this Assembly, and they are burnt out.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to sort out its emergency communication and cannot continue its siloed approach. It currently relies on Cabin Radio to consolidate information from multiple social media pages and regurgitate it in digestible form. If Cabin Radio closed its doors tomorrow, crisis communication would be hooped.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard multiple calls and commitments in this House for a fire season and evacuation review. The review needs to be independent, transparent with included itemized costs, and include input from departments, anonymous public servants, NGOs, and the public. Mr. Speaker, not all evacuations were built and supported the same. There was no equity. I recently saw a quote that read, quote, survivors aren't only healing from what they endured but the ways they were treated when they asked you for help, end quote. These stories need to be captured and solutions implemented. What happened this time can never happen again.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Northwest Territories has no substantive preventative plan to address climate change, no cautionary plan

to address changing environments, and no plans for business continuity during an evacuation of our capital city.

Private industry is the backbone of this territory and continues to show up in a big way for residents. I am truly worried for our private sector here in the Northwest Territories. They have weathered storm after storm in an environment that, while resilient, has its breaking point. Through COVID, inflation, and rising interest rates, then evacuations, our private industry is suffering. We need more business, more entrepreneurs, not less, Mr. Speaker. And thriving business communities across the Northwest Territories are markers of a healthy economic environment. And let's be honest, thriving business communities are one of the strongest job securities for public servants. So learning how and not if you can support local industry not only puts food on Northerners tables, but ultimately puts food on your own.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only private industry whose bottom line is in jeopardy. This year, this government had to literally pull back the couch cushions to afford its fire season and subsequent evacuations all but draining the surplus they had worked hard to leave the 20th Assembly. I am worried about the financial state of this government paired with the expectations of Northerners. The 20th Assembly is going to need to continue addressing the continuing costs of this year's wildfire season. Already underfunded municipalities have incurred significant costs as a result of this season, and residents cannot afford to cover these additional costs. The municipal funding gap needs to be a greater focus in the next Assembly. In addition to wildfire expenses, much of the North's infrastructure is coming of age at the same time. This is going to cause significant strain on multiple municipalities concurrently while simultaneously putting added financial pressures on this government as it works to maintain its own assets. This government needs an infrastructure deficit plan, Mr. Speaker, because we cannot afford to have our arenas, schools, or housing fall into further states of disrepair.

This, Mr. Speaker, does not even touch on the continued increasing funding demands on much of the remainder of the system, including education, health care, infrastructure, and yes, MLA O'Reilly, that includes affordable housing. All these northern issues are national issues because they all ultimately relate to Arctic sovereignty and Arctic security. The next Assembly is going to need to make difficult decisions, and the 20th Assembly needs to be willing to have uncomfortable conversations. Psychologists Adam Grant says, quote, when

you have an open mind, a challenge to your ideas isn't an attack on you. It's an opportunity to learn something new. End quote. My wish for the next Assembly is to find the balance of spirited debate.

But it isn't all doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in each of these, there are great opportunity. Yesterday Bill 85, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, passed third reading in this House. This marks a historic event and I am both excited and curious to see how this will impact the work of governments. The Education Act will move to phase 2 of a complete modernization of education legislation that stands to truly help support students to become, in the words of Chief Jimmy Bruneau, strong like two people. I am impatient but excited for the work of the homelessness strategy, integrated service delivery, and housing solidifying its place in a social envelope department. To accomplish this work, we need a public service that empowers residents service representatives and not government gatekeepers. And successes need to be measured in outcomes for residents, not outputs by department. I hope to see a 20th Assembly plan that continues to put people first.

Mr. Speaker, the status quo doesn't work anymore. Not for programming, not for service delivery, not for budgeting. But to challenge the status quo, the public service needs to be empowered to work outside the confines of their cubical. People are naturally creative. Not all creative draw, sculpt, paint or bead. For many, their creativity is born in how they see the world, how they interpret solutions, and how they communicate. Some corners of the public service need permission to get creative. Mr. Speaker, there is much work to do but is work worth doing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting work environment. Nothing could have prepared me for what the inside of this building would be like. I want to thank my colleagues who invited me to their homes, argued passionately about our political differences, and invested in discovering our commonalities. We do not get paid to pick our colleagues, Mr. Speaker, but we do get to serve our constituents by learning about one another and leveraging one another's strength to serve our collective goals. I want to share some of what I am most proud of from our communal committee work.

As Regular Members, we excelled at being stubborn together during budget negotiations thanks to our chair, MLA O'Reilly, and our deputy chair MLA Semmler. In those negotiations, we achieved strong winds that

impact all of our residents from funded items like housing dollars to client experience navigators, to business supports, to policy and legislative pushes that will continue to help shape future Assemblies. I was always thankful for our ability to stick together in those moments that mattered to the people we serve.

Mr. Speaker, I was also thankful for our relentless pursuit of holding NWT housing accountable. We heard the Minister say this week that 600 million housing dollars were committed to this territory in the life of this Assembly, and I know we, on this side of the House, played a role in that as well as changing the core values and policies of Housing NWT with our housing motion.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to reflect on more of our work of committee. I had the honour of serving my colleagues as the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development. I have to say a huge thank you to the multitude of staff that supported our committee work, especially to those who endured the workload of social development. I look forward to our social development meeting later today. I'm totally kidding, and I'm glad you all laughed. We decided at the start of our term that we wanted to work different, Mr. Speaker. My proudest markers of our work were our intentional inclusion and elevation of youth voices in our work. I'd like to thank Home Base YK for their support on this.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we ensured that we applied three key lenses to all of our work. The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, the Truth and Reconciliation Calls for Action, and the Articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I hope these are both practices that continue in the 20th Assembly.

There are no shortages of opinions about people in politics, Mr. Speaker. I didn't grow up wanting to be a politician. I grew up loving the North, its people, and believing in its great potential. And I still do. Mr. Speaker, as we get closer to election, I have had the opportunity to sit down with many NWT residents considering putting their name forward. I want to thank them and congratulate them on even considering it. One of the most common questions is what makes it work. And for me, the answer is support - supportive residents, family, friends, and mentors. This is not a job you can do alone. You need people who will tell you the hard truth, challenge your belief, foster your growth, and sometimes stand you back up, dust you off, and send you back in.

We rely on people outside this room, Mr. Speaker. My support network starts with Leslie

Straker. Leslie and I first met when I was a toddler. She worked with my parents in the architectural and engineering division for public works. Her career spanned 30 years of public service where she had the privilege of working with people like John Quirke, now clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. She worked here in this building in the Nellie days. And she worked for executive before she retired, or tried to, in 2019. I have one ask, Mr. Speaker, and that's that none of you in this building tell her that this is not what retirement is supposed to look like.

Leslie's compassion, empathy, knowledge of government, and keen communication skills make her an asset to my support team. I could not have served the people of Kam Lake without her. I'd also like to thank her husband Randy for putting up with our late night phone calls and middle of the night text conversations.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my fan club. It has two active members - my mom and my dad. Mr. Speaker, I'm fairly confident that I could fall down the stairs of the Great Hall and that my mom would high five me for a great landing. My dad would turn around and offer me advice on how to improve my tuck and roll based on 14 scholarly articles he's recently read. I appreciate that about both of them. I want to thank my younger brother for teaching me compassion and never letting me forget that I am short. I'd like to thank my older brother who tells me when I'm wrong but makes me crumble when he reminds me that he's proud. I also owe an apology to all of his staff who have had to listen to every day that we are in session in their workplace for the last four years.

Session is a crazy time. We are often in this building 12 plus hours a day, working through constituency issues, committee work, and work in this House. As a parent and one with a travelling spouse, I owe a huge amount of gratitude to my in-laws, Bev and Johnny Bowden, who have both prioritized my session and committee work schedule so that I always knew my children were cared for on our late nights.

Mr. Speaker, over a decade before I ran, a woman campaigned door to door here in Yellowknife and was told she shouldn't be running, she should be home with her children. Four years ago when I ran, questions of if I could give this role what it needed and still be a parent with the same values made their way back to me. Another person told me, you know, your kids are only young once as a concession for why I shouldn't run. I felt that, Mr. Speaker -- or I felt that, Mr. Speaker, yesterday as the MLA for Yellowknife South and I updated a four-year-old photo of our five kids in front of

the Legislative Assembly. And I still feel that. But I think every working mother, also known as mother, feels that as do fathers and as do caregivers.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, I spent the Assembly chasing the MLA for Nahendeh for the most constituency issues, e-mails sent to Cabinet, sat as the chair of social development supported by my very supportive committee members on this side of the House, and together we reviewed the most pieces of legislation. And later today, I hope to see my Private Member's bill move through third reading.

Before I ran, I spoke with past politicians and the children of past politicians. Their perspective of those who grew up in these halls were incredibly important to me as I made my decision to run. While each of them acknowledged that sometimes they resented sharing their parent, none had regrets and all acknowledged their own growth and unique experiences inside this building. I want people to think about putting their names forward to know that with a solid support team, you can do this job. And I want to thank my colleagues for their role in helping me create a space for my children in this important work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for welcoming my youngest child Dalyn during our weekend board of management meetings after he had already shared me during busy weeks. I sincerely appreciate that. I want to thank staff for their animated conversations about politics with my oldest son Jackson. But this Assembly's support of my family extended beyond the walls of this building. I want to thank my colleagues for relentlessly cheering on my middle child Owen, and for those that welcomed all of us into their homes and constituencies. Mr. Speaker, I am a mother, and it is my most important job. But we all wear multiple hats. None of us are defined by only one. My kids are both my greatest weakness and my greatest strength. And I want to thank them for sharing me with this role.

Last, I cannot pay enough gratitude to my husband, the first husband of Kam Lake, Yellowknife bud. In all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, I could not have survived this term without his unwavering support. On hard days, he was the one who picked me up, dusted me off, and sent me back in. Throughout this Assembly, he has worked full time, completed his MBA, sprinkled his normal quiet service in our community, and continued his love of volunteer for kids sport. I am incredibly proud of you. He is my champion, my confidant, and he is my lobster. When I told him I wanted to run for MLA and that I wanted to ask for the trust of

the residents of Kam Lake he simply said, then do it. And for that, I am forever grateful.

Mr. Speaker, this morning a staff member joked, we can't miss you guys until you leave. So colleagues, I think we have officially worn out our welcome, and I wish all putting your names forward in the upcoming election the very best. And I want to thank those spreading their wings for all of their service in the last four years.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Replies to Commissioner's address. Colleagues, we will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Out of respect for Jackie, I think I'll let him go.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. To our elder MLA, Member for Nunakput.

#### MR. JACOBSON'S REPLY

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Elder statesman, yeah, I've been here too long. No, Mr. Speaker, as we end the 19th Assembly, I just want to take a moment to reflect on my time serving in the House. At the time, I've been an MLA for Nunakput for three Assemblies. You know, Mr. Speaker, I was first elected in the 16th Assembly in 2007. The Members I was elected alongside with, you know, I just want to honour them today because I've been through a lot before prior to you guys. You know, Michael McLeod, Wendy Bisaro, Glen Abernathy, Paul Delorey, my favorite Speaker and the guy who took me under his wing, just like I took you under my wing, Paul took me under his wing because -- and Paul told me, he says, you know, Jackie, he says I'm doing this because of your uncle Vince Steen, because when he was first elected, Paul, my uncle Vince took him under his wing and took care of him. So when Paul took me under his wing, he took me to the board of management. So it was -- it's a good -- it was a really good friendship, and he was my -- he was my mentor, and I really respect Paul Delorey for what he's instilled in me in honour and being steadfast in your beliefs.

My co -- at the time when I was -- is Jane Groenewegen, Floyd Roland, Robert McLeod, Dave Ramsay, David Krutko. David Krutko was a battlelacks, just like you, Mr. Speaker. He was one of my good friends. Outspoken and always wanted right -- to do right for the people that we represented. And he always said that

to us, steadily reminding us. And my good friend Jackson Lafferty. And Kevin Menioche, Sandy Lee. I've never seen Sandy in a long time. I'm going to have to reach out to her. But Norman Yakeleya, Michael Miltenberger, Tom Beaulieu, Bob Bromley, Robert Hawkins, and my favorite Premier Bob McLeod.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly for putting up with me during my first term at the office here. All jokes aside, though, I learned a lot during my first term, especially my fellow colleagues I have a great deal of gratitude and respect for, all from the Members of that Assembly. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, there's an Assembly of Regular Members that was a part of the following committees I sat on. You know, board of management, priorities and planning, government operations, and deputy chair of economic development and infrastructure and at that time, in the 16th, Mr. Speaker, on the 16th I was very happy to see several new developments in my riding of Nunakput. In those days it was -- it's a while ago, but I did a lot for my people. And us as a whole did. This includes the new RCMP detachment but I won't go without saying Calvin Pokiak, the MLA prior to me coming in, he had a big part to do with that too. And I want to thank Calvin for his service. You know, developments in Nunakput communities, the Sachs Harbour detachment in 2008. That year we built Paulatuk in 2010, we had a youth centre built. Tuk hosted, you know, our first hockey clinic in 2011. Ulukhaktok, a new community centre for the community included a youth centre in March 2011. Terminal buildings were replaced in all of Sachs Harbour, David Nasogaluak Jr. Airport in Paulatuk, and then Tuktoyaktuk, the James Gruben Airport, in 2011 as well.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the 16th Assembly, I did 224 Members statements. Of those statements and topics, I spoke about still what I'm talking about today - housing shortages, housing issues such as mold, safety levels, housing maintenance and repairs, elder care such as proper facilities in our communities, proper medical service, long-term care, medical travel, mental health, youth sports, doctor shortages including lack of housing for nurses, the shortages of lack of housing and income support our schools -- I'm thankful for the Assembly over the last few years for getting my Mangilaluk School. Thank you, Madam Premier, and Cabinet, for that. For Mangilaluk School, 2007's the first time I brought that up. And how that came up is I went to the school one day. They have 38 staff and they only had one bathroom. But we're going to have quite a few bathrooms so it's going to be good, in the new school, when it's done.

Yeah, so the support for schools such as lack of counsellors, you know, mental health supports for our youth, high school dropout rates, the addictions and substance abuse, the economy such as high cost of food, fuel, power, lack of employment in our communities. We're resource rich and cash poor in our riding for oil and gas. And I wish the moratorium would be lifted.

But, you know, one thing we did get going in that Assembly was the highway, Inuvik-Tuk Highway. I remember when I was the Speaker, I started when I was -- in '07, we started. Myself, Mervin Gruben, Russell Newmore, Kurt Wainman, and we lobbied hard, and I -- like, I think I -- at the Explorer Hotel for one month straight one time, 30 days at least for that road, getting stuff ready to get it done. And that Assembly got it through for me. And they were -- and one thing I'll always remember, when they were reading it in to the House at the time when I was a Speaker -- I was a Speaker that time -- I was giving those guys tea and cookies that night. I'll always remember that. And I always joke about that.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, I was elected in the 17th Assembly in 2011 in that term, as Speaker of the House. That was one of my proudest moments in my life because I was the first Inuvialuit Speaker. And I was mentored by the -- to me, the best Speaker the NWT Assembly ever had was Paul Delorey. And you too. But you're after me. All joking aside, Mr. Speaker, you know it was special to speak have -- be the first Inuvialuit Speaker. I served as Speaker of the House of that Assembly. And the pleasure of working with Mike Nadlii, Wendy Bisaro, Glen Abernathy, Robert Bouchard, Jane Groenewegen, my deputy chair -- or my deputy Speaker at the time, Alfred Moses who I missed and he was part of the Fab Five that time when he came in. I remember that. That was a good time we had with Alfred. Robert McLeod, David Ramsey, yourself, Mr. Speaker, Jackson Lafferty, Kevin Menioche, Darryl Dolynny, Norman Yakeleya, Tom Beaulieu, Bob Bromley, Robert Hawkins, and my favorite Premier Bob McLeod. So where am I -- four -- boy, got long ways to go yet, Mr. Speaker.

Anyways, Mr. Speaker, because I'm telling a story. In the 17th Assembly, among my accomplishments I presided over as a Speaker, a role in the chair of the board of management Assembly. I also at the 17th Assembly, the GNWT -- GNWT of the day began construction of the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project, and it was a project that was talked about for -- and come, really contemplated for decades. And it was done. You know, every time I drive on that, it's surreal because the efforts and that we put into



that road prior to me, it was my uncle Vince Steen that tried so hard for the road and, and that's one of the biggest reasons I'm here today is my uncle Vince Steen that -- that encouraged me. At that time, I was the mayor of Tuk. Encouraged me to run and put my name forward in '07. And that's how I became into the -- as an MLA. You know, I'm very proud of that project. And that was talked about. And as MLA for Nunakput, you know, again, with that project, was -- we were like the A Team, myself and Mervin Gruben and Russell and Kurt to get that done. There was so much work that went into that project.

Mr. Speaker, on the Assembly once again, I was very happy to see developments occur in my riding. Environmental Remediation Project done in Tuk in November 2012. Environmental remediation in Sachs Harbour, same time, to improve safety and sustainability, also in March in 2013 the project funded to mitigate homelessness that provided support and help soup kitchens in the communities I represent, food banks, programs, shelters, food rescue. On May 2013, trapping workshop was held in Ulukhaktok and helped trappers succeed in the fur market and be up to date regulations and standards with technology. And finally, in Ulukhaktok in 2015, the Ulukhaktok was three schools awarded \$50,000 pilot project for resiliency program, resiliency and program for students.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, after the short hiatus from the House that time, I was elected once again in the 19th Assembly and now, what do you know, these last four years our territory's been through quite a lot. We've had global pandemics, record breaking fire season, several floods, locally for two years now resupply barges. I'm really happy we got a resupply into the communities for this year. I thank the Minister for that, Minister Archie. And I don't have to worry about the communities not having any food. And delivering the materials up the Mackenzie River. So that's a whole different thing now. We have to really look at that because there's almost no river water running. Nunakput communities are normally does every year that the reasons why the barge could not make it in deliveries due to impacts of climate change, Mr. Speaker. Various natural disasters I've mentioned, which several disrupted service in several communities. In addition, Mr. Speaker, throughout the 19th Assembly, as a Regular Member, I was a part of the following committee, board of management thanks to you, accountability and oversight, rules and procedures. I was the chair, and I want to thank my colleagues on -- Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. Simpson Sr.. thank you, guys, and Rylund, for all your support. The

committee -- if I missed anyone, I'm sorry. The rules and procedures chair during some Assemblies as well as chair of economic development and environment. And I really want to thank my co-chair Mr. Ron Bonnetrouge for stepping in for a lot this year because we've been through a lot and travel's hard to get sometime, and a lot of family -- personal family matters I was dealing with. And also Mr. Kevin O'Reilly. Thank you, Kevin, for stepping in and helping me and getting my briefing notes when I called you. Thank you. But, you know, and additionally throughout the 19th, I did 132 Member's statements. This covered such topics as housing again, cancer screening, public housing, rental arrears, marine transportation, power rates, COVID plans in communities, power corporation, isolation, the community harvesting assistance programs, as well as evictions to use the power limiters, anti-bullying, income support claw backs, mental health, dental, medical travel escorts, barge schedule, youth, youth sports, offshore drilling, oil and gas, I hope that comes back. We're resource rich and cash poor. Elder care such as long-term care. And that's one thing this -- this Assembly coming forward, we should be looking at smaller health care facilities in the communities instead of sending them to central locations.

Mr. Speaker, and the safety issues of our communities, such as Frank Gruben's been missing. And the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. You know, it was an honour for me to be here when we -- and it was Ms. Semmler and yourself to be a part of the unveiling of the statue. And that, it hit me hard because I have an auntie that went down that and was affected by that. And, you know, when something like that happened, it just brought up a lot of emotion and a lot of memories. And I currently want to thank my colleagues of 19th Assembly for both current and former ones since the by -- by the by-elections, you know, with the Members, you know, again, my -- Kevin, Katrina, R.J., Rocky, Diane, Lesa, Caitlin, Fredrick, Jackson, and then we got Jane. I'm really blessed to have Jane here. She's been a steadfast supporter of small communities and working with us. And, you know -- and working for the people. And she -- she's just awesome. I'm really blessed. Shane Thompson, myself, Caroline -- Caroline Cochrane, thank you for your service. Paulie Chinna, thank you. Freida -- Freida's, yeah, steadfast and probably walking Rambo. You know, and then my friend -- my good friend, still is a good friend, no matter, is Steve Norn. And then brought us Richard. And Richard, you've been steadfast in your commitment to your people that I thank you for that. Richard Edjericon. Julie, thank you. You're the Minister

that answered my calls the most when I had health care issues, everything. I want to thank you because you're going to get the Nunakput award for answering your phone from me. But I am thankful. And then Katrina too, like thank you for all what you do in supporting of our small communities. You've got a good heart and you just want to do what's best. And you keep up the good work.

Mr. Speaker, throughout my time in office, I've always sought compassion, honest to speak the power on behalf of my constituents. I want to thank the residents. I know it's been a great honour for me and privilege to serve as MLA at the Legislative Assembly. I want to thank the people of Nunakput that put faith in me in choosing me to be their voice. Don't worry, I'm not done yet, got quite a bit here.

You know, the things -- you know, the little things are going to -- I'm going to miss, you know, are like being here as an MLA from the communities, we're always alone. We work here from eight in the morning. We go home last night at, what, 9:45. And it's just like going to ourself. You're always alone. You never have family. That's probably the toughest thing I've done through the 12 years, Mr. Speaker, of being an MLA is the part of being alone. You know, I don't drink. I don't smoke. I don't do -- I just work. Never stops. And for myself, I think, you know, the people that I did visit, I'm just going to tell you I'm going to miss you. You know, my friend Grant Beck. Thank you for being there for my, Grant, and your 200 dogs, and we had some good times running dogs, you know. Kirk and Lizzy Fabien, thank you for all the meals, hot cooked meals you cooked for me and invited us over. Also, Charlie Kudluk and Lourdes, thank you for always cooking for me. My sister Pauline makes the best lasagna in the NWT, I know that. And Diane and Myhala Newmark, thank you for always, you know, thinking of me with suppers, late nights. You know -- I'm going to save this one last for you guys here. You know, my family. You know, I want to thank my brothers and sisters for all my support, my nieces and nephews. You know, as a Member from small communities, most -- you know, we're away for most holidays and stuff like that. The time and pressure that's put on our family and our spouses, and that's the -- is our backbone. Just like you, Mr. Speaker, you know we have children at home. I've sacrificed -- I've sacrificed, Mr. Speaker, my four oldest -- sorry. I sacrificed my four oldest kids for serving my people, and now I got a 10-year-old son. I've been -- I've been gone too long. You know, the -- and I've been blessed -- I've been blessed to do what I do. You know, I got to thank God every day that I wake up and be able to help people and put me

in a position like this to do that. For my daughter Chelsea and my son-in-law Justin, Kristin, Matthew, Akeeko, Mitchell, Jema, Miekala, Joseph, and my granddaughter Addison and my son -- or grandson Alexander, and the people that -- my elders before me. Some are still here when I started and some are gone on my list. I got to thank my dad for being steadfast and listening to the stories from him and always telling me to work hard because nothing's gonna be given to you. My mom Bella, that was my role model, and I see that in my wife, same thing. Georgina and Barney, my biological mother, and Barney my stepdad, Masazumi, he was an awesome man. My brothers Joemboy, Fred, that's all I have left. When I started here, I had six brothers here. And my sisters Pauline, Judy, Martina, Mavis, thank you. We've been a lot -- there's been -- and my uncles -- one of the proudest things too is when I leave this building, it's not only me on that wall, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be my uncle John Steen Sr. was the first MLA for Nunakput. You know, my uncle Vince Steen was a Member here and a Minister. And they did both good work, steadfast and hard. And I tried to go that way. And, you know, and keep that -- I guess it's like a family tradition. And then my uncle Vince again, like I said, he's the one who talked me into running for this. I thank him for that. And rest in peace.

I want to thank -- like I said, I started off with a lot of people back home. Eddie Gruben, Persus Gruben, Bobby Gruben, Mabel Noksana, Stanley Keevik, Jeannie Keevik, my good friend David Nasogaluak, William Nasogaluak, Jimmy Momagana. Thanks Elsie and -- Elsie Klengenber and my uncle Joseph Uliqsik and the family. And one of the -- and when I first started, put my name forward, I -- I was in Sachs Harbour for a few days and that was with one of my good friends Andy Carpenter. I'll never forget him. I sat on the board of directors with him with IDC for a lot of years, and he did so much for the people. And Andy was one of my go-to guys and my good friend Keith Dodge.

Mr. Speaker, all the mayors in my communities. In Tuk, you got Erwin, Ryan for the community corp. You got Ray and Larry in Paulatuk. And then you got Pat in Ulu for the community corp and Josh Oliktoak in Ulu. Thank you for your service. Thank you for letting me work with you over the years that I've been with you. You know, as a Member, again from the small communities, take -- you know, they should really take -- walk in our shoes for the stuff that we have to put up with. Like you said it earlier today, so easy to judge people. My job as an MLA, I don't judge nobody. 90 percent listening, 10 percent doing the rest. And I take

that to heart. I've been a really proud Member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the community that is so easy to sit at home and put stuff on Facebook of people not happy. We got to break that cycle, Mr. Speaker. People got to want to -- you know, I always say honour the past, live the present, create the future. And that's what we got to do. People got to want to help themselves. We can't do everything for them. And they got to take the bull by the horn and do it. We can't be doing what we're doing. A lot of this stuff that we're doing, it's been -- the stuff that we deal with in the communities, the amount of funerals that we've gone to -- and I've been to a lot of funerals when you could sing off the handbook and not even need the song sheet. And we're caring. We care for our people, Mr. Speaker. We care for them to make a difference in their lives and the youth. And, again, with our youth, every -- it's so easy to say our youth are our future, our youth are our future, but that's all they say and they don't back up anything. You got to support them because we got to be hitting them in the communities in the -- when they're like grade 5 and 6 and 7 and instill in them work ethic. Not just video games. Work ethic. And I know you work with your sons and that with fishing and everything, and they're hardworking young men, they're not little anymore, like when we first started. And just like mine, you know, I -- I don't have to do nothing for hunting no more. I got my son. I'm really blessed. And I have all my children.

You know, the most -- again, we -- I'm going to go through this one now. My favorite seat mates I've had since my three terms is Bob Bromley and Wendy Bisaro. Bob Bromley, I called him Big Bopper. Wendy Bisaro, I called her Mother Superior because she was just remind me of some of the nuns in Grollier Hall. But my next favorite seat mate's Mr. O'Reilly, yeah. And I'm really thankful for all of you that, you know, we've been through all what we've been through.

And for myself, you know, I wouldn't be able to do this without my wife. My wife is my rock. I'm so proud of her. She's been putting up with so much. Me being away. Thank God for FaceTime, you know. And we've been -- we've been through a lot. Our family's been through a lot but we're still standing. And I'm still going to do good things. I'm not done yet. I'm so blessed to have you in my life, Jenny, and I want to thank God for that. And I still remember when I got you in lunch line at Grollier Hall. She walked ahead of me and when I seen her at lunch line, I said after you. We were 16 years old. And we've been together -- I'm 51 now. I know I don't look it. But, Mr. Speaker, it's been an honour and a privilege to serve with you.

And this one thing I want to say to my Members, I know I've been hard on everybody. I know that. But I kept it -- I tried to keep it professional. And I checked it at the door. We're all human beings. We all have families. We all got to work together for the betterment of the people and make the right decisions to come and -- the next Assembly, when they come, you know, I -- Mr. Speaker, I wish them all the best because today I'm telling you I'm not going to be running for re-election. I've come to -- I've come to a point in my life that I've outgrown -- to myself I've outgrown this place. I want to go home. I want to be with my son Joseph. He's ten years old. And the rest of my children, my grandchildren now. And, Mr. Speaker, I never had to be here the last term any -- this term anyway. You know, I -- I'm blessed. But for myself, I'm -- there's a new chapter in my life. It's my family. I want to go home. I want to run fish net. I want to run ski-doo, hunt, you know, and have a good time and run my dogs. Yeah, and be a pooper scooper. Because I poop the scoop quite a bit here too. But, again, Mr. Speaker, the staff, thank you. Mr. Rutland, Kim, Mr. Ball, thank you. I'm very thankful for all that you've done for me. To all our interpreters, thank you so much. Quyananni. To all our staff in the back from EDE, we're still number 1. And just remember one thing, folks, just remember one thing, today when I walk out of that door, the next time I'll be here on official Assembly business, is when I get my painting unveiled. You're not going to get away from me yet. Every time you walk through the door of that building, the second pillar says Jackie Jacobson. So just remember, I'm not going to be wasting my time watching this next Assembly. I'll be out doing my other things, what I -- what's important to me. But for myself, my family, I got to put my family first. I got other opportunities coming, which I'm really blessed with that I'm working on. But right now I want to spend some time at home and reconnect with my community and getting back into local politics. If they need help, I'll help them. And I'll still be a strong advocate for Nunakput. And just remember one thing, Nunakput's number 1.

And another thing, I always said, eh Kevin, what's good for Yellowknife is good for Nunakput, yeah. And now what's good for -- and what's good for Ottawa is good for the NWT. Mr. Speaker, quyananni.

Honey, I love you. And now we're going to get out of here pretty quick. So no, again, thank you. Colleagues, thank you. Bless you all. Thank you for all the hard work you've done. It's been a -- it's been a west wind with four-foot waves all the time, but we did it. You could say you did it. And thank you for your service. Thank you. Quyananni.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON'S REPLY**

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if I could top that. Thank you very much for that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you. No, I'm just thinking, you know, I've been in Aboriginal politics most of my life. I was on the other side of the table fighting the fights in the trenches for our people. On July 25th, 1900, my great grandfather signed a treaty along with Chief Drygeese, Chief Snuff for Treaty 8. And Mary Rose Sundberg that's here, she's the descendant of Chief Drygeese. And that's why they call this area Chief Drygeese Territory. And so I just want to reflect a little bit about how I ended up being here. And I always think back about my grandmother who always said, you know, you got to help people. Ever since as a child, that's what we've been doing. I often think about my uncles. At a very young age, they taught us how to work. You know, I remember my younger brother and I, we were outside, and he made a sled for us, and -- and a nice sled. And he told me, I bet you can't push your brother around. We were just little guys. So we did. And then the next thing he said oh, I bet you can't put wood in there and bring it over to the warehouse. Oh, no problem. Oh, man. Now, and then he says well, I bet you can't cut that wood on that sawhorse. Holy man, the next thing we were cutting wood. And now that was our job. And so we learned to work at a very young age growing up in Fort Resolution. So, you know, my grandparents had a big part of -- they were a big part of my life in terms of growing up and teaching us traditional values and being honest and work ethics, etcetera.

So our family in Fort Resolution is a big family. We come from a place called Buffalo River. It's, and our last name, if you look at it, if you -- the name that I have now, it was done by the Catholic Church, Edjericon. But when you look at it in the Chipewyan way, it's Jerthicon, you know. But when the transition happened, they couldn't spell it so they wrote it the way it is today. That's what you see here. So I just wanted to just mention that.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know, yeah, I've been involved in a lot of politics, and maybe that's why I am how I'm here today in terms of being so aggressive is that I was on the other side of the table fighting the fights. You know, I fought for housing, education, lot development, anything and everything you can think of, I was part of with YKDFN. And I had a privilege of working with really good chiefs there. And one

thing we don't do enough is that, you know, we don't thank our chiefs. You know, when I left being a chief, you know, a few people came up to me and said thank you. But, you know, my colleague here talks about being here late and everything else. I been there, done that, the same thing. I've been up and working 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock in the morning. I'd negotiate three IBA agreements worth hundreds of millions of dollars of mining industry, and -- but after a while, it's tiring. But today I just want to mention as well that, you know, we honoured Chief Eddie Sangris here today, which is good, because I've worked with Eddie, played hockey with Eddie. And they come from a long life -- a long line of chiefs in YKDFN, along with Jonas Sangris. And that family's pretty big. So it is good that -- you know, I just want to say to them that, you know, thank them for their service, and all of the councillors that do this. But I want to say this to all people up and down the Valley, mahsi to all the chiefs and council that -- and the elders that are no longer here. I've been to so many funerals and I think I been to two weddings in my lifetime. And I been to funerals all the time. And it's tiring. But, anyway, that's how we grow, and I'm starting to think I'm like an elder now, you know. But anyway, it's just -- it's that feeling when you say thank you. It's really good. And I know I just want to say that to all the chiefs and band councillors up and down the Valley.

And when I first got here and I walked across that door, I didn't know what I was getting into. I know when I was a chief, I used to come and meet with the Premier or Ministers and that kind of thing. We had good relationships. But back in the '90s and 2000s, we did a lot of good stuff for Dettah and N'dilo as well. And at that time, we were dealing with people like Premier Joe Hanley, you know, and he was our MLA. So it was a really good time. But today, you know, when I walk through these doors here, you know, I'm trying to understand how this whole institution works. And what I know is we got a \$2.2 billion budget. We got \$1.6 billion coming from Ottawa -- sorry, for the deficit that we're in, capped off at \$1.8 billion. But 75 cents on the dollar comes from grants and contributions. And so essentially the financial situation we're in today, I could say that we're broke. It's how we have managed and moved forward. And so when we talk about consensus government, I'm still trying to deal with that because at YKDFN chief and council meeting we're in, we sit amongst ourselves around the table and we agree on a budget, and we -- you know, we have a good discussion and debate and finally agree on something. So to me, I thought that was consensus. But on this side when I come here, you know, then I -- we got Cabinet on that side. That's put there by the people in this

Assembly. And sometimes, you know, I go home at night; I tell my wife that sometimes my hands are tied. You know, as much as I want to bring an issue forward for my constituent, then I bring it to the Minister, the Minister sends it to the deputy minister, and so on. And it goes back -- it comes back to me and he said oh well, you know, I'm sorry, the policy says this. You know, and that's disheartening for me because, you know, the issues in our community are real. Housing is real. Homeownership repairs are real. And I hear it today. And, you know, that's why when I come here, people may see me being very aggressive. But it's not about that, because I'm here to be their voice and convey what the issues are. And I know. I know all the issues at the local level. I've been there. At the regional level I've been there. You know, the Akaitcho spokesperson I was there. So coming here, it was really interesting for me but now that I understand how this whole institution works, and -- and how it functions is really interesting. But I had the privilege of working with really good people here. Good colleagues around the table. The staff here at the Legislative Assembly, really good. You know -- so anyway, I just kind of want to mention that. And I just want to say some thank-yous.

First of all, my wife is here. She surprised me. I didn't think she was going to be here, you know, and for about four years, she's been working all over the country trying to -- you know, to work on her teacher education and get some experience and that. Now she's working on her masters, and she'll be done probably by next year this time. So anyway, my wife now, I had to relearn that I can't tell jokes or how to speak properly because she corrects me. So but, you know what, she what's been the biggest supporter for me. She's my rock, you know, and we like two stepping. But anyways, I just want to say thank you to my beautiful wife. I love you. I also want to say my son, who is in Saskatoon, his family, Kelsey, Adam, Kaiden, my grandson -- oh by the way, I got two dogs. One -- pug. His name is -- her name is Sophie. Anyway, her and I watch TV. We watch Men in Black. Oh and man, she just gets excited. But anyway, and we have another dog. A French dog, bulldog. A French bulldog. And her -- his name is Rocky. So anyway, honestly, when I get home after we come here -- by the time I leave here, by the time I get home is about 10 o'clock, and she'd be just barking at me saying where were you, what were you doing, how long were you gone for. So that's -- it's like that. But anyway, I just want to just thank my wife and my family and my mother-in-law, Dolly Simon in Fort Resolution, my sister, my auntie, my uncles, all my relations up and down the Valley. And in Fort Resolution, you know, the

people there it's great to -- it's an honour to actually stand here today and say that -- you know, to serve them and to help where I can. I don't smoke. I don't do drugs. I don't drink or anything like that. You know, and when we're chiefs, the elders, they frown on that kind of thing. They're trying to guide you. So I'm here because of that. But, you know, I just want to thank the people in Lutselk'e, Dettah, N'dilo. And, jeez, it's been a long haul I guess, because, you know, it's like being chief all over again. Just 24/7. You think we go home at 8 o'clock and be done at five, but it doesn't work like that. And it's been tough. But, you know, when I go home, supper's ready. When my wife's doing her work, you know, I -- I cook. I clean. I do all that stuff. It's all because she's busy with her education. And I'm a big supporter of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just also want to say thank you to my CAs. When I first got here, I didn't know what the process was but I know is that, you know, I had the privilege of working with people like Shirley Tsetta on band councillor etcetera, and she worked for De Beers so she knows the industry side of it. So I've asked her, and it just so happens she was just laid off. So I picked her up and said come work with me. And she's been really good to me. Also, former Chief James Marlowe, he helped me out for a while. And in Fort Resolution, I have Warren Delorme and his wife Velma. They do so much for me. Whenever I'm going there and -- to Fort Resolution, they cook. They invite me to come over. When I go around through Fort Resolution and go visit the elders, they always say hey, we got soup on for you, or whatever. And we go there and eat. And if not, my mother-in-law does it all the time. You know, so that's really -- that's really good. And anyway, I just wanted to say thank you to all my constituent members for giving the support, especially the elders. This -- a few months ago we lost an elder Robert Sayine who was a Member of the MLA here, chief as well. And I'm going to miss him because he would phone me. Doesn't matter what time or night, he would say hey Rick, regarding this bill, this is what I think. Or he would give me advice. And I think he done that to Kevin as well, you know. And I really appreciate that but I'm going to miss him because, you know, his -- he's got a beautiful wife May and his whole family. You know, it's a big loss to our community. He had so much knowledge, you know. And he phoned me up one day and he said hey Rick, there's nobody on CBC Radio for Chipewyan hour. So we sent a letter to CBC and about a month later, we were up in the air. Oh, he was happy. It's because the network the elders have in the community, the elders would go to him and then he will come to me and visa versa. So I found

that really interesting. So it's elders like that we're losing that, you know, I really -- it's a privilege and honour to know these elders that are there.

But anyway, again, I just want to say the other thing is when we meet here, you know, I've been to so many Dene Nation assemblies, Akaitcho assemblies, Tlicho assemblies, and we can't do it without the translators. You know, the translators here, I want to say thank you. Mahsi. You know, if it wasn't for you, you know, all this information here wouldn't get out there. So I just want to say thank you to each one of you. And also the cooks, I know we have food brought to us sometimes and that. And I just want to say mahsi to them.

But most importantly, in my riding, you know, I just want to say thank you to Chief Louis Balsillie. You know, he calls me all the time and all kind of issues, especially during the evacuation. And it -- and also Chief James Marlowe, Lutselk'e Dene First Nation who was just recently elected. Chief Fred Sangris from N'dilo. And the new chief for Dettah Ernest Betsina. Also, I work with president Arthur Beck with the Fort Resolution Metis Council and the NWT Metis Nation Gary Bailey. So you know, I go to their assemblies. You know, we have good food. You know, we get to visit elders. It's great when I go to these assemblies. I feel grounded. Sometimes when I leave here, I -- something's off. But when I go home into the communities, I feel so grounded because when you go to the drum dance or go to have tea with elders, I feel good. But for me in the last few months, it's been really interesting because my colleague here, we talk about North Slave region and South Slave region but yet the Tu Nedhe-Willideh riding, we're mixed in with the North and South Slave region. Our funding that we get as a government is split into these areas. But yet, you know, I'm sitting here today as a Tu Nedhe-Willideh MLA. But the way it's set up in this system, it doesn't happen that way. So when we say that I get less than half a percent of \$2.2 billion for my riding, but we're rolled into the North and South Slave region, so I'm hoping that will change shortly in the new future because we need to separate that because at the end of the day, once you do that, you going to see the real numbers, what is really spent in our communities. And I been saying all year, last year and a half, that small communities do matter. And we do.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we have claims in the North. We have self-government agreements. They're all constitutionally-protected land claim agreements. And in the last little while, and even this few days ago, my colleague Kevin had talked about constitutional reform. Well, in committee, when these guys -- the departments

come here and they ask for more money, you know, and I go look at my budget book and everything else, every year consistently it's been going up. But really what's the benefit to my community I say? And so anyway, what I'm trying to say here is that the day is going to come when we really need to take a look how we're going to coexist here in the North with settled claims. How is this institution going to be looking like? In the early '80s, they had the Jim Bourke report. I think we need -- it's time now to really take a look at that. And as a new government coming in, that's something we're going to have to talk about.

Mr. Speaker, again, I just want to thank all my colleagues, my constituents, my CA, all the elders. I'd like to thank the Premier for your service, all the Cabinet for your service, all my colleagues for your service, and all the leaders here in the Northwest Territories for your service. I want to say mahsi.

I know that I'm probably not the easiest guy to work with, but you know what, I'm consistent and I'll follow up. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, is that I just want to say thank you to you and your family as well. And, you know, it's a tough time, you know, for everybody in the last few months, and in -- and finally, we could breathe fresh air now, you know. But anyway, it's good that we're talking today and saying our last speeches here, and the work that we've done in our communities doesn't end. Just because we leave here, it doesn't end. So we will be working the phones. We will still be calling the department and all that stuff.

So Mr. Speaker, one more thing I was going to say is that one thing I was told never give a mike to a chief. But anyway, I just want to say that they have many -- people of Tu Nedhe community of Fort Resolution, I want to recognize the dedication, commitment, and efforts to help those in need during the fire evacuation this summer. The community of Fort Resolution was not designated an evacuation centre by the GNWT; however, the community of Fort Resolution hosted over 80 evacuees from the town of Fort Smith, the town of Hay River, Yellowknife, and they welcomed them into their homes. At Mission Island, they had cabins, the Four Season B&B, breakfasts, and the Beaulieu Hotel. During the fire evacuation, the community of Fort Resolution had no internet, no phone, no cell service for over a week. And thank you to Starlink for providing services, and they were good to us. Anyway, the community volunteers made several trips to High Level to purchase groceries and to ensure they had adequate gas and diesel supplies for the residents of Fort Resolution. During the fire evacuation, Chief Louis Balsillie, Deninu Kue First Nation,

president Arthur Beck, Fort Resolution Metis Council, ran the culture camp for three weeks to provide food and traditional -- sorry, provide traditional food and activities to ease burden off the evacuees to distract them from the scary situation we were faced so they could -- would be welcome in the community during these difficult times for everybody in the community in the South Slave region. I just want to say thank you to the volunteers Chief Louis Balsillie, Carol Ann Chapman Jessica Sanderson, Brandon Beaulieu, Dolly Simon, Martina Jerome, Eddie and Dee Lepine, and they're all other communities residents who assisted by accommodating, feeding, and caring for their displaced families, members, and friends.

Mr. Speaker, the Fort Resolution Metis Council was also involved in the culture camp. Again, I want to thank John Delorme, Brandy Miersh, Alicia Sanderson, Archie Smith, Jaylyn Voice, Harlan Mandeville, Sheyda Lafferty, Kaden McNabb, Lyndon Beaulieu. I want to say thank you for your help during this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to say -- oh, I'm just kidding, another two more minutes. But anyway, I just wanted to say thank you to all my colleagues and the staff, the pages, and it's an honour to be here to serve the people here in the Northwest Territories. And especially my wife and my family. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Great Slave.

#### MS. NOKLEBY'S REPLY

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to try to do this one from the heart because for me that's when I feel like I always am able to speak my best. So I've got a couple notes here and I'll forgive -- everybody will have to forgive me if I forget to mention someone that has been there for me.

I first just wanted to start with my personal staff that had helped me through the last while starting with my MSA, when I was a Minister, Krista Elander. Also my campaign manager. And as well Colleen O'Connor who was my constituency assistant for the majority of my time here in the House. I don't think she's here, but Colleen saw me through what was probably one of the toughest moments of my life, and as well including the death of my mother, and I wanted to thank her for that time. My current constituency assistant, Maggie Mercredi, I can't thank Maggie enough. Maggie is my sounding board. Maggie is my weathervane. Maggie is my teacher, my instructor. The conversations that we have and the things that I have learned, particularly around the privilege that I hold as a

white woman in this country and in this nation, I can't thank her enough for that perspective that she gives me. And I'm honoured to call her my friend as well as my assistant. I would be remiss if we talked about all the staff in this building, and I didn't bring up the security guards, the security guards who have made me feel fairly safe given that I've had a little bit of a bumpy ride here and who knows, when people get passionate about things how it's going to go. And I've always known that security had my back, plus they were the recipient of a lot of my corny jokes as I came in to the Assembly every day. So I appreciate their time. And unfortunately Bob is now gone, he was also my constituent. So I always enjoyed chatting with him.

Speaking of my constituents, they have been through a lot with me. I know that there are many that are probably not too happy with me at the moment but there are a lot that have reached out in support. I would be remiss if I didn't bring up probably everybody's favorite Canada Day parade participant Merlin Williams and his wife Joyce who have provided just a huge amount of support to me over the last four years and just keeping me going as well as providing me some of that dry British humour that I miss from all my great uncles who were Scottish and loved a good joke. Although they are Welsh so I will not, you know, conflate the two.

I think a huge thing for me has been the committee work, which I often tell people the sessional piece is not really that important to me. I find this to actually be the part of the job that I don't -- I mean, I like to get up, it's fun to put on the earrings and the clothes and etcetera, but to me the real work is the work that we've been doing in our committees and our advocacy work. And I'm really, really proud of the two committees that I sat on, besides the AOC, which was the Standing Committee on Social Development as well as the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment. Both were very lively. Both were very informative. I'm a lifelong learner. My parents the were educators, I've mentioned that many times in this House, and the things that I have learned just from being a part of these committees has blown my mind. And I know that no matter what happens in my path forward, the information and the knowledge that I've gained from that work is going to serve me no matter where I go and will allow me to continue on the path of advocacy no matter whether I sit in this House doing so or somewhere else in this territory.

This role really is about relationships. Relationships across the House, across the floor, but relationships also with our colleagues,

relationships with our staff and relationships with our constituents and our neighbours. I've been very grateful to have made great friends in this Assembly. I really want to give a special shout out, though, to my colleague the MLA for Monfwi. We've had a great time sitting here much maybe to your chagrin a few times, Mr. Speaker, when we get chatting. I just want to say that the power of this woman is that she is probably the only person in my adult life that has ever gotten me to pray on a bible. And if you know me, Mr. Speaker, that is a huge thing. And I think it speaks volumes to the faith and commitment that Jane has and the heart that she has brought to this Assembly and the support that she has shown me. I am really grateful for your support and your friendship, Jane, as well to you, Jackie, we've been a big supporter in keeping me coming back into this House time and again.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't speak about all my colleagues. I've watched everybody transform and change over four years. I don't even recognize myself from when I came into this House. I remember feeling so scared and intimidated. Haylee Carlson being that bright smile to make us all feel a little bit less scared. But it's funny to me now when people talk about the intimidation or feeling like the awe of coming in here that I no longer have that same feeling of fear that I had when I walked in. And to me, as a person who has struggled a long time in my life with confidence and esteem, the ability to now walk into this Assembly and feel like I belong here is a huge growth for me and speaks volumes to the confidence I now have in myself that has been instilled in me through this work.

I would have to say to you, Mr. Speaker, specifically thank you. Thank you for tolerating my, you know, challenging of process and rules at times. I know the clerk's office has also been kept on their toes by me. I'm a firm believer that change doesn't happen unless we sort of push forward and batter, and I know sometimes my battering ram is a little bit maybe oversized for what it needs to be; however, it's always been done with the intent to make the change that's good and right for this territory. And I thank you for always having a sense of humour while you do this and while you deal with me. So much appreciated.

I had already mentioned before the translators. I am a fast speaker. I am the youngest of four kids, I had to speak a lot to get words in when I was a child, and I think that's translated on now as well as having been a consultant where time was money. We didn't have a lot of time to spend choosing our words often, and so we just plowed ahead. So thank you to the translators and the interpreters for bearing with me, but

also thank you for all of your kind words of support. Many times I walked out of this Chamber after a very, very difficult day not knowing many of you from before -- or not knowing hardly any of you from before, but you have said words to me that encouraged me, that have kept me going. I don't have family in the territory. I don't have any family anymore that's of a certain vintage. And so I do really appreciate that the elders, I feel that you have welcomed me and embraced me and encouraged me and I thank you so much for that.

Sorry, I just got to find my notes here.

There are a few things that have happened here in this last one that I want to take forward to the 20th Assembly and areas I think that are important for them to focus on. My speech today or my statement today was on the infrastructure deficit. I can't stress enough what that is doing to us as a territory. When you are constantly playing catchup on things, you're spending more money to do that catchup than you would if you had the right money to begin with. That's a huge thing and lesson in consulting. In engineering, you need to put the money upfront to do so right. And so I think that's something we really need to take forward in the next Assembly is get that Mackenzie Valley Highway built.

The next piece I think that is probably the most important -- well, I say that, and then every time I say that I think of about 40 other things that I feel are equivalently important. And I think I'm a bit cursed sometimes with that bigger picture, you know, and interconnectivity ability to see that, so. Addictions and mental health. I've been a huge proponent of mental health supports. And, Mr. Speaker, I've been very frank; I spoke about it earlier today to the CBC. I struggle from depression and anxiety. And I think that has been something that when I have people that come to me in this territory that are suffering, that is the piece that I have been able to relate to them on and to really see that if you don't have safety, you don't have security, which comes into the housing piece we talk a lot about, you will not have good mental health and you will not be able to do anything in your life. It is just something that is all encompassing. The addictions, I personally try to help many people -- I've got a lot of ideas on that that I won't waste our time here today speaking about, but I think to me that has to be one of the top priorities of the 20th Assembly. I also spoke this week about proactive climate change and emergency response. As an engineer, iterative process, learning from our mistakes, living documents, standard operating procedures, all of these are things that I think are very important, things that I helped and



hoped to bring to the Assembly as an MLA and something that I think we really need to be looking at and being smarter with our government day-to-day work and ensuring we're doing it efficiently.

And lastly, I just -- on this part is I wanted to speak a little bit to the federal engagement. I do say -- have seen an increase to the hundred percent dollars. And kudos to us all, I think, as a group for being able to be vocal and loud about some of the issues that we're facing. I have to say as much as COVID has been a terrible thing for us, I think in some ways it did us a little bit of good in highlighting to the federal government just really how behind the 8 ball we really are in here in the territory. And I do think some of that hundred percent dollars is a result of them finally having an understanding of what it means to get food into Ulukhaktok or into, you know, Sachs Harbour. And I think that it's important that the next Assembly utilize our unique consensus government to create relationships not only with the ruling federal party but also all of the opposition parties as well. We all know in this House that everybody comes to us on this side when they want to push on that side. So we need to be doing that more strategically as a territory and leveraging relationships with all three federal parties to get what we want and get them at each other in the House just like the municipalities do to us here, Mr. Speaker.

Another majorly important part to me in all of this, and pretty much actually the moment that I made a decision to ever get into politics, had to do with working with youth and women and advocacy of women in being in leadership roles. As I've mentioned before, and you may not remember this but I'm an engineer, Mr. Speaker, and I have spent my entire career dealing with a lack of female representation in my profession. It was from advocating for more women in the -- discipline of engineering that led me to become a politician. I remember specifically sitting with a group of Pathfinders, which is the teenaged-age girls in Girl Guides and thinking to myself about a work event I just had and wondering where was my voice, what was this. And then I looked at these girls and I thought to myself, I don't want them to become 40 years old and wondering why they don't have any voice in their government, why they don't have any say, why they still feel second class. And, Mr. Speaker, for me, that was the reason that I ran for office. And one of the best things that I've had doing here was participating in the youth parliament and being one of, I hope, the most enthusiastic pages that they've ever seen. And so to have the youth with us, to have the pages here, the youth parliament, something we missed out on during COVID,

has really impacted me and to being a role model to those youth and especially young girls, that is one of the most important things I carry out of this Assembly.

And as I said before, just the transformation of myself, I'm grateful for who I've become, the strength that I've learned and, yeah, the path that I find myself suddenly on versus where I thought I was going to be maybe ten years ago.

I had hoped my colleague for Thebacha would still be here because I wanted to give her a bit of a shout out because she's always talking about Rambo so I really wanted to mention my two cats, Piper and Sophie who, honestly, Mr. Speaker, we can -- I know this is a territory that loves their animals. But when you are a single person, and I heard my colleague speak to coming home and not having their family around, that is my reality every day. So I have to admit those cats have gotten me through some tough times. And, you know, I can't stress enough the importance of the animals. And I love that we have an Assembly where we embrace that; a territory where we embrace animals as part of our life and our well-being.

I don't want to belabour on this one either, but I do want to say thank you to everybody that supported the evacuation efforts in the last while as well as those that supported through COVID. We would not have been able to do a lot in the last while without our sister provinces in the south - Alberta, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, BC, the Yukon. Everybody that helped us to take care of that, the firefighters and the army.

Last, Mr. Speaker, a couple of my colleagues here have touched upon their influences in their life and who they were and what was important to them. And I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that on October 4th, my mom would have been 80 years old. This would have been a very significant date for her, and it wasn't lost to me that it was the day that they unveiled the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls monument. My mom has always instilled in me a strong -- and my dad, a very strong passion to stand up for people who can't stand up for themselves. And so to me, it was very fitting that for her 80th birthday, I was able to stand there and do something so monumental. It is a day that I won't forget, and I was able to mark it in a different way for me than, you know, just spending a day of missing her. One of the things that my mom and my dad did for me was that they have instilled in my empathy and compassion. And that is what I bring to this role; traits, that I believe have made me the leader that I am today. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm really proud of the leader that I am today. People can say what they want to say.

They can find my faults and my flaws. I've never denied them. That's the, I think, the nature of the engineers is we're just going to tell you how it is. And I take that so much to my heart, the oaths that I've taken as an engineer and as an MLA. But at the end of the day, I can tell you that I have done everything in this House with good intent, with the mindset of the people of the Northwest Territories at heart. And that will always be my motivation. If I am sitting in this House, or whether or not I'm on some other path, I know that going forward I will always be here helping and advocating. I don't see myself going back to taking water samples, Mr. Speaker. So with that in mind, I just want to say again thank you to all my colleagues. You know, I know it hasn't been easy. I have never been the easiest Member in this House, I will acknowledge that, I admit it, but at the end of the day I sure made it interesting. Have a good day, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Sahtu.

#### MS. CHINNA'S REPLY

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been a remarkable experience to be here and to be a part of this government. In the past, I was always so critical of the government and their process but respectfully I did work for the GNWT. I worked for them for 20 years. And I gained a lot of experience at that level. I worked for several departments. I could not help but to constantly be critical and constantly ask questions about their programming and why do we work at a snail mail pace. But I tried painfully to be a part of those changes and understand their process. I wanted to be in this position. I thought of this position as -- when I was a student. I was 14. I wanted to be a politician. So I worked frontline. Always found this challenging working for the GNWT because I always had questions. I wanted them to be answered today. But then I soon realized that I come from a different generation. I'm very familiar with the history of the territory. And I witnessed evolving of this government from the beginning, watching the days and listening to COPE, the Committee of Original Peoples Entitlement, and the Indian Brotherhood, and also including the creation of Dene Nation and the original intent at that time was to enhance treaty rights and work side by side with the territorial and federal government, and finally the creation of the GNWT.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I sit here a part of history. Thank you to my riding, the pillar, the region of rich, strong, political history with

innovative solutions. And with their strong political influence and partnership in the Northwest Territories, I want to start to speak about the beginning and the days of John T'sellie, being the first MLA representing the Sahtu. With his passion to work in respect of Indigenous rights and treaties, we then evolved into the days of Stephen Kakfwi, who served as Minister and former Premier, who led the territory towards the economy and fueled our territory to recognize our treaty rights but also leading into natural resources and into the opportunities to discover the interest into diamond mines, oil and gas, but most remarkable, to lead the influence to settle land claim agreements throughout the Northwest Territories. That's when we had money and flexible funding. And then I recognized the efforts of former MLA for the Sahtu Norman Yakeleya who, in his days, witnessed the completion of the Sahtu Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. And then we move on to Danny McNeely for his influence for the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

But in my time, I reflected on two ladies who have strong influenced my career. The former MP Ethel Blondin-Andrew, secretary for state, children and youth. She became the first Indigenous woman from the Northwest Territories to represent the North and also to speak her Indigenous language in the House of Commons. And second is former female chief for the Inuvik Native Band that represented us throughout the Northwest Territories, respectfully Cece McCauley.

With all this rich history, I'm sitting here today as the first Indigenous woman to represent the Sahtu region as a Member of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, that path has been paved for me and for future leaders to walk in these footsteps and continue the legacy. Our rights, our time to work side by side.

I want to acknowledge my colleagues here in the House. I've learned so much from your leadership, your style, your skills, your debates. Together we have led the territory through the most challenging of its time and right to the very end, we're still talking about the fires and the recovery right up until the very last day. We are still working together to find solutions for the better of the Northwest Territories. And just to reflect and a reminder, the pandemic, the floods, the fires, the extreme low water levels, brought us all to have several debates and hours of sitting in the House to make the best decisions for the Northwest Territories. Of course, we did not agree with everything. We all wanted our say. We all got our say. Respectfully, in time, but sometimes more time than required, we all got the opportunity to speak.

I want to also thank from the bottom of my heart in trusting me and voting me to be elected as Minister to sit on Cabinet. It has been a remarkable experience. It has been something that I didn't expect. When I got voted in as MLA and we sat and we were trying to collaborate and trying to think of how is this Cabinet going to be structured, it is -- it's a complete honour to be sitting here as a Cabinet Minister, an Indigenous woman coming from a smaller community. We're having these discussions. I've lived them. I've been there. The conversations are pretty much about a number of us, and I'm here to represent them. Thank you to the Premier for assigning me to the responsibility of Housing, Workers' Safety and Compensation, Public Utilities Board, and Homelessness. And thank you to my Cabinet colleagues for your support and countless conversations of encouragement. I remember when I first got elected, I chose my office to be in the middle of the lawyer and the engineer. At that time, I was fascinated by their accomplishments, but then soon realized the unique and several and so many skills in this House. I knew I was going to be a part of a remarkable team and debates were going to be extraordinary. We all wanted what was best for the North. We are all passionate. We all have history here. And we all care. So today I want to acknowledge the work in each of our portfolios. And for myself, I carry, and I want to begin with housing. The historic changes we did make. The first I'm most proud of is the repaired relationships with Indigenous governments, the signed agreements, trusting our partnership and respectfully including the departments and the debates to address housing in their communities. Also, working relationships with the federal governments have improved. Together we've developed a unique approach identifying the realities of the North. With a massive \$600 million in the North, 100 units, new builds, 50 new homeowners, employment in smaller communities, and a huge work that is completed by the federal government, federal applications, and the engagements.

I want to thank my colleagues on the other side, my Cabinet colleagues. We've done this together. At this time, I want to remember former president Tom Williams and former Minister of Housing Alfred Moses. I hope I continued your legacy, your commitment, and your passion for the people of the Northwest Territories. Throughout this government, it was most difficult to say my last respects and knowing I would lead this portfolio without you. I hope I did you both well. And I gave it all that I had. I tried my very best. And mahsi to both of you for your time.

To the Public Utilities Board, for all your support and your time, you've made me feel confident in the position and provided your expert advice and your knowledge. I greatly appreciate it.

To the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, I want to thank you for the extreme knowledge and support on this file and the briefings were excellent. But, once again, thank you for handling files in such respect and passion to assist the people of the North. But most respectfully, I did experience a death in the Northwest Territories that was very tragic to my family, and I carried this portfolio and I had to show up every day to work and, respectfully, my team did not share that information with me. Thank you so much.

Homelessness, as we work towards, there are many avenues to this file we do carry. I want to thank Housing NWT and the employees that administer this file. Your work does not go unnoticed. Thank you for coming up with unique solutions and developing the respectful partnerships.

With all this work, I don't do this alone. I had the experts. Ms. Heather Nekako, thank you for being my pillar, my strength. When times got so challenging, I felt so defeated. Your perspectives, your knowledge helped me to get through those difficult times. Thank you. Jean Yuris, thank you for your time and keeping my organized. Your work ethic is so impressive. You kept me alive. Thank you to Larissa Stewart for working with me. Until the end it's been heartfelt with all that it takes to support this office and to work together to keep each other focused. You kept the determination, at times it was so frustrating, but we did it. Thank you for keeping me on time and thank you for preparing me. And Kevin, it's been a great experience to be working with you with so much knowledge and skills to work with the people, working directly with the MLAs. You've built those relationships in such a short time, and I respect that. It's what's made a huge difference for us in this office and in the portfolio. Your friendship and expertise is very much appreciated.

And now I want to thank the people of the Sahtu who voted me to be here to represent you. I want to thank the Sahtu leadership who provided guidance and endless support. I don't have any favourites in the Sahtu, but I just wanted to acknowledge Ekwahtide Danny Gaudet and president Erutse. For when I first got elected, he said you know you're going to be the first female that's going to be sitting at this table, you got to be tough, you got to be strong, and there's no going in the corner and crying and getting emotional. You got to show up, get this work done. And one of the

strongest statements that he had made is don't complain if you don't have a solution. Move on.

I also want to thank my CA Natasha Takazo who has been here and with me side by side and who has supported me extremely throughout the portfolio. The thing that I admire about her the most is that had spoken Indigenous language so our communication to the Sahtu was excellent. We were able to reach out to everybody during my term.

And I also want to say thank you to my daughter Kayla. She has taken the responsibility of her sister. She does have Mya with her in school, which gives me the opportunity to be here to serve my four years, to be focused, to be rested, and for me to fulfill my own passion, and I'm able to do this clearly. I also want to thank my supports, Verna, Lucy Ann Antoine, and Denise Voudrach. Thank you for answering my calls when things got so hectic and I wanted to find a solution yesterday and I need to get this done tomorrow. Thank you. And to my nephew Easton Dane, Jonah, Audrena, and I also want to just acknowledge Lexie who told me, Auntie, you work too much, you're never here. So she's going to bring her bag of clothes. She's going to set up a room in my house so when she gets there, she doesn't have to transport her clothes back and forth. And so heartfelt that she's waiting for me today. And our kids and our families sure take a backseat when we uphold these positions. But it's with the passion that we do have in our heart. It's what we want best for the Northwest Territories. We all come with unique perspectives, and we also come with different set of skills. When I got this position, I wanted to be -- I wanted to inspire the youth. I wanted to inspire the Indigenous people, kids, people who want to make a career change. I grew up as a foster child in the Northwest Territories, and I was -- I was thought of that I would never be successful, that I could never be educated. So I know what it's like to be sitting in those homeless, homes. I know what it's like to be sitting on the streets and people don't give you the time or day. But in this position, I want just that simple outreach, especially as a leader, just to be telling those young people even though you're struggling with addiction, tomorrow's a new day. You get up, and you try a little bit harder. You learn from today. You just keep on ongoing. Life is not meant to be lived easy. You have to have challenges because you've got to grow. You got to become the person you need to become. And the most -- the message that I have out there is that we need you. We need our young people to work with their addiction. We need to help them. We need to understand them because they need to fill our seats. A lot of us are retiring. Now there is five of us that are

leaving from this table. I don't know what the North is going to look like but I hope I inspired Indigenous youth or the person at home that just wants to have a career change that has been in a position for 20 years and that wants to leave. Live your dream. It's possible. And I hope I've served you well. Thank you so much to the other side for the amount of advocacy you've done for me and I mean, for the portfolio. You've given us a lot of money to work with. Not extremely, but it was enough. And we were able to get funding from the federal government. That was all from the push from the other side. Thank you so much. And there's nothing that has ever been taken to heart. Anything that has coming forward, I was looking for a solution, what is it that I need to bring back. If I can't get houses on the ground, then how can I get houses on the ground and the key was Indigenous governments. I needed to improve my relationships. And I needed Ottawa to understand and recognize those federal agreements do mean something. There is an obligation there to meet. Thank you all so much. Mahsi. And I wish everybody well in the election coming up. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Range Lake.

#### MS. COCHRANE'S REPLY

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to talk about the relationships I formed during my time in this Assembly. I will begin with Indigenous governments and organizations. I'm proud of many things we've accomplished during this term but if I was to pick one, I would say it's forming the Council of Leaders as a place where all leaders are invited and have a place to discuss programs and services aside from those restricted to the Intergovernmental Council. As a Minister, the lack of this opportunity was one of the biggest complaints I heard from the Indigenous leaders, and it seem so easy to address. It actually was a lot of work organizing, but we did it. Great work, team.

Relationships, though, go both ways. And I've learned a lot from the many Indigenous leaders I've met over my term. One wise leader told me when I first started that I had to hear not only listen. So I worked hard at hearing past the angry words thrown at me, to hear the pain that it came from, and to do my best to find solutions that we could agree to. I was honoured when later this same leader said to his Members, this Premier not only listens, she hears. To this leader, thank you.

Other leaders gently guided me, helped me build my own skills as a leader. One of my most

treasured was when I was told, Premier, the elders don't like when our leaders get angry. And I was given a precious key chain that helps me control my emotions when I'm criticized in this Legislative Assembly. I'm still working on this but each day I get better. To this leader, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Many Indigenous leaders greeted me with kindness and gifted me by reenforcing my belief that to truly be happy in myself, in ourselves, we must try to help people whenever possible. And it's never okay. It's never okay to purposefully harm others physically, mentally, or verbally. It's not okay. I thank the many Indigenous leaders I have met and remember you all for the knowledge and strengths you brought to the table.

The next relationship I want to talk about is those with Cabinet Ministers. Some of my strongest relationships over this term are formed with my Cabinet colleagues. I am grateful for each of your individual gifts that together make us strong as a team. I am proud of the work of Ministers during my term as Premier, and I'm proud of the relationships we formed during this government. Three of our Ministers were Regular Members in the last Assembly, and three came in new to this Assembly. No Minister, other than myself, had any Cabinet experience, and as said to me at the start of my first term, when you're elected as Minister you hit the ground running. Not only did this Cabinet have a sharp learning curve normal for every newly formed Cabinet, we were all, all new to our Cabinet roles, and we were hit with life threatening crisis after crisis over the entire term. Members of Cabinet, though, stepped up, and our first priority became to ensure the residents were safe. We all know that COVID, floods, and fires took any money we had for new initiatives of this Assembly. But I'm amazed at each Minister's ability to still accomplish incredible work within their individual departments.

It's hard being on Cabinet and constantly being told you need to do better. But I saw how much each of you worked, how much each of you cared, and all of you should be proud of your work that you did over this term to make the lives of residents better.

I'll now talk about relationships with Regular Members.

This Assembly was harder than others in that we were never afforded the benefit of being able to meet in person for the first two years. That was unfortunate. But nevertheless, I saw the genuine care that each of you have for your constituents, for Indigenous people, and for all residents of the NWT. Even though we didn't

always agree, I saw in each of you the special gifts that you brought to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's through each of us having different gifts, different skills, and strengths that we truly represent the people of the Northwest Territories. Most of you will run again, and hopefully many of you will be re-elected. I look forward to seeing what you all accomplish in the next governments and watching your progress as some of you elected will get elected into the next Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most treasured relationships I have gained is that with employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I'll start with the deputy ministers. The huge workload we had as elected officials was compounded for you. Not only did you have your normal roles of guiding and overseeing the departments, you also had an exceptionally difficult term. All of you had to work many, many additional hours to implement Cabinet direction, to keep residents safe, and step up programs and services at an incredible pace to accomplish this goal. You went above and beyond in carrying out your duties, and the Government of the Northwest Territories and residents are lucky to have had you in your positions. Thank you for the work you provided and for your commitment to the Northwest Territories. To the staff within all departments, all of you were faced with having to still perform your duties during the first pandemic most of us have ever seen. Not knowing what the future would bring, you continued to keep the operations of government going throughout. Many of you also experienced the devastation of floods and/or fires personally and yet you continued to put the needs of residents before your own, and that is true public service. Each of you deserves to be recognized and to be provided of your commitments.

To the staff within the Legislative Assembly, your work to keep the Assembly functioning has been outstanding. It's hard trying to give support to 19 Members, many of whom were new to their positions four years ago. You have amazed me with your dedication to the Assembly. And even though I know you've had your own trials and tribulations, I have seen your commitments and appreciate all the support you provided to me and others as MLAs.

To the staff within EIA, executive and Indigenous affairs, I've been a Minister of many departments over my time in office, but I am exceptionally proud and impressed by the staff within executive and Indigenous affairs. Your level of professionalism, compassion, and commitment as you carry out your job duties

has been outstanding. From our communications team, the regional government service officers, our ministerial and Cabinet support teams, negotiations and intergovernmental affairs team, and our gender equity unit, each of you has been vital in ensuring Cabinet functions as best as possible, the needs of residents are considered at all times, and that we continue to build relationships no matter what hurdles are thrown at us. You are incredible, and I was honoured to lead you through the last four years.

To the staff within my office, some of you have been here since the beginning of my term, and some have joined throughout the term. A few have left, but their commitment to myself and this office remains, and I can't say enough about how much your support means to me. No individual can do the work in this office alone and having a strong team is critical, and I have that in my team. There are two individuals that I want to highlight, Mr. Speaker. My principal secretary, Shaleen Woodward, and our Cabinet secretary Martin Goldney. Every position in government is critical to ensure the efficient functioning of government. However, these two positions are the most important to a Premier as their roles are to give honest, critical advice, and support. When beginning politics eight years ago, I didn't know either of these individuals but I watched their performance over the years and knew that they would be the best choices for me personally. Neither have let me down. These two individuals have been expectational in both their support to me personally and in carrying out their duties to oversee the operations of Cabinet and the bureaucracy. I am forever grateful to have been able to work with you over the years. I've met many people throughout my working career, and many I respect to this day; however, I'm very careful in calling people my friends as this title is based on loyalty, trust and love. For years, I could name my true friends on one hand and now I have to add the other hand as I consider both Martin and Shaleen my friends. And I will be there for you wherever you are, whatever you do. I hope you feel the same.

I also want to acknowledge my constituents, campaign team, and supporters. You don't know how critical you are to keeping politicians going. It's tough in the limelight all the time and knowing that no matter what you do, you'll not be able to please everyone. In an atmosphere where it's easy to target, your positive support is crucial, critical, and important in keeping each of us going strong.

My family, thank you for being you, for standing beside me throughout my term, for putting up with my neglecting you to take care of all of the residents. You've been my strength

throughout, and I can't express how much I love each of you. Thank you for being you and for being there for me.

Mr. Speaker, relationships go two ways, and all of us have a duty in our roles within the public service as elected officials and our staff. Every one of us has a role in ensuring we continue to build relationships and thereby trust in our work. I've learned so much from all of you, and I thank you all for your teachings and support to make me a better leader and a better person in general. Thank you, everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Replies to Commissioner's address. Member for Yellowknife South.

#### MS. WAWZONEK'S REPLY

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure anyone's still listening but if they are -- maybe I'll get a copy of Hansard and put this in my transition binder.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not really the touchie-feelie speech writer type; that's not really how I went through the court system so you can put your Kleenex away. I also, in general, the Commissioner's address is something I thought I would do because I don't get the chance to speak much, I gather. Thanks to Member from Frame Lake, apparently I'm in error. Apparently I speak a lot. Sorry, everyone, I was going to make up for that today so it's a bit long but I don't think -- I think you've all beat me anyway so I'm in a good stead.

Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm an optimist. Being an optimist and being a politician are not an easy combination. And these last four years, as we've all been saying now for a few hours, have had nothing short of crisis and those crisis have done their best to break an optimist's habit. Before we'd even passed our first budget, my first budget in this Assembly, there was COVID. This taxed our already maxed-out health care system. Then there was some supply chain shocks, floods, inflation, more floods, wildfires, record low water levels, challenges with the food resupplies, and challenges to our electricity systems that are now looking to have to use more expensive and carbon intensive diesel. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to be an optimist right now.

But way back in February of 2020, when people were still associating COVID with cruise ships and inflation was well under 2 percent, the Commissioner said the following in her address, People need a strong and secure foundation on which to grow, and, Mr. Speaker,

I believe we have that strong foundation. I will not go so far as to say that the foundation is secure in the sense of being sustainable because I think a lot depends on what happens here in the next few years. But I do believe the foundation, at least, is there.

Some of what this government has achieved, even in the face of the recurrent crisis, has helped established that foundation. This is true across government but in the attempt to summarize or simplify will be just that; it will be too summary and too simple. So while this is not an exhaustive list, I have a few thoughts.

The government renewal program and the program evaluation policy that goes with it.

Mr. Speaker, back when I started, we did not know all of the programs and services that were offered by the Government of the Northwest Territories. I find that a bit striking. We now know. And we discovered that there's around 200 programs that had no evaluation matrix associated to them. While on the one hand you might not be proud of that, on the other I'm very proud we now know that and we can move forward.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a human resources strategic plan, the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework. It has published targets associated with it, diversity and inclusion framework, and succession planning. Mr. Speaker, let that sink in that we didn't have any of that before the start of this Assembly.

Our capital planning, Mr. Speaker, we are delivering a capital plan that we can actually achieve that makes it more transparent and makes it much easier to hold departments to account for the delivery.

Mr. Speaker, on procurement. Like human resources, let me pause for a moment on these few facts. Three years ago, there was multiple different versions of the objectives and purposes across multiple departments for government procurement. Is it any wonder that people were challenged with that system, and there was no methodical way to answer whether a proponent was, in fact, delivering on the promises for local employment or purchases. It is hardly a wonder that this was such an issue at the beginning of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we put ourselves on the map as a location for environmental, social, and good governance investment -- a term I didn't even know existed four years ago -- and as a source of critical minerals and metals, something I also didn't hear much about just four years ago. For the Mineral Resources Act regulations, somewhat much maligned at times, Mr. Speaker, but, Mr. Speaker, it has

completed six of seven steps in the brand new Intergovernmental Council Legislative Protocol. That's an accomplishment.

And last but not least on my list, Mr. Speaker, having an action plan for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry is a significant step forward, and it was one that was slowed down, intentionally, to go back and consult with communities along the way. It also has a translator's booklet associated to it that is foundational in that space for the North where we have 11 different official languages.

Mr. Speaker, I am not the only political optimist, and I'll give you an example coming from the conclusion of the Northwest Territories chapter of the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. It speaks to barriers and challenges but it has a hint of optimism. It says this: It is time for Canadians to look North, to look beyond the cultural methodology we have created about the Arctic, to its real potential to add to Canada's social and economic strength and global advantage, end quote.

The existence of a methodology about a distant and mysterious and exotic and maybe harsh or inaccessible Arctic allows Canada to be disconnected from the realities of the North. That disconnect leaves the incredible potential of the Northwest Territories' people, lands, geography, culture, and geology misunderstood and, frankly, underestimated. That disconnect also allows a lack of understanding about the striking disadvantage against which northern people are still trying to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, it is in the interests of the rest of Canada to take note. A few examples, if I may.

The Inuvialuit settlement lands have tremendous reserves of liquid natural gas. That's something of much interest around the world right now. And the IRC should be given the opportunity to capitalize on that, should they choose.

Our territory has a wealth of critical minerals and metals in a jurisdiction where our industry practices reflect environmental, social, and good governance factors. I've had the opportunity to travel to many countries in the world and, Mr. Speaker, our tourism product is incredible. This is my favorite place in the world. We have lands and waters primed for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives which would come with their own economic, social, and cultural opportunities. We have incredible freshwater fish. We have a growing satellite facility up in the North. There's film scouts that are coming to look for our unique locations. There's strategic geopolitical placement here.

And this is not meant to be the rah-rah for the ITI minister, I assure you. What it is is two-fold.

First -- and the list could be much longer. I'll stop in light of time, Mr. Speaker. But, first, it's my frustration at how much hustle it seems like it takes for Ottawa to take notice of us. And this is not meant at every Minister or department who are members of the federal public service or the federal government. And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I am lucky that there are some Ministers with whom I value a relationship. But on a larger, wider and higher scale, there are growth opportunities in the Northwest Territories that could benefit all of Canada with a bit more attention.

Part of our challenge involves the need to overcome historic and systemic disadvantage. The Northwest Territories has the highest proportion of residential school survivors. It should be little surprise, then, that we also have some of the highest rates of family violence and some of the highest rates of suicide in Canada, and yet our Indigenous communities cannot access 100 percent funding after emergencies that on reserve communities might access, as one example.

Our government remains responsible for the delivery of health and social services, justice, and housing, among other services. Those are services that are often drawn down when people have greater mental health needs or other personal challenges. And of course as we all know, and you've all heard me say, we get a huge proportion of our budget from the territorial formula financing. That complex calculation is meant to account for what provinces are able to provide to their residents and then adjust so that the territories can, theoretically, provide something similar. Except that the last time that that calculation was given a detailed once over was sometime ago and over recent years, it has become clear Indigenous people of Canada have far greater needs owing to Canada's troubled relationship with Indigenous people. And I cannot help but question whether the equation, in fact, adequately takes into account that 50 percent of the residents of the Northwest Territories are Indigenous Canadians, many still living in traditional communities, and all of us lacking in a national scale energy or transportation corridor infrastructure. Even if it does take some of that into account and even if it does give us money that brings us to a provincial level, Mr. Speaker, that does not put our population at an equal footing. And I won't even start getting into programs where the federal government seems to outright forget the realities of the North, like in our health care funding, medical travel, or Metis health benefits.

My other purpose with that laundry list I had at the beginning about opportunities here in the Northwest Territories, however, is that we must also take responsibility for our collective future North of 60.

Mr. Speaker, it's too often that we seem to bog down at the edges of big issues, spend time on what divides us rather than what could or should unite us. And I'm going to give one example, and that is what is the energy future for the Northwest Territories. In the years to come, hauling diesel long distances across the territory by road only to then transfer it to an even more carbon intensive means of transport like barging, that is not going to be a viable method of powering the Northwest Territories. And any chance we have of reducing the cost of power will not count via a patchwork of disconnected systems. Is Taltson the answer, Mr. Speaker? Well, it might be. It is clearly a billion-dollar-plus sized project, but why did it not proceed before? What were the consequences of it not proceeding? Well, for one, the three diamond mines that now have to create their own power systems are likely now facing, sooner than not end of life because they have to instead incur the high costs of trucking diesel up the winter road. What about the future for critical minerals and metals? There's major demand coming. But they're expecting to be able to have green energy. Well, how are we going to supply it, Mr. Speaker? I think that's true for a lot of institutional investors in different sectors, not only here. What are we going to do to respond? So what are we offering? What are we offering to the exploration companies and others? What about the existing mines? What MOUs might have been signed with NTPC? What kind of collaboration has there been between our energy team and industry? What other alternatives might there be, in fact, that could provide equivalent megawatts? Any? Do we need all the megawatts? Where do we need the megawatts? When would we need them? If we don't need them, does that answer our need for Taltson? Maybe and maybe not. What other benefits are there for a large system like Taltson? What about small modular reactors, Mr. Speaker? What about micronuclear? And how does the proposed timeline to complete transmission on Taltson compare to the predicted date for small modular reactors? How might the cost of large scale hydro compare to community scale hydro? Was that maybe what we need?

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to stop there but I could go on asking questions in the energy space for quite some time. And my point, Mr. Speaker, is that there are a multitude of questions that I think need to be asked about energy security



for the Northwest Territories, and these questions don't necessarily require a final cost estimate calculated today with interest rates high and inflation all over. It's a point in time anyways, Mr. Speaker. But, really, I want us to imagine what if we spent some of the time that we did stating all the reasons we dislike the federal carbon tax or debating all the pros and cons, what if we did that and applied it to some of those questions? What if we took back some of the time we've spent talking about who's sitting on the board at NTPC and asked instead, regardless of who's there, what they are doing to build the industrial customer power base. They're territory-wide issues, Mr. Speaker. Energy is but one. There are many more such issues where we simply must get moving on territory level solutions. And if I was -- if it seems like I'm taking a dig at MLAs, Mr. Speaker, I'm not. There's a responsibility for asking these questions as Ministers as well, internally and externally. And there's also a responsibility within the media to ask these questions of all of us, both the Ministers and MLAs. I was using the example of Taltson specifically, but I do want to acknowledge that Members certainly have asked for progress and I am glad every single time that they do. But nonetheless, there have been many times where those conversations did get bogged down on which document we'd shared on board composition, on carbon tax, something about which I have had very little control, but it leaves my wondering why. Why did we get stuck on some of these topics and some of these issues about documents and composition of boards? And let me venture one observation for the remainder of my time.

I don't think there's enough trust in this building, Mr. Speaker. And it's not trust in any one single individual because relationships will falter in which is sometimes a very emotional role. I mean trust in our system of government and in our collective group of leaders, both elected and in the public service.

My most challenging and disheartening moments in this role occur when our differences, which are the very aspects that, as I began by describing, could unite us, instead devolve into personal accusations, statements like you don't care, you want to cause pain. We might not agree on how to face our political challenges but no one in this room, I believe, no one in this room wants to cause the residents of the Northwest Territories any form of pain. That's nonsense. And this isn't merely a matter of argument style. Saying those types of things, Mr. Speaker, stifles our ability to continue to stand and engage in difficult debate. We need to rebuild trust, not only in our institutions but in each other, and in the ability to engage in

difficult debates on substantial matters. And it doesn't mean that we don't have serious disagreements. I have had some serious disagreements, both with my Cabinet colleagues and with Members across the floor. And respecting them doesn't mean I'm going to invite them to dinner when all of this is over, Mr. Speaker, but surely, surely we can hang on to some basic respect for one another no matter how much we disagree on the politics.

It is not just us as Members. It is trust in government processes and trust in the public servants behind them that is often lacking. Mr. Speaker, we are all human, and the people who work in the public service are human. Some will work harder than others, and some will make mistakes. Please do not ever let one person ruin your faith in the ability of your friends and your neighbours who work for government. And I'll speak to that a bit more in just a moment.

My ask first, to anyone who steps in this building come November, is to please begin from a place of respect and try always to build trust. Even when it seems broken, please try again. Without this, progress on the big issues facing this territory will be much harder, and the discussion and the debate will not be ready. Mr. Speaker, I'm almost done. I have a few thank-yous so maybe get the Kleenex; we'll see how it goes.

I was new to the government service when I was elected in 2019. I had never been a member of the GNWT's public service and if I am being honest, I was unsure what I was going to find.

I am so grateful to the public service. In a consensus system, when people get upset with the government, which happens, it is the nature of governing, rather than blame the party who happens to be in power, which is what might happen in a party system, the ire and the frustration easily gets turned to the government generally, and the public service specifically, here in the Northwest Territories.

As of Wednesday, October the 4th, I have answered 1104 questions in the House. There's been a few more since then, but I haven't done the count. I have answered hundreds more questions in Committee of the Whole and hundreds more again in front of standing committees. And here's a secret. I did a lot of homework before I ran for office but four years ago, I knew very little about public accounts. I knew very little about the government fiscal framework. I could not have told you what an ESG might stand for. I certainly could not have explained digital government. I had competed on RFPs, but I did

not know much about public procurement. And I can assure you I was quite unfamiliar with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. And so in order for me to answer literally thousands of questions about all of these different topics, and many more, I have relied on the public service. For every single question I have been asked, I assure you I have probably asked my staff and my departments at least two, and sometimes more. And often I have not only asked them to explain a concept or a process in excruciating detail, I have often then said but why is it so? And sometimes, often, they have answered with new policies, new processes, changes, legislative or regulatory changes, not to mention countless rewrites of the BF reply, the speaking notes, and the media releases. The poor comms folks.

Mr. Speaker, so much of this work is unseen and under appreciated but any success that I might have had in this role is thanks to members of the public service.

A true unsung public service hero is the role of the constituency assistant. It really doesn't have the right title, Mr. Speaker. For me, balancing the demands of a Minister's office and that of a MLA is challenging. I had many different channels by which people can reach me. Unfortunately, I am often overloaded by the one channel that I am standing behind here. Fortunately, I have someone with energy and passion, and I was never worried about missing a communication come in as an MLA. Nor was I worried whether or not my office would advance issues on behalf of my constituents, many of which my constituency assistant had to advance to me as a Minister so I know exactly how difficult and tenacious she can be. She was always accessible, she was deeply engaged, and I do not how I would have managed this role without her.

A huge thank you to my ministerial team at the Assembly. They have kept me, my correspondence, my briefings, and truly my life organized. I put everything in my calendar, every last sports event, every dentist office appointment for the kids, and they somehow have managed to work around that and balance that with all of the demands of this office. They have kept me calm. They have kept me functional. The volume of things means that all of this was no small feat. But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, they are the frontline of my office, and they are also the frontline for all the emotional highs and lows that come into a Minister's office.

I want to say thank you to my colleagues on Cabinet. We do not always agree, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the front that we like to put forward of being all calm and organized, but we

did become a team. I am very grateful for this comradery. And thank you, Premier, for your leadership of our team.

Thank you to my colleagues in the House. We have had some laughs, Mr. Speaker. We have had some tough but good debates. I have learned a good many things. We also had a few other less than pleasant moments but I am pretty sure they are going to make some good Ministers some day, Mr. Speaker.

A thank you to my family. My spouse is at one of our remote mine sites most weeks from Monday to Thursday, and he just doesn't do the 12-hour days. His days are typically longer. But when he comes home, he has consistently asked me what can I do to help? He also happens to be my most difficult constituent and frequently tells me very plainly his views on what the government is doing. He is also my first gut check and has had to listen to many a political theory as I was trying to unpack an issue or a problem.

Thank you to my kids, Mr. Speaker. They have been troopers. They have become very independent confident young people over these last four years, and they are now exceptionally good at making breakfast for dinner on days when I am running late.

Thank you to the many many friends and neighbours who have helped drive my kids all over the city to various sports, had them over for play dates, and including sometimes some weeknight/school night sleepovers when required.

Last but not least, very importantly, a thank you to the residents of Yellowknife South. Many residents and their families have struggled with the recurring emergencies that we have all experienced in the last four years. Even when I have not been able to provide a preferred solution or answer a question the way someone clearly had hoped, residents have remained respectful. In a age of political polarization, I have been deeply grateful for that. Many have trusted me with their challenges and concerns, shared their struggles and Ministers with me. I am grateful for the trust they have placed in me. I am grateful for the kindness and the support that my residents have shown me. It has been truly an honour in this House to be here on behalf of Yellowknife South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Member for Hay River North.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON'S REPLY

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will keep this brief. I think I am the last on the list, we have been going over three hours, so I will do my best to keep this tight.

I just want to say a few thank you's before we finally and mercifully put the 19th Assembly out of its misery. Better late than never, Mr. Speaker. And I am just joking. I think that today has shown that despite a lot of the issues that, maybe even the public have seen over the years with some of the, you know, way that we interact with each other that this group, while maybe not as cohesive as it could be, everyone is working towards the same goal. Everyone has the people's -- the residents of the territories' best interests at heart. I am proud to be part of that, Mr. Speaker.

First and foremost, I want to thank the people who are the reason we are all here, and that's the constituents. So I want to thank my constituents, the constituents of Hay River North, for giving me the honour of serving two terms in the Legislative Assembly here. I can't even begin to explain what I have learned, what I have experienced here. It has been -- it has been truly amazing. I have met amazing people. Even in my own community. When you are an MLA, people come to you and they open up to you. You hear things that you don't expect to hear from people. And you really, you really get insight into their lives, into their families, into the history of the community, and it really brings you much closer to the community and that's something that I am always going to treasure, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Hay River have been through a lot, especially in the past five years. You know, we often talk about COVID as the beginning of the crisis after crisis. Well, in Hay River, just prior to COVID, we had the high-rise fire. Overnight, 150 people were homeless, just like that, Mr. Speaker. The other thing that that high-rise had, in addition to 150 people and their homes was vacancies. There was a time when you could go to Hay River and find somewhere to rent. If there was a teacher that the DEA wanted to hire, they didn't have to worry there was nowhere for them to live. And we lost all of that, Mr. Speaker.

Less than a year later, or almost a year later to the day, we started to deal with COVID. And for two years, we dealt with COVID and Hay River, I think, might have been more divided than any other community in the territory. And those wounds are still healing.

Mr. Speaker, after that came the flood - at that point, the biggest natural disaster in the territory's history. 50 homes damaged or destroyed. People are still dealing with that. People are still out of their homes.

After that, Mr. Speaker, almost a year to the day, was the first evacuation this year. And our neighbours over at KFN, a number of our neighbours lost their homes.

Not long after that, we all know what happened. The worst fire season in the history of the Northwest Territories. I got the evacuation alert and then we packed up -- we had been packing since that morning because when that wind picked up that morning, I thought that we should be prepared. And we drove out of town, I drove down to High Level, and by the time that I got there, there was no cell service. I tried to call home. I tried to call back to Hay River to see what was going on. Couldn't get through. I got a call from Minister Thompson. He was great about keeping me updated about what was going on and, basically, he said Enterprise is gone. And I couldn't fathom that. I couldn't understand that. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what happened.

And so the amount of homes that have been lost in Hay River, and our neighbours of Enterprise and KFN, over the past five years is extraordinary. It's unbelievable, and people have been dealing with a lot. And Mr. Speaker, that's on top of everyday life. Life can be tough in the best of times and so that backdrop for the past five years has been difficult for everyone, and I want to acknowledge their resilience and the struggles they have been through, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've really -- I really enjoyed being a Regular Member. It's a much different lifestyle. I was home a lot more. I got to go to all of the events in the community. I talked to a lot of people. It was great. But as a Minister, I spend much more time either in Yellowknife, on the road, or in Hay River in my office and in meetings, virtual meetings, and so I don't get to go out as much and my constituency Ann has had to pick up that slack, and I really want to thank her as well.

People usually don't go to their MLA when they are happy about something, and so she has had to deal with some very angry people, some irate people, and it's tough. It can be tough on a person to sit there and deal with that, with all of these other things that I just mentioned, in the background as well. And so I am very appreciative of that and what she's been through.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of the MLAs for Hay River. I am lucky to have another colleague, the MLA for Hay River South, who is my dad. And, frankly, I don't think that I could ask for a better colleague to help me represent Hay River. I think if you look around the room here, I don't know if there is an MLA who is more universally

respected or liked. I, in my hallway there, the Minister's hallway, I hear him in our hallway more often than any other Regular Member. He's not just lobbying; he's building relationships. And from my perspective in Cabinet, I can see that that has paid dividends for Hay River. When you are well informed, well researched, reasonable, rationable, likeable, you can -- you are influential, and I would recommend that anyone who, who is back here, look at some of those traits and tries to employ those, because I think that he has been perhaps the most effective Regular Member, and I am proud and honoured to be his colleague and work with him.

I also want to mention very briefly, because I can't talk too much about this, but in the last Assembly I had a colleague who was very influential to me, Alfred Moses. He really took me under his wing and, you know, I regret that we lost contact thereafter, after that last Assembly. But I really appreciate everything that he did for me. And I was -- I became very good friends with Alfred, very good friends, and we would hang out after session, you know, every day. Alfred, myself, and Herb Nakimayak, favorite MLA from Nunakput. It's a call back to earlier, in case anyone wasn't listening.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to mention that I saw -- he did a lot for me, Alfred. He really, he instilled in me the values that you need as an MLA. He was so community-minded, so hardworking, and I think about him often and I know he is missed.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to being an MLA, I am also a Minister and I really have to thank my ministerial staff. We have a very small team. You know, I go to these meetings with federal, territorial, and provincial Ministers and they have their chief of staff and three other staffers for their one little tiny department. Upstairs there's three of us, Mr. Speaker. I have Ron and Sheila, and we manage ECE, justice, and government House leader position, and it is a lot of work and it would be impossible without them; the place would fall apart and so I can't speak highly enough of the work they do. And I thank Alfred for putting that team together because I came here, I took over his office and his team, and so I am very appreciative of that too.

Mr. Speaker, I also have to thank the departmental staff. I am not going to echo everything that Minister Wawzonek said, but I do endorse it. I think that government employees get a bad rap sometimes. There is always a bad apple who people say oh, they don't even do anything, they don't work. Mr. Speaker, the staff that I work with, the senior staff, a 60, 70, 80-hour week, that's not

unusual. You know, we work long hours and there's times when we have been working 12 hours a day, I need something done for the next morning, they continue to work to make sure that we get that done the next morning. So I work with a number of deputy ministers and ADMs, and I can't speak highly enough of what they bring to the role and their value to the territory. But as a Regular Member, I thought oh there's 6,000 employees, the GNWT can do anything. Until you get into the departments, you realize there is a lot of employees but they have jobs, they are focused on service delivery, they are focused on these things, and really the people who do the things that we are asked to do, it is a relatively small group of people and they are dedicated and they put in the time and I am very appreciative of that.

Mr. Speaker, I have to of course thank my family. I already thanked my dad. My mom, she's probably here in the gallery more than most people. She's not here right now but whenever we are sitting, she makes a number of different appearances as well as my sisters. They are all very bright, they all very open-minded, and I can go to them with issues and they've always been very supportive. And I realize that not everyone has that support and so I am very thankful for that.

And of course, finally, I just want to thank Chantal, my spouse, Mr. Speaker. I am on the road a lot. You know, it's, even if you have a meeting here one day, it's a three-day trip to Yellowknife for me often and so, you know, she's understanding about it. She picks up the slack. She makes sure that if the truck needs to get serviced it goes into the shop, the fridge is full of groceries, and all of those kind of things, the daily life that we often don't have time for. She is, you know -- she's that constant in my life so I really appreciate that, and I appreciate her and I love her, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Member for Hay River South.

#### MR. ROCKY SIMPSON'S REPLY

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What time was supper supposed to be at?

Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to say anything today, but, you know, I just wanted to let people know, you know, the reason I ran for office. And I have -- I guess I've been in politics before. I have been president, you know, of the Metis local in Hay River and, you know, went to meetings. We were part of that, you know, the claim and the comprehensive claim that fell

apart as well. And, you know, through that I guess I learned how to, you know, to be compassionate and empathetic and help people. And so that's what I have done most of my life. I share what I have, you know, give what, you know, if somebody needs something that I have and I don't really need it, they can have it. And that includes money, lot of times. Every day actually in the office. So I always carry around a lot of \$5 bills in your pocket, not 100s or 50s.

But, you know, and that's kind of the reason. And one the other reason I ran as well is like I sat up in the House here a few times, last -- just R.J. got elected, and I looked around and I listened to what was being said and that. And I always believed that, you know, somebody should be challenged, all MLAs should have a challenger and, you know, the MLA at the time in Hay River South had no challenger, and I opened my big mouth and said well I guess if nobody runs, I'll throw my hat in the ring. I tried to encourage people to run but nobody so I had to walk the talk on that one. And then I got elected. And I thought what the hell am I going to do now? I can't get out of this. But I am glad I didn't get out of it. It's, you know, it's been a great time. I have been able to work with R.J., I have been able to work with all of you guys, and I have been able to do -- hopefully, I did some -- you know, something for the people in Hay River. You know, my office, you know, I usually work every day. The office is usually opened in the wintertime 6, 6:30 in the morning. It allows the street people, the people on the street, if they have to get out of their night shelter, they will come over for coffee and snacks as well, so. You know, it's important to provide that, plus I get all the news of what happened that night or the night before and, you know, if I need somebody, I just -- one of them come in the office and I just say I am looking for so and so. Usually five minutes later the other person shows up. So it's actually pretty good that way. And, you know, it's important as well as an MLA to walk around town and just talk to people and, you know. The other thing I like to do too is to, you know, even when I'm sitting up here, when I come in on, you know, early or something to Yellowknife when we have session, is just to call people. Like I will just sit there and just I haven't talked to anybody in a while and give them a shout. And just see how they're doing. And, you know, even like I noticed the people that moved to Yellowknife and I still call them and talk to them.

But, you know, to me, the residents have always been important and that's why I ran, is that I wanted to give a voice to the people. I wanted people to have access to their MLA, and I think that I have achieved that. It's

probably been my biggest achievement, is letting them have access -- or allow, you know, allowing me to be accessible to them. You know, I am there for them. I realize that without them I would be -- I wouldn't be needed. None of us would be needed. So it's important that, you know, that that was important to me to make sure that happened.

The other -- and the other thing too, as well, is that, you know, even though they have access, access isn't good enough. It doesn't go far enough. You actually have to, you know, you got to be able to listen. You got to be able to take their issue. You got to be able to understand -- you should understand where they come from. And Hay River, I am lucky because I was born and raised. And so I know the people, I know their background, and it is very important you know that. Because a lot of times the solution is already there. And you got to be able to take that solution and, and if you need support from Cabinet, give them the answer. They are busy enough as it is. Make their work easy. Because if you let them think then nothing happens. Sometimes.

And like R.J. said, you know, we talked about disasters in Hay River. I went through the 1963 flood. I went through the -- I went through a number of other floods as well before, before the one in 2022. And in that flood, we forget about the -- about the explosion that happened. You know, a House blew up. And it took out about four or five houses around it, you know. And so there was that at the same time.

The big one though I guess for me was the high-rise, like I was just astonished that, and I am still astonished, that that thing is sitting empty. You know, I went to a meeting and if we would have had the right officials and people sitting up front, I think that place would have been operational right now. We would have had those rooms. You see high-rises all over the place have fires but they get up -- you know, they are up and running in no time. But, you know, we got into, you know, you know, it just got into a match with the owner and people didn't like him, but he had a big heart, that guy. You know, he provided space to people nobody else would provide space to, you know. Those are the things that people don't know but I know that, you know. I talked to him and I talked to him lots, and now he's passed away, the high-rise is sitting empty, and we're, you know -- and we're short accommodation in Hay River.

Yeah, so you know, we've had our issues in the last while. We've had, you know, drug overdoses. We've had more than our fair share of them. Like I have had people come through my office and, you know, I can name off

probably five of them that have passed away because of it. And I talked to them about it, you know. And they knew that's probably what was going to be what happened to them and that's exactly what happened to them. So we have got to do something about that, you know. And the illicit drug trade, you know. Stuff like that is never going to go away, but somehow we got to dampen it. We got to lessen. And that's got to be through, you know, we got to pass legislation, like the SCAN Act, and the Forfeiture Act, then those are things that we actually have to do. Because otherwise if we do nothing, nothing's gonna happen. We got -- maybe we got to pressure the federal government to, you know, to make some change to the Criminal Code. Maybe we got to make, you know, the drug, you know, people who are selling on the street, you know, if they get caught, we got to make them pay. Maybe they got to go to jail, you know. We got to -- you know, somehow we got to do something because it is just like, you know, you take some of them off the street and it's just like water, it just fills in right away. And we see that in Hay River. And it's, it's my friends, our friends, our family members. Like none of us, you know, none of us can say we don't know somebody, don't know anybody that is being impacted by it.

Then we have housing issues. We will always have housing issues. This government is gonna -- this government isn't going to solve the housing issues. You know, people have to work toward it solving as well. It has got to be an approach, you know, from government, individuals, Indigenous governments, industry, everybody has got to do something. You know, and part of it is people want to be homeowners but I was watching something on TV the other day and people just can't own their homes anymore. It's just too costly. And even now the rental market is getting out of reach. So we are going to probably see more people on the street. So how do we fix it here when they -- you know, when we see that getting worse in the south? You know, we got to do something. You know, we got to -- we got to make it so people, you know, can have jobs so they can maybe, you know, they can contribute but first of all they got to learn how to work. You know, I learned how to work, from, you know, from my parents. That's why I work long hours. I'm probably crazy to do that but that's what I do. And I think that my kids learned that. But I think a lot of times we want something better for our children and we make it easier for them, and that's the problem, I think that we make it too easy and maybe we shouldn't be doing that. You know, we need -- maybe we need' course on, you know, just how to, on work ethics,

because there's a lot of people that don't have that anymore, so.

You know, in all these impacts, in all these disasters that have happened for Hay River, you know, we have got mental health issues. People are stressed and, you know, they are going through hell after this. And I think that a lot of people are shut in right now. We are losing residents. Residents are moving out of Hay River. They are moving -- they are moving south, you know. This was the catalyst that pushed them over the edge and said it's time to go.

Businesses, the same thing. You know, we've had T businesses -- our businesses, probably, you know, two and a half, three months, had their doors shut. You know, if you look at one or \$2,000 a day, you know, of lost revenue, that's pretty bad, you know. And now they are looking at, you know, they got that on top, they got that and then they are trying to go compete, you know, a market that people just go on the internet and order whatever they want so it's tough.

Somehow, we got to -- we got to look at reality. Things are changing in this world. Climate change, you know. It's impacting -- you know, it's impacting the North. Hay River, one year we got too much water. Next, this year, we got no water, you know. It impacts the shipping industry. So what does that mean for Hay River, if we have low water for the next ten years, then we know what's gonna happen is that we are going to have to find another route to get materials up north. Then -- and then we will be looking, and we should have looked at this years ago and should have been built already, is the Mackenzie Valley Highway, you know. That should have been done. I worked on that -- I worked on the piece there around -- river between two mountains when I was -- I think I told you -- when I was 17 years old or 16 years old. You know, it's only went up to Wrigley, that's as far as it's got. So it's -- you know, I look at all this stuff and I know that history because I have been up here. And when I hear people talking about it, if you are not really from here and you came up, you don't know that history. And I am lucky enough to know a lot of people up and down the Valley and so, you know, and that's the other thing too, is that if I need know something that, you know, happened around somewhere I just call somebody, you know, and ask them and they tell me. So, you know. And so you just kinda got of be plugged in to that type of -- that network.

And then we have got -- then we got health care. You know, we got the Hay River Health and Social Service Authority, we got the

NTHSSA, and we are both in the same boat. You know, it's hard to find doctors. It's hard to find, you know, health care workers, and it's even going to be harder now that Manitoba has, you know, elected an NDP Premier because he said that they're gonna, they're gonna entice health workers to go to, go to Manitoba and they are gonna be the number 1 provider of health services in Canada. So that's what we have got to compete against. And, you know, and those -- and those are the type of things that we have to look at doing as well. And, you know, if we have to do that amalgamation, bring them together, if that makes sense to me and, you know, we just gotta do it.

You know, the other thing is with all these disasters, you know, like I said the businesses had, you know, they were short money. They lost revenue. You know, some of their infrastructure, you know, was lost. This government, you know, we provided some money to them. We provided a little bit more to Hay River, you know, and I let people know that and I just hope that the criteria isn't so onerous that nobody actually uses it or just says to hell with it, and I am just hoping that's not gonna happen. But we do have a gap and that gap is the insufficient financial support to those people in Hay River. And I am talking about Hay River now. You know, Yellowknife, you guys had two days to get out of here. We had minutes. And we had people go through the fire. We had people burnt. We've had animals and pets lost. We've had vehicles lost. We had people almost died. Like I don't know how -- like there's gonna be trauma. And those people ran, they got a place to stay, they paid for it. Their mind wasn't on I hope the government pays for it. I don't think so. You know, and I am not talking a lot of people. But now I ask for something, I asked for that type of support. All I hear is oh, we can't do that, there's no money. That's BS, as far as I am concerned. Like, we need support for them, and we need that -- we need to show that compassion. And I hope that, you know, the Minister of finance and ECE and Cabinet sit down and talk about that. Like it's needed. People, people are struggling right now.

You know, the cost of living, it's just -- it's gone crazy. And, you know, I got people from Hay River saying, you know, there's -- turkeys are a hundred dollars here, how much are they in Yellowknife, can you bring some back for me. Well, I don't really want to start taking food back from Yellowknife to Hay River and then cutting out the retailers there. So, you know, we've got to do something. The amount of money that we have been giving people, you know, \$750 or whatever, it's minimal. It's not a lot. So I hope that, that Cabinet will sit back down, find a few dollars to make sure that those people who ran

out when we told them to, you know, were traumatized, were injured, lost their vehicles and pets, and other animals, that they get a little bit of support. And like I say, I am not talking a lot of them.

The other thing that we are doing, and Kevin mentioned that today, is like you take a look at Cameron Hills. We are just bleeding money from the territories to Alberta. All that work up there, done by Albertans last year. And it will be finished with Albertans this year. And who is challenging that? Who's challenging them? You know, we need our First Nations to step up as well and they got to push us so we can push the federal government and push ourselves to provide that support and make sure that the work stays here. You know, if we are going to have a remediation economy, we need to work to be done by the Northerners and, you know, that includes like, like we got larger companies here. Maybe they are not large enough but they, you know, they are the ones that also got to step up and bid on things. So we also need the Indigenous governments, and corporations and businesses, to step up as well and look at joint venturing if they have to with northern companies and not running to Alberta or BC or somewhere else to joint venture with somebody and then still bleed more money. Like, you know, we got to work together on this. And I seen all this happen. Like I have been around long enough, I seen a lot of the mistakes that we made, and I am hoping we can change it.

You know, and then I just got something on the computer. Our employment rate has dropped, you know, from 74 percent to 70.9 percent. And, you know, that might be part of because of, you know, some of the disasters we had. Our Indigenous, our workforce is still remaining the same. There has been no change.

You know, for Hay River itself, you know, is we got -- Hay River, we got to reinvent ourselves, just because of the way the world is changing, the way the the climate's changing, the way the economy is changing. At one point in time, like when I was younger, I worked up in the Arctic, and Jackie talks about that quite a bit, is about the oil and gas industry, you know. That made me who I am today. It gave me that work ethic, paid for my schooling, paid for R.J.'s schooling, the kids' schooling, you know, and so we need that type of industry in the North and we got to champion that. And right now it seems like the only thing is the mines. So what do we have to do to entice them to me come here. It's usually money. If they are not going to make money they are not going to come here, you know, at the end of the day. You can build all the roads for them but if it's cheaper to go to South America and destroy something down there and make more money, that's what they are

going to do. So, but we still have to work with them. We have to, you know, make it so that it's less onerous to work in the Northwest Territories, and that's something that hopefully the next -- with the next government they won't have to deal with what we had to deal with which is COVID and every other darn thing. And they will be able to actually do something. So, yeah.

And the other thing that we got to do is champion North. Like I said, champion northern businesses. Like there is a lot of northern businesses here that needs support, they need help. We got a limited -- we got limited opportunities. We got a limited base to work from. A lot of times you find businesses competing against each other for, you know, for something that's small and then whoever gets it might joint venture with somebody from the south and then nobody wins at the end of the day.

And people talk about, you know, myself like, for a while I did fine there. I was in the manufacturing business and I was building industrial trailers that went into Alberta. I probably built 150 of them, you know. And I probably, \$150,000 a pop so you can figure that out. Plus I rent a lot of equipment. And that money -- all that work was in Alberta, all the things that I was -- all the units that I was building was going to Alberta, all that money from Alberta was coming back this way. And that's what we need for Hay River. We need to make it the manufacturing capital of the Northwest Territories.

We have, we have shipping there, or hopefully we still will have shipping. It's a good central point, not only to move, you know, infrastructure north but also to move it back into Alberta, Saskatchewan, BC, you know. Like I find -- I have sold units in, you know, BC as well, so. There is a lot of opportunity there. The Premier gave me some support when she was Minister of housing and that was kind of the -- well, I don't know if it was support or a death blow, I am not sure. But, you know, it's one of those things, you know, where the industry, the oil and gas industry dropped. It went down, and usually it used to only go down for about a year. This time it was for about three or four years and it never came back, and it basically killed me. And but not just me. A lot of southern firms in the same business have the same issues; they are not there anymore, you know. And so there's -- and that's the thing. That's where we have to try and support those businesses a little more and that's why I am glad that -- you know, the other day we passed the Act there and gave the -- I guess I can't say BDIC anymore, Prosper North. But at the end of the day, give them a little bit more authority, allow them to get

out there and actually help business. That's what we need, you know. And move a business out of them into banking because, you know, we want to see businesses deal with conventional lenders. The good thing about conventional lenders, they don't really care. As long as they get their payments, they don't care -- you know, they don't really care too much about you whereas the BDIC -- or the Prosper North I would hope that they would be out there going around talking to their clientele as well, we need to do that. But, you know, it's, I guess I just see all the things we could do but at the end of the day, for me it's about that person that comes to me and says I got nowhere to live. I am on the street. I've got no money, you know. I got no food. And, you know, a lot of times -- one day somebody came from Yellowknife, came to Hay River. They wanted to get back to Yellowknife. And there was no help for him. So I phoned up R.J., I said I'm just gonna buy the person a ticket and they can go home. So he -- you know, so he jumped in and paid half the ticket. It's just easiest. It solved the problem and it's done, and we move on. And kind of that's the approach that I take, and I am hoping, you know, that that, you know, people in Hay River recognize what we have been able to accomplish. And also, it's, you have to work, like we are lucky in Hay River we have got two MLAs and you have to work with each other, and you got to talk things through. You got to, you know, gather information and, you know, things like that, so.

One thing about being an MLA I guess is I never -- like I don't really find it difficult in the sense that -- except for it's lots of work and, you know, you got to, you know, you got to do the research and you got to, you know, find the answers and stuff like that and find -- but the most important thing is finding a solution. And a timely solution. Because a lot of times we take too long. Like today, I have been answering e-mails as well and, you know, I've sent health an e-mail today. And hopefully they will fix the problem, you know, the issue on that. But those are the things that people want.

Is it supertime yet? I can keep going?

And so yeah, but, you know, at the end the day, it's been enjoyable here; there's no doubt about that. You know, I come to Yellowknife for a rest. Hay River is where the work is. That's where I have to work. And other than that, I guess, what else can I say?

And I just thank everybody for putting up with me. And one of the reasons I go down that hallway in Cabinet, they always have food there. That's why I go there. But anyways, I thank you for that, and -- but the gap for the people that went through that fire. I want you



guys to think about that and find some way to help them. Because I don't want to go back home and tell them the door is shut. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Replies to Commissioner's address. Colleagues, one more record you broke, the most replies to Commissioner's address in one day. 11 total. Good job.

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 1036-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY 2022-2023  
ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 1037-19(2):  
TILCHO COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL  
REPORT 2022-2023

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority 2022-2023 Annual Report, and the Tilcho Community Services Agency Health and Social Services Annual Report 2022-2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 1038-19(2):  
STRENGTHENING THE NON-PROFIT AND  
CHARITABLE SECTOR EXTERNAL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE FINAL REPORT

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Strengthening the Non-profit and Charitable Sector External Advisory Committee Final Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 1039-19(2):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR  
THE PERIOD OF OCTOBER 1ST, 2019 TO  
OCTOBER 5TH, 2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 1040-19(2):  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RETIRING  
ALLOWANCE FUND FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
MARCH 31ST, 2023

Colleagues, pursuant to section 5 of the Indemnities Allowances and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Summary of Members' absences for the period of October 1st, 2019 to October 5th, 2023.

Also, pursuant to section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowance Fund financial statements for the year ending March 31st, 2023.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Member for Frame Lake.

### Motions

MOTION 86-19(2):  
REPORT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER  
INTO COMPLAINT OF CODE OF CONDUCT,  
CARRIED

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President.

WHEREAS the Integrity Commissioner received a written complaint and carried out an investigation pursuant to section 100(2) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act;

AND WHEREAS the Integrity Commissioner submitted an investigation report dated October 3rd, 2023, to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly into the conduct of Ms. Katrina Nokleby, MLA Great Slave, by returning to and remaining in Yellowknife after it was ordered to be evacuated in August 2023;

AND WHEREAS the Integrity Commissioner has concluded that the MLA for Great Slave violated section 2 of the Members' Code of Conduct;

AND WHEREAS based on that conclusion, section 102(c) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act provides that the Integrity Commissioner may recommend to the Legislative Assembly one or more punishments in accordance with section 106;

AND WHEREAS the Integrity Commissioner, pursuant to 106(1) of the Act

(a) has recommended the Legislative Assembly may reprimand Ms. Nokleby and

(b) fine Ms. Nokleby \$7,500 to be reduced by the \$3,500 contribution she has made to a charity for a net amount of \$4,000.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner be accepted and that this

Assembly reprimand the Member for Great Slave and impose a fine of \$7,500 to be reduced by \$3,500, for charitable contributions made, for a net amount of \$4,000. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to provide some context and background on this motion.

In December 2015, the 18th Assembly adopted a motion which referred the Members' conduct guidelines to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, which I chaired, for comprehensive public review. This work included a thorough examination, conduct guidelines from other jurisdictions, all relevant legislation, and the rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Committee filed both an interim report and a final report on this review.

The interim Report on the Review of Members' Conduct Guidelines was brought forward on October 25th, 2016. The purpose of the interim report was to generate public discussion, consultation, and further research. We reviewed best practices and experiences across Canada and the Commonwealth. Public hearings were held in Inuvik, Hay River, and Yellowknife. Written submissions were also carefully reviewed.

A lot of work was done with all the MLAs in caucus to review options and determine the best path forward for our Legislative Assembly. We filed our report entitled *You are Standing for Your People: Report on the Review of Members' Conduct Guidelines*, in February 2017.

The report outlined several key concerns heard by committee, including that the then Members' conduct guidelines were only voluntary, and that the adoption of a Code of Conduct include more specific and enforceable obligations. These concerns were addressed through the development of a new Members' Code of Conduct that includes specific and enforceable provisions for the 19th and future Assemblies and expanded role for the old office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner that now includes

- Responsibility for receiving and investigating complaints respecting potential breaches of the Code of Conduct through an Integrity Commissioner;

- Legislative changes to incorporate these improvements and make them binding on all MLAs; and
- Requirements that this information be given to and acknowledged by all future candidates in territorial elections.

As a result of these changes during the 19th Assembly, we held a public ceremony right here in this Chamber where each Member agreed to and signed the Code of Conduct with an understanding of what that means. Today, we have an established binding process. We are following that process. A complaint was made to the Integrity Commissioner. He investigated the complaint. He concluded the Member breached the Code of Conduct. He recommended the Assembly take specific action under the legislation. We can accept or reject this recommendation.

To ensure the honour of this House and public confidence, we must respect and support our Code of Conduct and the legislated process to resolve complaints. This is why this motion is before us today. And we must deal with the recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner in this Assembly. This motion is the final step of this process. I believe that it is essential that the 19th Assembly be the one to conclude this process. This is the business of our Assembly, not the next one.

We all agreed to the Code of Conduct when we were sworn in here in this Chamber in 2019. We agreed to the system for resolving complaints. I fully accept the recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner. I will vote in favour of this motion to accept these recommendations to support our Code of Conduct and the honour of this House. I urge all my colleagues to do the same. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this motion at hand, one that seeks to impose and reprimand a fine \$4,000 upon the Member for Great Slave Lake. This action is in response to the severe breach of our MLA Code of Conduct wherein the Member for Great Slave has accepted that she's openly violated the public safety order during the recent fire emergency, an emergency that witnessed the evacuation of 19,000 residents of Yellowknife and thousands more in the South Slave. The transgression is not to be taken lightly as it goes against the very principle of responsibility in

public safety that we, as elected officials, are entrusted to uphold.

Mr. Speaker, the recent wildfire emergency was a unprecedented crisis that saw our constituents in dire need of leadership, guidance, and unwavering commitment to their well-being. As elected leaders, it is our solemn duty to ensure the safety and welfare of the people we represent. The duty extends to respecting and adhering to the public safety order that are put in place for the benefit of communities.

These orders are not arbitrary. They are grounded in collective wisdom and expertise of emergency management authorities who have worked tirelessly to safeguard our residents during times of peril. To deliberately violate the public safety order during such a crisis as a Member of the Great Slave has accepted, it is not only irresponsible. It demonstrates a severe lapse of judgment and disregard for the lives and welfare of our constituents. The evacuation of thousands of residents was a monumental undertaking, and it required the full adherence to public safety order from all individuals, including elected officials. We're not above the law we pass in this House, Mr. Speaker.

It is important to acknowledge that perception and concerns raised regarding the difference in the outcome of these two cases. The fact that Steve Norn was Indigenous and the Member for Great Slave is a non-Indigenous settler is not lost on me and should not be lost on anyone in this Assembly. We must recognize that our action and decision carries significant weight and implications beyond the walls of this Chamber. Our constituents, who are diverse in every way and manageable, look to us not only to govern responsibly but also ensure that our decisions are equitable and just. The need for fairness and accountability in our action cannot be overstated. We have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure that our decisions and judgment are consistent and fair regardless of the individual's background.

It is disheartening to witness and perceive disparity in how misconduct is addressed within our Assembly. This has led to a growing dissolution among our constituents who rightfully expect us with violation of public safety order and breaches of the Code of Conduct. It is incumbent upon us to uphold the principle and the fundamental justice in all our actions. To maintain the trust of our constituents, we must address these concerns head on.

This matter is very personal to me as I have the privilege to stand on the floor of the House due to the same by-election. I heard from residents

in my riding on what they thought of Mr. Norn's conduct and eventual dismissal by his peers. I know how serious our constituents take matters of ethics and integrity for those lucky enough to serve in this institution. We must strive for consistency and fairness in our approach to addressing this conduct regardless of the individual's background, ethnicity, or political positions. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that justice is not only done but is seen to be done. Let us use this moment as an opportunity to reflect on how we can ensure that our represents the values of our diverse inclusive society.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to further address this concern related to the conduct of the Member for Great Slave, particularly regarding her behaviour behind closed doors within the Legislative Assembly. While a public appearance and speeches are scrutinized and observed by our constituents and the media, it is essential to acknowledge the real --

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member, you must speak to the motion.

**MR. EDJERICON:** I'm speaking to the motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You're speaking another topic. We're talking about the breach.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, I'm reading this on behalf of my constituency. They called me and asked me to put this together. And I just want -- if I could, I just got -- I just want to finish it. And it's related to the motion at hand. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, it is without reasons that Member of Great Slave has been the subject of criticism for her conduct both inside and outside the Chamber, and it is worth reminding that this Assembly --

**MR. SPEAKER:** -- Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh, her conduct in the Assembly is not relevant to the motion. The motion is the breach of the orders.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The motion is in order. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had some time to think about that motion and, you know, and what transpired and, you know, I'm in favour of it. And you know, we do have laws. We have the Code of Conduct. And we have to follow those. That's -- you know, that's basically the rule of law and in this instance the Member, I

guess, failed to do that according to the Integrity Commissioner. There was a process. If there is a process, if one wanted to, in this case to be deemed essential, and -- which is a fairly easy process. And to give you an example, myself, I stayed in Hay River during the fire. And, but I made sure that the town put me on their list of essential people. And I think that's important that you do that. It was -- it was easy to do. And, so that's kind of one point. The other point is when should a -- you know, when should a Member be deemed essential for something like this? And I think that's something we have to look at. And hopefully the next Assembly will do it because it's government money that's getting spent. There's -- there should be some interaction, I guess, or something there, representation or connection, you know, with somebody whether, it's a politician or whatever. Like, Hay River, just to give you another example, Hay River, we lost communication. So we didn't really have any communication with the outside except if you were by Starlink. So the point I want to get -- make is that we, as an Assembly, need to look at is at what point is an MLA deemed to be essential and under what criteria would that be. In this instance, there was an easy way for the Member to solve that was just ask the city to be put on the list, and the city said no. Simple. Then you don't stay in town, in the city. You go. And in this case, it didn't happen, so. And the other thing is there probably was some confusion, but Integrity Commissioner made his report. He made his recommendation. And I will follow that recommendation. Thank you.

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

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote the section of the Member's Code of Conduct which applies in this case. Members must act lawfully and in a manner that will withstand the closest public scrutiny, upholding the integrity and honour of the Legislative Assembly and its Members. Members shall ensure their conduct does not bring the integrity of their office, or of the Legislative Assembly, into disrepute.

And as you know, Mr. Speaker, there's commentary that goes with this. And I think the most important paragraph in the commentary says the Legislative Assembly will not generally be interested in the personal or private affairs of a Member; however, if a Member's conduct is such that knowledge of it would likely to impair the public's trust in the institution of the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Assembly may be justified in taking action. This is particularly so where the conduct in question is unlawful.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the Member for Great Slave has broken the Code of Conduct and that has been affirmed by the Integrity Commissioner.

I want to say as a Yellowknife MLA, when I was evacuated, and the news broke that the MLA for Great Slave had returned that the reaction from Yellowknife residents was anger. People were angry. They were also in a place that they didn't find comforting. They were in a place that wasn't home to them. Even though they may have been in a place that was safe and secure, they would rather have been in their own beds. And they were angry, I think, because there was no shared sense of anxiety and hardship, which all of us experienced to some extent or another.

There was no compelling reason for the MLA to be in Yellowknife, and there was no reason for her to stay after the YKDFN made it clear that they did not need her -- they did not need her services. So in summary, this was a selfish decision with no benefit to the community. And the fact that she's not here today tells us that she has nothing but disdain for this House. Those are my comments.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, on October 2nd, Minister Thompson and I attended an event held to recognize the hard work of GNWT employees who went above and beyond to keep our residents and communities safe during our horrible fire season. At this event, I spoke about how employees kissed their families good-bye, how they worried about their own safety, as well as the safety of their loved ones, as thousands of people evacuated. I also asked everyone to remember the firefighter who this summer lost his life. These employees are heroes, Mr. Speaker. They took on additional responsibilities and stepped up to support efforts when and where needed. But they were not the only residents to step forward. People also volunteered to stay behind to protect communities and support those working on the front lines. I want to thank those people as well. Their efforts assisted in ensuring we had homes and communities to return to.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, not everyone who stayed behind in evacuated communities was authorized to do so. I stated many times through the evacuation it is critical for residents abide by the emergency orders so as not to put firefighters and other frontline workers at risk, nor to jeopardize the effectiveness of our emergency response. Mr. Speaker, most residents left, traumatizing to all.

Mr. Speaker, MLAs are expected to be role models for their constituents and for all residents. While we all make mistakes, it's critical to acknowledge those errors and commit to improving going forward. When the MLA for Great Slave entered Yellowknife during the evacuation, she states she believed that she had permission to do so. However, when it became clear that the Member was not authorized to support the fire efforts, by remaining in Yellowknife she undermined the hard work of many people and brought her office into disrepute. No MLA is above the law, and all Members must abide by emergency orders in place to protect residents. That is our work.

This should come as no surprise to anyone as we dealt with breaching of orders previously in this Legislative Assembly. It is clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that the MLA breached the Code of Conduct by choosing to remain in Yellowknife. And as such, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Nahendeh.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand here to support the motion. Mr. Speaker, I was struggling on what to say here, especially after what's been going on the last little while. However, I'm going to stick to what we're here to talk about today.

We came up with a tool that was -- to deal with MLA's Code of Conduct issues without having to spend tons and tons of money and doing an inquiry. We used that tool. I used that tool.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the rule of law and order, MLAs are not above anybody else. We need to lead by example. That is our role. Mr. Speaker, we have two choices: accept or reject integrity Commissioner's report. That's it, Mr. Speaker. And with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I will therefore support the recommendations provided by the Integrity Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to an aspect of the motion I haven't heard as much attention on, and so I wanted to take this opportunity. It comes at page 11 of the -- or I'm sorry, at page 11 of the Integrity Commissioner's decision. And he says, In reaching this determination, I have considered Ms. Nokleby's explanation that she did not leave Yellowknife after the YKDFN made it

clear that she was not an essential worker because she was in, quote, emotional tailspin.

He continues on to say, The whole situation was no doubt stressful, as it was for everyone who evacuated as required. However, Ms. Nokleby was able to participate remotely in the Legislative Assembly session in Inuvik three days later.

Mr. Speaker, mental illness does not discriminate. It affects many residents of the Northwest Territories as we all know. Mr. Speaker, it affects many of my constituents, and it affected many of my constituents who were evacuated and who abided by the order. Many of those residents, Mr. Speaker, were in contact with me or their MLAs asking, in many cases, to be allowed back. I was specifically asked by someone who was in a difficult situation if they could be added to the essential workers list so that they could return. Mr. Speaker, I had to decline. Mr. Speaker, there was a number of people who were in extremely similar circumstances. It was difficult, it was stressful, and it was emotional, and they abided by the order that they were under and they did not return.

Mr. Speaker, it was difficult to answer questions to those residents who were struggling, who were struggling in difficult circumstances and who were struggling with emotional well-being, but they did abide by the order and they continued to abide by the order for the duration of the order. The Member chose not to do that, chose not to abide by the order, chose to return and chose to stay returned even after she had been asked to leave. And she blames that on her emotional state. But, Mr. Speaker, again, that was no different from any of my constituents who went through very difficult circumstances for the entire duration of time.

Mr. Speaker, meanwhile, we are elected leaders. And leadership is uncomfortable, and it requires sacrifice. Mr. Speaker, I accept the Commissioner's recommendation, and I'll be accepting this motion. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I request a recorded vote.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just listen to all the comments said here today. Like, mental health issues in regards to that, the stress and duress that Member's under. She's been through a lot. For myself, I do accept the

Integrity Commissioner's report and as is rules, I do -- I have no choice but to support it. But at the end of the day, this is a question I have is the time that it went in, the first complaint, second complaint with the fires and not staying. It's just like for myself, you know, she's not here to defend herself and that and everybody wants to take shots. She's here. But at the end of the day, we're wasting the House time. I'm wasting the House time right now. Let's just put it to the vote, and we go from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, I support this motion too. I just want, you know, to close this and move forward. And I know that, Mr. Speaker, there was a process in place, and I know there was a lot of people that were stressed from the fire and, you know, like when I mentioned earlier, there was three people that were affected by the whole forest fires that was -- took place for about three weeks, or two months for some, the business people, people left behind, and the most vulnerable. So I know that had a lot of impact on us, the one that were left behind, the one that were abandoned. So there was a process in place; I know that, I understand that. But only after the MLA for Great Slave start inquiring, then the policy was changed. It was strengthened. There was a loophole, and she used that. I know that for a fact. So I will support this motion and get it over and done and just move on. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):** The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. 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. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Kam Lake.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION 87-19(2):  
DISSOLUTION OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY,  
CARRIED

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, dissolution of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

WHEREAS under section 11(1) of the Northwest Territories Act (Canada), the Commissioner may dissolve the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS under section 11(2) of the Northwest Territories Act (Canada), writs for the election of Members of the Legislative Assembly are to be issued on the Commissioner's instructions;

AND WHEREAS under section 2 of an act to Postpone Polling Day for the 2023 General Election, notwithstanding subsection 39(5) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act, polling day for the 2023 general election must be on November 14, 2023.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the Legislative Assembly request the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories to dissolve the 19th Assembly of the Northwest Territories on October 15th, 2023, to permit polling day for a general election to be held on November 14th, 2023;

AND FURTHER that the Speaker transmit this resolution to the Commissioner.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 100:  
 APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE  
 EXPENDITURES) 2024-2025

”  
**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 100, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) 2024-2025, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 100 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 101:  
 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
 (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND  
 BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 3,  
 2023-2024

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Cracking 100, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 101, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 3, 2023-2024, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 101 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 100:  
 APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE  
 EXPENDITURES) 2024-2025,  
 CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 100, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) 2024-2025, be read for the second time. This bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** the motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? The question --

Okay, it's been a long day. Bill 100 has had second reading.

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 101:  
 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
 (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND  
 BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 3,  
 2023-2024,  
 CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 101, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 3, 2023-2024, be read for the second time.

This bill sets out limits on supplementary amounts that may be borrowed by the Commissioner on behalf of the government and authorizes the making of disbursements to pay the principal of supplementary amounts borrowed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 101 has had second reading.

Oh yes, the motion is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 101 has had second reading. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 23, 75, Committee Report 53-19(2), Committee Report 76-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

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

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madam la Presidente. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. And thank you for allowing me to be your chair.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bills 23, Bill 75, Committee Report 53-19(2), Committee Report 76-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), and Tabled Document 681-19(2), and I would like to report progress. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? The motion's carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 80:  
DENTAL HYGIENISTS PROFESSION  
STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT,  
CARRIED

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):** The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Hay River South.

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

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):** The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Hay River North.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The results of the recorded vote: Ten in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 80 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 100:  
APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE  
EXPENDITURES) 2024-2025,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 100, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) 2024-2025, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm given 20 minutes here, and I know we all want to leave, but I'll make a promise. If any Member of Cabinet yells out the estimated cost of the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project at any time, which I know all of them know, I will stop talking.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I love hydro. I believe it is the future to getting to carbon net zero. I love hydro for the Northwest Territories. I am so glad for the mines that came before and built our hydro power. We need more hydro, Mr. Speaker. I also love mining, and we need more mines, Mr. Speaker. It would be absolutely irresponsible to allow more mines go in production in this territory that run off diesel, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe renewables are going to get us there. We have seen our solar and wind projects to date come in at an astonishingly high price per megawatt, and they are intermittent. I think the hope of micronuclear is a pipe dream. There's not a single micronuclear reactor in Canada that is currently active, Mr. Speaker. One day, perhaps, maybe we can put them on the back of a truck, and those can power a mine, but I don't believe in fantasies. But you know who does believe in fantasies, Mr. Speaker?



The Department of Infrastructure and the GNWT, because 25 years ago someone had a dream about expanding the Taltson Hydro Project and running a transmission line to the diamonds. And if we built it, Mr. Speaker, it would have been amazing. We would be sitting here rich, paying it off, and all of our power bills were lower. But, instead, we spent 25 years not building it. And, Mr. Speaker, in the life of this Assembly, the most significant thing to happen in this project in the last 25 years occurred; that is, this government secretly, without really telling anyone, decided that it was no longer going to the diamond mines, which was the whole point in the first place, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, why is that project 60 megawatts? Because that's how much power the diamond mines needed, Mr. Speaker. We have been talking about expanding Taltson at 60 megawatts for 25 years, Mr. Speaker. And we have forgot that we actually have 10,000 megawatts of undeveloped hydro potential in this territory. We have the Bear, La Martre, Lockhart, MacKenzie, Snare, Snowdrift, Taltson, and Yellowknife River, Mr. Speaker, all with undeveloped hydro potential, and no one has ever even talked about those in 25 years because they got so laser focused on a project that they have repeatedly failed to build, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister talked about well, we got too focused on who was on the board. Well, Mr. Speaker, the previous government fired that board because it had members who said listen, I'm not going to take this Taltson project on without long-term power purchasing agreements. And the GNWT didn't like that. They didn't like an independent arm's length corporation having some say over what their hydro infrastructure looked like because, Mr. Speaker, if the NTPC gets given a dam and doesn't have anyone to buy the power, guess who's rates are going up? All the other ratepayers. So we are talking about enough money here, some questionable amount that anyone could yell out at any time, Mr. Speaker, but it is fair to say it is enough to pay every single individual's power bill in this territory for the next 50 years, Mr. Speaker. And that's not surprising because we're talking about 60 megawatts. Essentially doubling all the current power we sell, Mr. Speaker. Every single power bill you have ever paid in your life is how much we are talking about for 50 years, Mr. Speaker, for all our residents. You could do the math on that, and you'll get to the number. I may have just kind of leaked it, but whatever.

Mr. Speaker, it is billions and billions of dollars. There is zero transparency in this project. There is zero transparency from the government about the cost overruns. There is

zero transparency about any of our energy projects.

We have been promising a line to Fort Providence and a line to Whati for years. Well, I still don't know the cost of those projects. We are light years behind on them, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and no one, despite years of asking has -- answered a simple question, why don't we just build a transmission line to Alberta? Mr. Speaker, we keep talking about selling power to Alberta and Saskatchewan. You know why they don't want our power? Because it's currently at 35 cents a megawatt, Mr. Speaker. And you know what they're selling power for in bulk? 9 cents a megawatt, Mr. Speaker. Let's build a line south and buy their power. Stop trying to sell our 35 cent power, Mr. Speaker.

Every single mine we could ever open in this territory is a drop in the bucket of what Alberta currently produces and provides to industry. We should tie into their grid and call it a day, Mr. Speaker, but we are stuck on this one project. We are stuck asking federal government. We are stuck wasting Indigenous government's projects. And no one will even tell me what they think it costs.

Mr. Speaker, the cost matters. The cost per megawatt on production is the entire debate we are having. It tells you whether you are going to develop another hydro system. It tells you whether you are going to continue to burn diesel. It tells you whether you're going to use LNG. The cost per megawatt is the entire debate. That is why we need to know how much it's costing to build 60 megawatts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is my plea. Say the number. Bring some transparency until we have an election. Until then, I ask every single worker in the GNWT who spent 25 years, some of them their entire career on a project that's going nowhere, stop working on it. I am so sorry for you. I am sorry we have wasted your time on this hopeless endeavour, on this fantasy of made up math and made up numbers that does not work.

To all of the Indigenous governments we are meeting with right now, that we are keeping in a room, leave, walk away. Our government is lying to you. They are asking for hundreds of millions of dollars in P3 funding that is going to be a terrible investment for your people. And, Mr. Speaker, that business case we have is absolute garbage, and the government needs to make it public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. That's a very tough act to follow. I think it's most excited I've seen the Member in the entire Assembly. But I actually agree 100 percent with his analysis. I just tried to make some of those arguments, perhaps a little less vigorously in this House, but bang on. It's absolutely the case with Taltson. I think it's -- it's a good -- it will be a boondoggle if it gets built, just like most other hydro mega projects in this country. So I commend my colleague from Yellowknife North for his vigorous analysis and urge my Cabinet colleagues to make more information about this, and some of the other mega projects, public. Because, quite frankly, these are poor investments. They're not even going to bring northern benefits. You know, these things are just -- we could -- we shouldn't have put them forward as three big projects happening at the same time. They've just raised such unreasonable expectations. Our Ministers go to Ottawa. Ottawa says these guys just can't make up their minds, they don't know what they're doing.

So in any event, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this capital budget as I probably have probably the seven or -- other eight ones that I've dealt with in the life of this -- my two terms here because the budgets -- the capital budgets that we are getting from Cabinet just are a reflection of wrong priorities. When we spend more money on roads than we do on housing, wrong priorities. Wrong priorities. We shouldn't be spending more money on these mega projects. They're just not going to go anywhere. If we have to build something, build the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I actually heard even one Cabinet Minister say that in their reply to the Commissioner's address as advice to the next Assembly.

Get realistic. Build one infrastructure project. Do it at a scale and pace where the communities can benefit from it. So stop wasting time. Stop wasting money. Invest in our communities and build real energy self-sufficiency.

So, yeah, this capital budget, again, has the wrong priorities, lack of transparency as my colleague has pointed out, chronic over budgeting. You know, when we have carryovers that are in the -- literally hundreds of millions of dollars from one year to the next, we cannot get the money out the door because we -- for whatever reason, we just -- but that chronic over budgeting means we have to run an operating surplus to help pay for the

infrastructure. Sometimes it's -- some of the dollars come from the feds. That's great. Sometimes we got to match 25 percent, whatever. But it means we have to run an operating surplus, which means we're shortchanging programs and services. We're not meeting people's basic human needs in the Northwest Territories because we're trying to spend it on mega projects that are not going to go anywhere.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting against this capital budget. I would commend my colleague from Yellowknife North for his dismantling of the Taltson boondoggle. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I told you I'm sitting -- I'm a rose between two thorns.

Mr. Speaker, I'm in full support of this motion, and I just wanted to let you know. But at the end of the day when projects like this, the communities see a little bit of potential to have work and employment into the communities. And, of course, I want the all-weather road to head from Wrigley to Inuvik. But at the end of the day, we have to set a precedent and try to work towards -- with our Aboriginal groups to make a difference for the people that we represent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll keep it short so I'm not keeping everybody from dinner and cocktails. So I just want to say that I do support this budget. I'm happy to see a lot of infrastructure projects going forward. 100 percent road funding that can't be used for houses, so we don't need to have that debate. It is money that's coming from the federal government to fix up our roads, and we didn't have to put any money into that. And I just want to say I completely support all of our communities and all of my small community colleagues' communities to be connected by roads, including what my colleague from Monfwi said about getting Gameti and Whati on there. And I want to see -- or sorry, Wekweeti. I want to see the entire Mackenzie Valley Highway road built. So not even just to Norman Wells but all the way up to my colleagues in Inuvik's riding so that we no longer have to worry about the Dempster Highway, so much; we still want it, it's beautiful and we need a tourism piece there and I know that yourself is

on that highway, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, it would be great if we could have two areas to bring in resources, supply chain, and have some redundancy in our network of roads. So I support this. I will be voting for it. 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. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

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

**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 Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, three opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 100 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 101:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND  
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 3,  
2023-2024,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 101, Supplementary Appropriations Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 3, 2023-2024, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my last chance to make a statement supporting Hay River and supporting the gap that is actually -- that -- you know, in the people that actually had to travel south. Okay, I don't support this motion as a statement in support of people from Hay River. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Our Minister has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):** The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Frame 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. The Member for Nahendeh.

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

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):** The Member for Hay River South.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour, one opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 101 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, would you please see if the Commissioner is ready to enter the Chamber.

#### Assent to Bills

**COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Margaret M. Thom):** Mahsi. Please be seated.

Mr. Speaker, Premier Cochrane, Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, staff, and visitors in the public gallery, mahsi. I am

blessed and honoured to once again sit before you in this great Chamber. I wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather are treaty lands and the home to many Indigenous people, including the Dene, Inuvialuit, Metis, and Inuit. We are grateful to be on this land. Many of you may have joined in all the powerful events happening throughout your communities and across Canada to honour National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

I have witnessed how this 19th Legislative Assembly really took to heart reconciliation and actioned it in so many ways by the encouragement to speak Indigenous languages, the Indigenous dress code, and incorporating Indigenous traditions and culture in this great House. You have shown this through recognizing and awarding distinguished Northerners residents during your term.

On February 27th, 2023, House Speaker Blake unveiled the Legislative Assembly's meeting room renaming project which was inspired by nature and reflected in all languages. The project includes representation of all official languages and regions in the Northwest Territories. Each of the nine rooms chosen are represented by a northern animal. Art work was done by an Indigenous NWT artist, Trey Madsen, and symbolizing the traits associated with each animal bringing deeper meaning to the work that takes place in each room.

Earlier this week with the unveiling of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls monument in front of this beautiful building, it was a very emotional ceremony and I was honoured to be here. But, most importantly, is how you individually as Members honour the people, the culture, and the traditions in the work that you do.

Today marks a day that I imagine is mixed with many emotions as well as much personal and professional planning for each of you. As Members of this 19th Legislative Assembly, each of you has become an instrument of change, an enhancement within this government. You have acted on the wishes and concerns of the people of our vast territory during your elected term. For that, I applaud you with a huge mahsi cho and know that we all owe you a debt of gratitude and gave us much to be extremely grateful for.

Being in politics is difficult, not only for the politician but for the families as well. As difficult as it is, we must remember that your families contributed immensely to have you function as an individual, a team player, and a Member of our great consensus government. On behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, I extend

my deepest admiration and gratitude to your families.

Some of you have already announced your intention to seek re-election. I wish you well and every success in your platforms and in your campaign journey. If you are elected again and return to this House, know that it was meant to be. If you do not get re-elected, close this chapter of your journey knowing that you have done your very best in representing your constituents and, most importantly, all Northerners. Some of you have announced your well thought out intentions to not seek re-election but rather have chosen to pursue new adventures and perhaps to rest and relax. Do that. Do it. I applaud you with sincere appreciation for your commitment and dedication and the service to your constituents and to all Northerners. I sincerely wish you all success, good health, and happiness in the next chapter of the journey you will take from here on.

I need to express my sincere gratitude to the people that worked diligently behind the scenes to assist you in your work - your staff, the public service, the staff that keep this great House tidy and organized, the translators, and interpreters. Everyone is to be celebrated for the tough decisions and accomplishment especially during the many challenges during your term. Much work will still be needed to address these times and these challenges.

I am very thankful for the difficult decisions made, especially during the many challenging times during your term. To name a few, these times include natural disasters and devastation of floods, wildfires, evacuation, and COVID-19 pandemic.

In closing, I remain deeply honoured to have been part of your political journey. I will keep close to my heart your kindness, your confidence in me, and how you welcomed me to my role as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho and Happy Thanksgiving.

Now as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills that you all have worked hard on and deliberated so carefully.

- Bill 65: Builders' Lien Act;
- Bill 74: Forest Act;
- Bill 77: Nursing Profession Act;
- Bill 78: Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Act;

- Bill 80: Dental Hygienists Profession Statute Amendment Act;
- Bill 81: An Act to Amend the Education Act, No. 2;
- Bill 82: Legal Profession Act;
- Bill 83: Liquor Act;
- Bill 84: An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act;
- Bill 85: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act;
- Bill 92: An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, No. 3;
- Bill 93: Practice of Engineering, Geoscience and Applied Science Technology Act;
- Bill 94: Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023;
- Bill 100: Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) 2024-2025;
- Bill 101: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditure and Borrowing Authorization) No. 3, 2023-2024.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Members. I do have nine pages of closing remarks here, but I think I'll save it for later on this evening. But just in closing once again all those that are -- all those of us that are planning to run again, I wish you all the best and have faith in the system because the system is what got us here. And that's some good advice that I received a while back.

Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day.

### Orders of the Day

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Rutland):** Thank you. Orders of the Day for Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Commissioner's Address
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Acknowledgements
6. Tabling of Documents

7. Notices of Motions
8. Motions
9. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
10. First Reading of Bills
11. Second Reading of Bills
12. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday December 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

