



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

1st Session

Day 3

20th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Pages 41 - 68

The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Shane Thompson
(Nahendeh)

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland

(Kam Lake)
*Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment*
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and
Investment*

Mr. Richard Edjericon

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Lucy Kuptana

(Nunakput)
*Minister responsible for Housing
Northwest Territories*
*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women*

Hon. Jay MacDonald

(Thebacha)
*Minister of Environment and Climate
Change*

Hon. Vince McKay

(Hay River South)
*Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs*
*Minister responsible for the Workers'
Safety and Compensation
Commission*
*Minister responsible for the Public
Utilities Board*

Mr. Danny McNeely

(Sahtu)

Ms. Shauna Morgan

(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Julian Morse

(Frame Lake)

Mr. George Nerysoo

(Mackenzie Delta)

Ms. Kate Reid

(Great Slave)

Mr. Denny Rodgers

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Hon. Lesa Semmler

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Minister of Health and Social Services

Hon. R.J. Simpson

(Hay River North)
Premier
Government House Leader
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous
Affairs*
Minister of Justice

Mr. Kieron Testart

(Range Lake)

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

(Yellowknife South)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Minister of Infrastructure
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power
Corporation*

Mrs. Jane Weyallon

Armstrong

(Monfwi)

Mrs. Sheryl Yakeleya

(Dehcho)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Glen Rutland

Deputy Clerks

Ms. Kim Wickens
Ms. Jolene Saturnino

Committee Clerks

Mr. Michael Ball (Clerk of Journals)
Ms. Cynthia James
Ms. Katie Weaver Charpentier

Law Clerks

Mr. Toby Kruger
Ms. Sandra Mackenzie

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	41
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	41
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 3-20(1): 2024-2025 INTERIM BUDGET	41
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 4-20(1): 2023 WILDFIRE SEASON REVIEW AND PLANNING FOR THE 2024 SEASON.....	42
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 5-20(1): EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PREPARATION	43
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	44
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 32-20(1): IMPORTANCE OF SENIORS	44
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 33-20(1): DEVELOPMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY.....	45
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 34-20(1): SUPPORTS FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CHILDREN	45
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 35-20(1): ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES	46
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 36-20(1): FOREIGN SECURITY CONCERNS.....	46
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 37-20(1): GAZA	47
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 38-20(1): ELDERS' HOUSING.....	47
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 39-20(1): STATE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ECONOMY.....	48
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 40-20(1): RENT SCALE	48
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 41-20(1): CARBON TAX AND ENERGY ALTERNATIVES	49
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 42-20(1): MICHAEL SQUIRREL – ABORIGINAL SPORTS CIRCLE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AWARE 2023	49
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	50
ORAL QUESTIONS	50
QUESTION 12-20(1): CHILDREN'S FIRST SOCIETY FUNDING	50
QUESTION 13-20(1): REQUESTING PRIME MINISTER TO STOP SELLING ARMS AND MILITARY GOODS	51
QUESTION 14-20(1): RESPONSIBILITY FOR SENIORS PORTFOLIO.....	52
QUESTION 15-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ECONOMIC DEFICIT.....	53
QUESTION 16-20(1): RENT SCALES.....	54
QUESTION 17-20(1): ELDERS HOUSING	55
QUESTION 18-20(1): FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND SECURITY	55
QUESTION 19-20(1): CARBON TAX REVENUES SPENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION.....	56
QUESTION 20-20(1): DIRECT APPOINTMENT TRANSPARENCY	57
QUESTION 21-20(1): ARREARS COLLECTIONS FROM ELDERS.....	59
QUESTION 22-20(1): FUNDING FOR CHILDCARE	59
QUESTION 23-20(1): PORTFOLIO CHANGES	60
QUESTION 24-20(1): ENERGY FOR HOUSING	61
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	62
TABLED DOCUMENT 13-20(1): INTERIM ESTIMATES, OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES, APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30, 2024	62
TABLED DOCUMENT 14-20(1): ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HYDRO CORPORATION.....	62
NOTICES OF MOTION	62
MOTION 10-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT	62
MOTION 11-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS	63
MOTION 12-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES	63
MOTION 13-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.....	63
MOTION 14-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	64
MOTION 15-20(1): EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO FEBRUARY 20, 2024	64
MOTIONS	64
MOTION 10-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT, CARRIED	64
MOTION 11-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, CARRIED	65
MOTION 12-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES, CARRIED	65
MOTION 13-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, CARRIED.....	66
MOTION 14-20(1): APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, CARRIED	67
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	67

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	67
ORDERS OF THE DAY	68

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 7, 2024****Members Present**

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland, Mr. Edjericon, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Jay MacDonald, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Mr. Nerysoo, Ms. Reid, Mr. Rodgers, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson): Please be seated. I'd like to thank Jonas Sangris for the opening words and blessing in Tlicho, and we'll move right into our business for the day, folks. Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 3-20(1):
2024-2025 INTERIM BUDGET

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, later today I will table the Interim Estimates, Operations Expenditures, 2024-2025 which presents an interim budget for the Government of the Northwest Territories. This interim budget will provide funding for programs and services over the first quarter of the upcoming fiscal year, giving the 20th Legislative Assembly appropriate time to complete its transition and to set its priorities. Mr. Speaker, it will come as no surprise that flooding, drought, wildfire events, and the global COVID-19 pandemic have all negatively impacted the government's financial capacity. Despite these challenges, Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has taken several significant actions to maintain the sustainability of public finances.

We have capped the budget for large capital projects at \$260 million to better reflect what the GNWT can deliver in a year. This single action returned the government's medium-term outlook to a more sustainable path. In 2023, we also updated the GNWT's fiscal responsibility policy to reinforce our commitment to transparency and accountability, requiring that our budgeted consolidated debt be a minimum of \$120 million below the federal borrowing limit. In addition to this, the government renewal initiative is building a culture within the public service to maximize efficiency and value for money, aiming to ensure that the GNWT does the right things at the right time in the right way.

Looking ahead, strengthening the Northwest Territories' economy must be top of mind when speaking of our fiscal reality. Maturing diamond mines, lack of economic diversity, and declining private sector investment are the main drivers of the territory's economic challenges. We are also mindful of global events influencing what happens within the territory, including ongoing supply chain challenges and labour market availability. I am pleased to say the Northwest Territories' employment rate remains strong and wages continue to grow. While this provides added resources to workers to deal with inflation, it can also create additional financial pressures for businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the significant challenges I just outlined mean the GNWT will need sufficient fiscal resources to respond to future needs, both anticipated and unforeseen. We will need a fiscal strategy that can address our financial challenges while delivering on the priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly. A well-developed mandate and priorities will provide direction for the government to create not only its fiscal plan for the next budget year but also operational plans for the life of this government.

In preparation for the operating budget I will bring forward in May 2024, we are taking a careful look at the government's own-source revenues balanced against the implications for the costs of living and doing business and on the economy in general. The GNWT's reliance on federal transfers for almost 80 percent of our total revenues, coupled with a small tax base, leaves little room to grow revenues in the short-term. We are building on the work of government renewal initiative in order to find ways to get more value from our spending and to be focused on delivering programs and services that align with this Legislative Assembly's priorities.

Mr. Speaker, the upcoming budget conversations leading to the tabling of the 2024-2025 Main Estimates will be critical in improving the territory's financial position. I am pleased that this Legislative Assembly has chosen to take the time to do this right so that the priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly

can be reflected in financial plans going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 4-20(1):
2023 WILDFIRE SEASON REVIEW AND
PLANNING FOR THE 2024 SEASON

HON. JAY MacDONALD: Mr. Speaker, the 2023 wildfire season was unlike anything we have ever seen in the Northwest Territories. More than four million hectares of forest burned over a six-month period, with fires reported all the way from the Beaufort Delta to the South Slave. Record temperatures, drought, and very high winds resulted in extreme fire behaviour that many of our most experienced firefighters have never experienced. At times, firefighting simply was not possible due to the life-threatening dangers crews would face.

On a personal note, I have often reflected on my experiences from past fire seasons. The thing that comes to mind every time is the effort, commitment, and sacrifice made not only by the direct firefighters but by all residents of the NWT. Especially for the 2023 season, the effort was truly great.

This was the first time that homes were lost to wildfire within the NWT communities and over 70 percent of the residents were called on to evacuate over the course of the season; in some cases, more than once.

The most significant loss of the 2023 wildfire season was of one of our own, firefighter Adam Yeadon. He passed away working to protect his home community of Fort Liard, and his sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am proud of the extraordinary work done by our wildfire management team, fire crews, wildfire experts, and other first responders in the face of extraordinary pressure and unpredictable conditions. While every wildfire season offers valuable lessons for adapting how we respond, one as extreme and challenging as 2023 is especially important to learn from.

As part of the Department of Environment and Climate Change's normal business, after-action reviews of individual fires are conducted every year. However, given the scope and severity of the 2023 season, we have engaged an external company to conduct an independent review of last summer's fires. A team of wildfire and program assessment experts will review several aspects of the 2023 season, including

wildfire management decisions and operations in the field, as well as environment and climate change's wildfire program structure, budget, and administrative systems. The team will also outline lessons learned that can enhance our approach to wildfire management moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, this independent review will include deep dives into the most challenging fires of the year, including those that impacted K'atlodeeche First Nation, Hay River, Enterprise, Behchoko, and Yellowknife. It will also feed into, and where relevant, help inform an overarching after-action review of the 2023 wildfire emergency response being conducted by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, environment and climate change's independent enhanced review of the 2023 wildfire season has been underway since November, and the work is being done with urgency. The team is reviewing all relevant information and interviewing staff, contractors, and other individuals and organizations involved in the response. With the next wildfire season only a few months away, there are many improvements already being implemented in advance of receiving the final review. Once we have the review in hand, it will be a top priority of environment and climate change to apply additional lessons learned to future responses. The review is scheduled to be completed by the end of March, and the resulting report will be publicly released this spring prior to the wildfire season.

Mr. Speaker, based on early indications, the current drought is expected to persist into the spring of 2024. We need to be prepared, and I would like to assure the public that we are working with all of our partners to make sure that we are ready for the upcoming season. Additional fire crews and aircraft will be engaged to support our existing efforts, and we will be bringing our resources on earlier than normal.

Relationships with our community partners are essential when it comes to preparing for the season ahead. Environment and climate change wildfire staff are meeting with communities to reflect on the last season, assist with updating their community wildfire protection plans, and discuss local planning for the upcoming season. To help communities implement wildfire prevention and mitigation measures, we will be working closely with the NWT Association of Communities. This work is possible in large part thanks to \$20 million in federal disaster mitigation and adaptation funding, and I want to thank the Government of

Canada for this incredible contribution to public safety.

Mr. Speaker, the summer of 2023 was very challenging for residents in many communities across the NWT, but it also brought us all together. I am confident that we can build on the spirit of collaboration as we prepare for the next wildfire season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 5-20(1):
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PREPARATION

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Mr. Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging that the Government of the Northwest Territories will ensure that a comprehensive and independent after-action review of last year's historic wildfire season is completed and shared publicly. This will be transparent and an open process, and it will involve feedback from community and Indigenous governments as well as emergency management partners. Additionally, public forums will be hosted in impacted communities to hear directly from residents who were evacuated during last year's devastating wildfire season.

This will be the largest after-action review undertaken by this government, and I want residents to know that this is a priority for this government. We already know that it will highlight gaps in last year's emergency response, but it will also inform how we collectively prepare for and manage and recover from emergencies in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this review will also consider the independent reviews being conducted by other organizations, including non-government organizations and community and Indigenous governments.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is deeply committed to learning from last year's devastating wildfire season, and I believe this extensive review, which all residents will be invited to participate in, will help guide emergency preparation and management efforts going forward. I want to stress, however, that our government is not waiting for recommendations from this review to make improvements now. All departments have been working to implement lessons learned from the 2023 wildfire season, including reviewing and updating the NWT Emergency Plan, updating standard operating procedures and coordinating training for GNWT

staff. The comprehensive review of our emergency plan will be complete in advance of the 2024 disaster season.

In preparation for another high-risk season, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is also rolling out its annual Be Ready and Emergency Preparedness Week campaign to promote the importance of personal and family preparedness. With that being said, Mr. Speaker, individuals and families should have household emergency plans, emergency kits, and emergency contact information available. Property owners and businesses should have insurance and plans to protect their property during emergencies. Residents should be familiar with their community emergency plans so that they understand the risk to their community and what to expect during an emergency, and businesses should have contingency plans in place and know how to activate them.

As the lead for emergency management, community governments should have local emergency management organizations and community emergency plans that are reviewed and practiced annually. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has contacted all community governments to offer assistance with planning activities and has scheduled workshops over the coming months. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs also provides tailored support, including presentations, meetings, and exercises to practice their community emergency plans.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT communities have faced many challenges over the past few years due to the impacts of wildfires and floods. As a firefighter from Hay River, I was personally involved in some of these events and I know firsthand how devastating they can be. I offer my sympathy and support to all those who have experienced loss and my thanks to all residents for their continued resilience.

Unfortunately, due to climate change we can likely expect more frequent and severe wildfires and floods in the future. While we cannot predict what this year's wildfire and breakup season will look like, we can take steps to prepare ourselves. I know it can be difficult to hear that disasters will happen again. But it is critical that all of us as individuals, businesses, communities, and this government, take action to prepare for and respond to disasters should they occur.

As Northerners, we know all too well that emergency events can be stressful, disruptive, costly, and devastating. We also know that with better preparation, we can mitigate some of the damage, stress, and financial impact. I urge all

residents to consider this as the 2024 high-risk season approaches.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my appreciation to all our emergency responders who continue to keep our communities and our residents safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that the Honourable Minister of Environment and Climate Change Minister's statement 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstain? The motion is carried. The Minister's statement is referred to the Committee of the Whole.

---Carried

Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Minister's statement Emergency Management Preparedness be referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Question has been called. All in favour? Opposed? Abstained? The motion is carried. The Minister's statement is referred to the Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

---Carried

Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Yellowknife Centre.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 32-20(1): IMPORTANCE OF SENIORS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today because I want to talk about Northerners living healthier, longer, and retiring in the North.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shifting demographics and makeup like the seasons in nature, people's lives similarly follow their own course. People travel from their spring to their summer to the fall and even to the winter cycle of our days. Each journey is different, and each journey certainly has its own supports and needs. We need supports through independence, care, but always through respect as we go through these stages.

Mr. Speaker, seniors are certainly one of the fastest growing demographics we have in the Northwest Territories. Between 2003 and 2021, that section of our population grew by 250 percent. It went from 6.5 percent of our population up to 15.2% of Northerners, Mr. Speaker.

Seniors are living longer. Some are working because they want to. Many work because they need to, Mr. Speaker. Our economy does need them in the workforce, but the reality is some of them are working because they absolutely are struggling, and they need help. While the median income in the Northwest Territories may appear high in respects to what it is in Canada, it has considerably dropped for seniors over the age of 65.

Now everywhere I travel throughout the North, all I hear about how important are our elders and our seniors, and I couldn't agree more. They are a revered piece of our population that deserves our greatest respect and dignity, Mr. Speaker. But to do that, many even question why we don't have a Minister responsible for seniors. It almost seems like a shame they've been forgotten. Often, I hear about how the government and our people extol the great virtues of seniors and why we need them, but where is that Minister?

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out how do we define and demonstrate our continued respect for this community? Seniors' benefits only go so far. They are also mapped all over the government. It's difficult to follow even for someone like myself who's familiar on how to find these types of things. We could, as a government, create a hallmark piece of legislation and policy that could codify seniors' benefits by calling it a seniors' bill of rights for our elders. Why? Because they matter that

much. We put pen to paper, and we demonstrate it through our commitment here every single day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member from Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 33-20(1):
DEVELOPMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE
ECONOMY

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking about the knowledge economy and what development of this sector could mean for our territory. First, I want to dispel the idea that growing this sector is only about skill development. That is a key aspect of it. But people can obtain skills elsewhere so we need to be thinking about what we can offer to the world, what would extract and keep people here to study, and help us build institutions communities can build their economies around.

It has been suggested that the university project is simply about centralizing things in Yellowknife. To the contrary. Doing so would fail to capture the value this territory has to offer on the global stage. Each region of the NWT has unique things to offer, and I truly believe that growth of this sector will benefit many communities if done right.

Inuvik is the epicentre of climate change and permafrost research and could grow to be an international polar research hub. Fort Smith has excellent infrastructure for existing programs and the on-land skills taught in the environment and natural resources technology program are unmatched. With an academic renewal, I think that program could attract many more students. Hay River could be home to a high latitude agricultural program. Yellowknife is the seat of governance. And the NWT is one of the few places in the world where Indigenous governments are achieving self-government agreements. Imagine a governance program which has students not only coming to Yellowknife and the Akaitcho region but also doing residencies and training in the Sahtu, Tlicho, Deh Cho, and Inuvialuit regions where self-government is being implemented and negotiated. We have so much value to offer and capture if we can come together and build an expansive vision and have the courage to invest in bringing this vision to fruition.

So when I think about where we could be in 50 years, Mr. Speaker, part of that vision for me is having a fully developed and thriving economy built around the people of this territory and the unique perspectives we can offer the world. In

my opinion, it is our greatest untapped resource. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 34-20(1):
SUPPORTS FOR NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES CHILDREN

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in April of 2023, the NWT Early Childhood Association held an event called waiting. They invited families from across the NWT who are waiting for spaces to participate. They heard from a variety of families that were either leaving the territory, going on income support, or not able to go back to work due to lack of spaces. This did not take into consideration the families that are choosing not to move to the Northwest Territories and the negative economic impact on the NWT that comes with our inability to attract professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, and many more.

Mr. Speaker, the bilateral agreement signed with the Employment and Social Development Canada has had a negative effect on daycare in the Northwest Territories. The subsidy provided will not be enough to offset the cap on what the daycares are able to charge for spaces. The shortfall will either have to come from additional funding from Canada or be additionally subsidized by the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, daycares are facing funding shortfalls due to issues like employee wage freezes, limits and/or freezes on daycare fee increases, and many daycares are considering closing entirely due to the uncertainty and accumulating more debt.

Mr. Speaker, operating costs such as utilities, food, and increased inflation are outpacing subsidy funds provided by the \$10-a-day child care program. Further context to this issue can be ascertained by looking at the other jurisdictions. Multiple other provinces are also dealing with issues like we are. Both Ontario and Alberta governments are pushing the federal government to commit more federal money for the successful rollout of this child care program.

Mr. Speaker, wait lists for child care spaces are getting longer each year while demand for child care is only expected to increase as this \$10-a-day program rolls out. Some daycares across the country are pulling out of the program altogether.

Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that daycares are able to survive. We must support the workers who go to work each day, so others are able to go to work each day. This affects the entire territory, Mr. Speaker. If we are unable to provide adequate daycare, it will have a major impact on our current workforce and our ability to attract professional people to our territory. They need clear programs, specific numbers on the new funding so appropriate decisions can be made well before the beginning of each new fiscal year. They need a clearer communication process with our government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line, the GNWT must provide a guarantee that it will provide the necessary funds to allow child care operators like the Children's First Society in Inuvik to continue, otherwise it essentially...

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Inuvik Boot Lake, your time is up.

MR. RODGERS: Sorry, I would ask for unanimous consent.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies. I'm just about done.

Now, finally, Mr. Speaker, if child care centres are no longer able to operate and we face even more limited spaces or closures, make no mistake it will affect us all. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member from the Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 35-20(1):
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This term challenge, part number 2.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of progress, our measurables is based on achievable priorities. Mr. Speaker, a collaborative approach with the multi NWT groups is tailoring resolutions through partnerships. Mr. Speaker, critical to projects large or small is the element of funding security. The Government of the Northwest Territories' previous assemblies has secured combined federal and territorial project resources. The bilateral agreements remain in place today. From this, we can implement a disposable economy.

The NWT, Mr. Speaker, is home to an active mineral industry. In our transitional efforts to a low carbon economy, the federal government is leading the charge. Through this initiative a

climate change development strategy has been completed.

Change is coming, Mr. Speaker. No longer automakers will be manufacturing fuel-powered vehicles by 2035. Critical minerals is a major component needed for emissions reductions. The NWT has a potential in becoming a major supplier to this emerging industry.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we recognize the mine closure. A huge concern to industry, residents, Northerners, and vendors alike. This issue, with new exploration, renewed devolution discussions, is required for investment, land access, certainty, and regulatory upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, education is a pillar of healthy communities and career security. The Government of the Northwest Territories has adopted a partnership with the Government of British Columbia in delivering a new curriculum. Our joint management systems, regional and local education authorities, need the awareness and delivery supports.

On the issue of housing, Mr. Speaker, the NWT has seen a significant influx of federal resources. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, colleagues. A significant influx of federal resources to bridge the gap minimize the NWT housing crisis. I ask myself if this partnership is producing results, let's endorse the partnership.

Mr. Speaker, our caribou herds are in decline, a main diet to many Northerners. Continued bilateral Indigenous government agreements and consultation are essential. This new --

MR. SPEAKER: Member from the Sahtu, your time is up to conclude your statement. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 36-20(1):
FOREIGN SECURITY CONCERNS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as my friend from the Sahtu has said, critical minerals are the future of the minerals industry, not just in Northwest Territories but in the entire world. And in that mix, rare earth minerals are vital to the modern digital economy because they're such a necessity for high technology devices, the demand of which increases exponentially every year. Rare earth minerals are particularly key to the transition to renewable energy and decarbonizing our economy. The industry is centered in the Asia-Pacific region because the People's

Republic of China accounts for 70 percent of the world's supply. China also has access to South American minerals because of complex trade deals with Latin American countries and the fact that they're built around initiative gives them access to South American rare earth markets.

Mr. Speaker, that's why Nechalacho Mine here in the Northwest Territories had so much promise to deliver a supply chain outside of China's control over the market.

Mr. Speaker, Vital Minerals is a company based in Australia that is also developing a rare earth mine project in Tanzania in addition to the Nechalacho Mine here in the Northwest Territories. The project was commenced in 2021, and Vital hoped to mine 25,000 tonnes of concentrate per year by 2025. Unfortunately, changes to the market caused issues with financing this project and shortly after June 2022, there were concerns with the company and they closed their processing plant in Saskatoon in 2023. So here, the situation we have today before us, is a large investment from a Chinese state-controlled company called Shanghai Resources has bought a near 10 percent stake in Vital Metals with a promise to bring that total up to 18 percent. And, Mr. Speaker, this kind of foreign investment is of grave concern to Canada's national security. It also is of grave concern to the future viability of rare earth mining and the rare earth industry in the Northwest Territories because China has used rare earths and critical minerals as part of their national strategy to maintain dominance over that market. And if things continue, we won't have a Nechalacho Mine in the Northwest Territories. It will be shut down, and we'll be forced to participate in that supply chain which is just not working for ourselves or our allies or for our efforts to decarbonize our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 37-20(1):
GAZA

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to offer folks a content warning of this statement which will contain graphic description of a hurt child. These kinds of firsthand accounts break the hearts of members of our NWT community every day. This is an account of a pediatrician in Gaza.

In the first few hours of my work, I treated an approximately one-year-old boy. His right arm and right leg had been blown off by a bomb and flesh was still hanging off the foot. He had a

blood-stained diaper, which remained, but there was no leg below. I treated the baby while he lay on the ground. There were no stretchers available because all the beds had already been taken considering that many people were also trying to use the hospital as a shelter or safe place for their families. Next to him, there was a man who was on his last breaths. He had been actively dying for the last 24 hours and flies were already on him. All the while, a woman was brought in and declared dead on arrival.

This one-year-old had blood pouring into his chest cavity. He needed a chest tube so he wouldn't asphyxiate on his own blood, but there were neither chest tubes nor blood pressure cuffs available in pediatric sizes. No morphine had been given in the chaos, and it wasn't available.

This patient in America would have immediately gone to the OR but instead the orthopedic surgeon bandaged the stumps and said he couldn't take him to the operating theater because there were more pressing emergencies. And I tried to imagine what was more pressing than a one-year-old with no hand and no legs who was choking on his own blood. That to me was symbolic of the impossible choices inflicted on doctors in Gaza and how truly cataclysmic this situation is.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 38-20(1):
ELDERS' HOUSING

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be questioning regarding the elders' housing. Mr. Speaker, population [Translation ends].

We also know that the majority of older seniors, those seniors who are no longer working age, are mostly Indigenous. We also know, Mr. Speaker, as seniors age so does the number of households that require major renovations. Mr. Speaker, many of our Indigenous elders are living in homes with disrepair or beyond repair.

Mr. Speaker, what are we doing to help our retired elders, those who have made the NWT their home their entire life? How can we help them with repair to repair their homes with ease?

I am hearing from constituents in my riding, Mr. Speaker, that elders on retired fixed incomes

are being asked to upfront \$1,000 to be eligible for various housing repair programs.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the cost of living has gone up. I am concerned about the income threshold for these programs. How has NWT Housing considered the increased cost of living when deciding income threshold? Not only that, we know government application process is a barrier for elders whose first language is not English.

Mr. Speaker, our elders need housing liaison workers. They need people to come to their home, speak their language, and assist them to obtain support from Housing NWT. We have elders trying to live at the same time some of them are caring for their grandchildren without running water in their homes. Mr. Speaker, our elders deserve more respect. Housing NWT can provide better support services for our elders to age in place. I will have questions for the Minister of housing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 39-20(1):
STATE OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES ECONOMY

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over recent years, many have stood up in the House to warn that our territorial financial outlook was worsening yet the government of the day just keep kicking the problem down the road so that hard choices will fall onto someone else's shoulders. Now it sounds like we can't ignore our finances any longer.

I understand that there's talk about cuts coming on the horizon. Like every northern family, the government must come to terms with reality and live within its means. My people understand that our territory can't keep spending more than we take in every year, but the communities in my riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh are concerned by this talk. They receive less than 5 percent of the \$2.2 billion from the finance Minister's table and worry that now that there will be less investment in our riding.

Across my riding, there are critical problems with housing, homeownership repairs, infrastructure, and across access to services. My people can't afford to lose out on support they have waited desperately for. To my constituents, it seems like the government just keeps growing. They still see a fair relationship with the GNWT and fewer coming budgets that work for their needs and will be imposed on to

them, just like the old days of the colonial system in the past.

The Premier says he wants to make another shot at renewing the relationship between First Nations and the GNWT. That makes me hopeful. I believe the path to fiscal responsibility offers this new government an opportunity to put words into action. They can choose to balance a future approach to fiscal restraint by ensuring services to Indigenous people and nations is protected and progress is made on the vital priorities of the smaller communities.

The people of Tu Nedhe-Willideh shares my optimism in this new government and have not lost hope in the future of the GNWT that works through cooperation and consultation. When this happens, we can find the solution together and build a prosperous economy that will see our territory thrive. I look forward to asking the Minister of Finance questions on this topic. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 40-20(1):
RENT SCALE

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my recent constituency meetings within my riding, the concern of rent scales has come to my attention by many of the attendees. They are frustrated because it does not work for everyone living in the public housing units.

Mr. Speaker, there are many factors that are related to the cause of this failure in the way that the rent is calculated. The current rent scale is calculated based on the previous year's income. Once your income tax is submitted, the local housing authorities calculate your rent for the whole year. We are experiencing high unemployment rate as with other regions, and most of the residents of my riding are employed seasonally. Some of these people do not even qualify for employment insurance yet their rent is based on the previous year's income.

Mr. Speaker, the current rent scale is landing many of the tenants with huge arrears with the housing authority. The residents are willing to work but due to the lack of employment, these individuals are still required to pay the set amount that was based on the previous year. The residents also require homeownership options for the families who have permanent employment but are paying high rent each month. There's a lady in Tsiigehtchic who informed me that she has been employed for three and a half years and pays \$1,450 per month in rent. In the three years of paying rent,

the total amount is in the excess of \$77,000 for this one person. Meanwhile, there are other tenants who pay \$70 a month, and these individuals have paid around \$3,000 in the same timeframe.

Mr. Speaker, we as a government must be reasonable and try to make the living arrangements more equal for all the tenants of the Northwest Territories, whether it is restructuring the rent scale or reintroducing homeownership options for the select few who are taking it upon themselves to work for the betterment of themselves and their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 41-20(1):
CARBON TAX AND ENERGY
ALTERNATIVES

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about the carbon tax because I fear that much of the discussion in the media is missing the point. Many of my constituents have come to me with their alarm and disappointment that the message they hear coming from this government's leaders is that carbon pricing hurts people because there are no economically viable alternatives to fossil fuels in the NWT so let's scrap the tax. The important message that's being lost, however, is that climate change hurts people, that climate change costs us dearly, and diesel and heating oil have many downsides including the expense and contamination of diesel spills.

Our status quo dependence on diesel isn't safe, and it's not cheap. And there are renewable energy alternatives. Some of them aren't even new technologies.

Since time immemorial, many northern peoples were heating their homes not with heating oil but with wood. Efficient, clean burning stoves are now more available and affordable than ever with subsidies by Arctic Energy Alliance. And district biomass heating systems for larger buildings are proven to work here, if we could just get all the different players organized.

In the NWT, we have some of the highest per person energy consumption and GHG emissions in the world, and our communities suffer the most from the effects of climate change so we cannot pretend that this is not our problem. My constituents and others across the NWT have told me that they are determined to be part of the solution.

Now, I want to be clear that I don't believe that high emissions or rampant climate change are the fault of individual Northerners just making bad choices. That's where our current carbon tax system falls short because it simply tries to incentivize individuals to behave differently, but people currently have limited options, so it just ends up feeling like punishment.

What residents need to see is the carbon tax revenues being used to create low carbon choices and options for them. That's where the municipal, federal, and territorial governments need to lead the way. People won't leave their cars at home until there is more convenient public transit. People will not invest in electric vehicles until there is clean, robust electricity system and charging infrastructure. Industry will not develop the supply or demand for renewable diesel until there is a clear regulatory framework for clean fuel standards. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This whole time we've had the illusion that fossil fuel technologies are the most economic because we've been subsidizing them with our tax dollars. So the whole point of a carbon tax is to help us plan for a cleaner future by noticing the real price that we are paying for fossil fuels. Carbon pricing should be acting as a kick in the pants to governments to find tools to bring down the price and increase the availability of cleaner alternatives. So carbon tax is not our enemy but if you want residents to do their part to address climate change, first our government has to do its part. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 42-20(1):
MICHAEL SQUIRREL – ABORIGINAL
SPORTS CIRCLE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES AWARE 2023

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Good afternoon, everyone. The first time I had the opportunity to meet Michael Squirrel was in August 1987 at a ball tournament he helped organize in Fort Providence. He did an amazing job, and all the teams appreciated the work he did.

This past December, I had the honour of presenting Michael the Community Build Award on behalf of the Aboriginal Sport Circle. I can tell you that Michael has been an active volunteer in the community of Fort Simpson since he and his family moved there. He has dedicated endless hours to building and improving the Beavertail Jamboree Committee

over the years. Michael's attitude, willingness and innovative ways of thinking has had a positive impact on the Beavertail Committee and the community. Whatever ideas he has, he is willing to put in the hard work to make it happen. Besides contributing to the Beavertail Jamboree, he assists with Old Timers Hockey and Fort Simpson Slo-pitch Association.

This past summer he took the initiative to organize a street festival on the main street of Fort Simpson to raise funds for the regional wildfire evacuees and to help distract from the chaos happening in the Northwest Territories. There was live music, many artists, booth of food and product vendors on the street. It was a well-received event, and we look forward to more of his creative ideas.

Michael is seen helping with fundraising year-round to ensure the community has positive jamborees. This means giving up some evenings during the week to host bingos for the community and 50/50 draws.

Michael can also be seen at all community events taking photos and showcasing them on social media. It really highlights and reminds us of all the good things happening.

Michael is originally from Fort Providence but currently resides in Fort Simpson where he works and lives with his wife. He is a father of three beautiful daughters. I can tell you he spends a lot of his time on the land practicing his traditional and cultural ways when he is not volunteering. He is an avid hunter, provider, and encourages others to get out on the land. He is a positive role model for our younger generation, and I appreciate his willingness to share knowledge on all the aspects of how committees work and create ideas to attract more participation.

Realizing the time, I would like to ask that the rest of the statement be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard. Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

This summer he sat on the "Shake It Off" ball tournament committee and encouraged all of them to think outside of the box and branch out to other organizations to help in making the event better. He helped organize an Old Timers hockey tournament in the spring because the recreation hockey tournament was about to be cancel. I got to play with him as my defense partner. In true old-timer fashion, the two of us on the ice made up over 100 years of playing the sport.

Mike has already had such a huge impact on many community members. Often when there is a need to bring the community together, he is willing to make things happen. He often jokes about "what's the next event?" - because he's

bored or getting antsy. I believe he positively impacts the volunteer community too by embodying the statements of never giving up, keep trying, and to continuously bring people together.

Members' statements. Return to oral questions. Recognitions of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River South.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my CA, Myrtle Graham, who is here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. And welcome. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 12-20(1):

CHILDREN'S FIRST SOCIETY FUNDING

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a follow-up to my Member's statement earlier, I've been told that each program is going to get more money or get new money for a proposed new funding mechanism. But when asked, they couldn't tell me, for example the Children's First Society in Inuvik, what that amount would be. For the new funding mechanism, if the department knows all the programs who get more money, why can't the CFS, Children's First Society, get those funding numbers now so they can plan for it? My question is for the Minister of ECE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister from ECE.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you very much to the Member. I was very excited to hear the Member refer to the virtual meeting that NWT Early Childhood Association had with their stakeholders because I was able to sit in on that meeting last year as a Regular Member, and it was -- I found it very helpful to be able to hear the personal stories of what people in the territory are going through.

Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the Member is that the Government of Canada has announced overall funding to this sector and, specifically here within the GNWT, for \$49.5 million over a five-year period, and that's the Canada-wide

Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. In addition to that, we have the Canada NWT Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement in the amount of \$10.2 million. That's over a four-year period. And I'll leave it there and wait for the next questions from the Member. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the department determined how that money will be allocated to each region and each -- Children's First Centre?

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the dollars aren't awarded or allotted by region. They are subsidies that are provided to child care providers across the Northwest Territories. So it would be -- the subsidies would be in relation to how many children, if those children are full-time or part-time, and information that is specific to each child care provider, whether or not that is a daycare provider or a day home. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, have those numbers been provided to each individual daycare what that subsidy will be?

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to actually at this point, in my term as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, to sit down with the association and have a very frank conversation with them about their concerns and about what they're looking for. I know that the department right now is working with the sector in order to do engagement and feedback on where they're at with establishing what the wage grid is. And so given that that information has not been solidified with the sector, that's why there is no final determination of what those dollars are. So right now, the department is working with stakeholders in order to find out, based on the dollars that we have in the territory, where they can work with one another for what the sector is looking for in conjunction with the dollars that we have within the territory for child care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned the wage grid, and I understand that the wage grid has been provided and the wage grid has been broken into zones for the territory. The concern for the Children's First Society in Inuvik is that they are in zone B while the surrounding communities are in zone C, and I wonder if the Minister can

provide a little update as to why that is. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this isn't yet a done conversation. The department is still working with this sector in order to figure out what works best for everybody involved. And this is a relationship that I am absolutely committed to. I have spoken with the association and let them know that I consider our first meeting the first of many. I want to maintain that open working relationship, and child care is something that I absolutely have benefitted from as a working parent in the territory, and I intend to see other working parents receive the same benefit as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 13-20(1):

REQUESTING PRIME MINISTER TO STOP SELLING ARMS AND MILITARY GOODS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's distressing for many that Canadian citizens are indirectly enabling the ongoing human tragedy in Gaza through the sale of arms and military goods. Will the Premier write to the Prime Minister of Canada and ask that he stop the sale of arms and military goods to Israel during this conflict? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a national conversation. That's a federal government conversation. And I've taken the approach during this government to not wade into international affairs. We're focusing on our jurisdiction. There's a lot of work to do here. And I appreciate the sensitivities around this. I appreciate the comments the Member made earlier. There's no way that people cannot be moved by hearing that. But the Government of the Northwest Territories is focused on territorial affairs. Thank you.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's disappointing to hear that from the Premier because it is a territorial issue. We do have members of the Palestinian community here in the Northwest Territories. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask if the Premier would be willing to meet with local members of that community to hear firsthand the impacts on NWT residents with family in Gaza. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've reached out to all MLAs and encouraged them to organize constituency tours where the MLA would set up -- we would go to the MLA's riding and meet with whoever the MLA would like us to meet with. So if the MLA would like to organize that meeting, I will attend. Thank you.

MS. REID: Really more of a comment, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, I will reach out to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: More of a comment. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 14-20(1):
RESPONSIBILITY FOR SENIORS
PORTFOLIO

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to my Member's statement today, I want to point out to how important -- I should say maybe it this way. I want to reaffirm how important seniors and elders are to me and our community. And I have no doubt every Member on the Member's side is feeling just as strongly that we care very deeply for our seniors and our elders, and we want to support them.

So my first question would be directed to the Premier, asking the question -- and perhaps maybe he can explain as the question why we don't have at least one Minister fully responsible for seniors and elders in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During this government, I chose not to assign any portfolios that had been assigned in previous governments that were Ministers responsible for something without a budget. So we don't have a Minister responsible for seniors, a Minister responsible for youth. And that was a conscious decision on my part because I saw those portfolios, and I heard from the Ministers who oversaw those portfolios, and I didn't think they were working based on everything that I saw and that I heard. When you are a Minister responsible for seniors with no budget, what is the point of that portfolio? I believe Mr. Speaker used to be the Minister responsible for youth so he might be able to relate to some of these comments. But that being said, the two Ministers who have the largest relationship with seniors in terms of their portfolio have met with the NWT Seniors Society - the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and the Minister of Health -- and they've had those conversations. So that relationship is still there. There isn't any specific

Minister to go to, a Minister of seniors, which traditionally was the Health Minister. Instead, now groups like the Seniors Society can go meet with the Ministers who are working with them, so the Minister of Health and the Minister of ECE. So if anything, I see this as a way to create more conversations and more relationships. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that relationship already existed before this Premier took office. So the Simpson government has created the new position of doing less as the appearance of doing more from the sounds of it. Perhaps maybe he can explain how this is actually better, because the previous relationship worked just fine but we've taken away the symbolism, the prominence, the emphasis of a Minister responsible for seniors. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm more concerned about actions than symbols. So I want the Ministers to work for seniors, not to have a token portfolio with no money or authority attached to it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there lies the opportunity. The Premier could have had the courage to put money behind the portfolio and dignity and respect finally in a portfolio that's supposed to mean so much to so many. Why doesn't the Premier have the courage to make that proposal to Members now? Because not one of us would say no to supporting seniors. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Members, please direct to me as the chair and don't direct it to your colleagues on the other side. Thank you. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sorry, I'm a little dizzy from all that spin. I don't think there's any -- I don't think anyone here thinks that, you know, we value seniors less because we don't have a token portfolio. So I don't really know how to answer this. It's -- you know, I'll just leave it at that. I don't waste any more of the Assembly's time with my response. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Member from Yellowknife Centre. Final supplementary.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure how the Premier can justify wasting the Assembly's time by not saying how he can help seniors better, Mr. Speaker, by giving the portfolio the respect and due it deserves. If there's a seniors' portfolio in the Government of Canada, I mean my goodness, are they wasting their time? So maybe the Minister can

chair -- sorry, the Premier can clarify why that wouldn't serve them better? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So I've been asked the question four times of why we don't have a portfolio for seniors, a token portfolio with no money attached, and it's because based on my experience I have seen those portfolios and I don't believe that they've been effective. I'd rather focus on actions than empty symbols. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 15-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ECONOMIC
DEFICIT

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our fiscal situation is worsening. The economy is going faster -- is not going fast enough, and several disasters has put further strains on our finances yet small communities across the North are facing severe problems relating to housing, housing repairs, infrastructure, and services they require, serious investment, economic investment, social progress, fiscal constraints are competing priorities this government must balance. My questions is to the Minister of Finance.

Can the Minister of Finance provide an update on the deficit and debt position of the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I am tabling the interim estimates that we're proposing, and with that does come an update as to our proposed borrowing. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we do typically run an operating surplus where available for the government. Now, we do also provide updates in the fall with the capital planning process and normally would be providing the update as well as part of the budgeting process here. We're still waiting on numbers, and we're still coming in from this wildfire season. So the last time we did May estimates, 2023-2024 Main Estimates, we were projecting a surplus, and followers of the House will know that over the summer when we had to come back to seek significant additional funding for wildfires that we were at that time taking away significant money from that surplus. So as those numbers have come in, that has reduced that surplus even further and may well put us into an operating deficit for this fiscal year. As I said, again, numbers are still coming in so we're still going to have to wait a

little bit longer to get an actual value for that but we certainly -- the Member's quite right, we're in a difficult situation as a result of the ongoing challenges that we've been having over the last few years. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister of Finance. I think the biggest thing I keep thinking about is the overall deficit of this government. And looking back at the budget books, we're about \$1.6 billion and one of the things we don't talk about is balancing the overall budget. So the question to the Minister is prioritizing balancing the budgets of this new government, can you tell me how would you approach on that? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ensuring that there is a budget that is compliant with the Fiscal Responsibility Policy has always been an important feature for myself, and I expect will continue to be so under this administration. And I do reference the Fiscal Responsibility Policy because that's the document that helps guide our assurance that we're providing the budget that is sustainable.

As far as balancing the budget, having debt in and of itself for a government of our size, Mr. Speaker, is not the challenge. The challenge, though, is ensuring that in our expenditures that we don't continuously overspend as compared to our revenues, and that certainly is something that, the Member's quite right, looking back over a decade, that number does keep going up faster than our revenues keep going up. So certainly going forward now, we've laid -- we certainly have a lot more information and data available to us on how we can get those numbers closer, how we can get those lines together, and that can certainly be a focus for this Assembly should we choose to take that path. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister of Finance. Thank you for your response. I just keep thinking that when you release those documents, I'm looking forward to see it.

Balancing the budget means cuts. Will these cuts be services and investment to the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding? Because we get less than 2.5 percent over the overall budget. I just want to know if that's going to be happening. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just firstly for the Members, communities, and residents of that riding and all ridings, the budget isn't parsed out by one community at a time. A large amount of

our budget is actually spent on services, programs, so for example health care services, that don't necessarily line up according to our riding line. So I certainly don't want any residents feeling like they don't get a fair shake out of the government.

With respect to cuts, Mr. Speaker, that would certainly always be the last -- and cuts to programs and services has to be the last thing that we look at. But there's a lot that we can do to improve our efficiency, to avoid redundancy, and significant work has been done already, and we laid ourselves a path and it's our opportunity to take it, with government renewal and with the data that's been gathered by health sustainability and can we actually look at spending our money better and more wisely now that we have that data available to us so that we can, indeed, bring ourselves to a better fiscal situation without any cuts. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Final supplementary.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the finance Minister. Well, the biggest thing that I'm a little worried about is austerity, and I brought this up in the last Assembly. And when the Minister of the day had mentioned that this issue would be brought to the next Assembly to look at, so here we are today. So I'm just want to raise this because it's a concern. You know, will --

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, question, please.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah. The question is would these measures to balance the budget be through layoffs or funding cuts? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I'm also the Minister responsible for the public service and the work that we do as a government can't happen without that public service. So that is -- I hope not a rumor that's out amongst the public service that that's where we're going to be starting to find a way for better and more responsible government. Being a responsible government, having responsible fiscal policies, does not necessarily require us to go out and get rid of those people who deliver our programs and services. It does mean looking at how we do things, looks at the duplication of services, at government renewal, are there areas where we can be more efficient, how can we operate differently and better, and how can we look internally to fund so that we're not continually adding new positions, adding more when we're not already managing the house that we're in. So I appreciate the line of questioning. I don't -- and I share the concern,

but I certainly want to emphasize to the public servants out there that this doesn't need to happen without them at the forefront telling us, in fact, how we can do better. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 16-20(1):
RENT SCALES

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions going to the Minister of housing. In my statement, I referred to the rent and how it's not working for the tenants of the Northwest Territories in the housing association. Will the Minister look at restructuring the current rent scale?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Minister for Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the question of looking at the rental scale, Housing NWT is currently reviewing the rental scale as an action item for the strategic renewal exercise conducted in the 19th Assembly. So it is an action item.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the select few who have full-time employment and keep up to date with their rents, will the department look at homeownership options for these tenants? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: The department can work with the tenants if they're interested in homeownership options. We can set up meetings with the individual tenants if they do have that interest for that opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Ministers, please direct your comments to me and say -- start with Mr. Speaker as well. Thank you.

MR. NERYSOO: Final question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. There are two programs available. The homeownership initiative and the home purchase program. Are these programs still in existence? Because I have two constituents who are -- who have full-time employment and have been trying to get some answers on these programs but they're not getting any concrete answers. I am just wondering are these programs still in existence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If they are interested in the homeownership program, they can contact Housing NWT district office. The program is still in existence and operating. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Mackenzie Delta.

Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

”

QUESTION 17-20(1):
ELDERS HOUSING

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one day this is going to be all of us in here, okay? So right now the Housing NWT repair programs require seniors to contribute 10 percent of repair costs if they earn \$59,000 or more. Would the Minister commit to reviewing the income threshold for the repair program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Minister of housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm afraid I didn't understand the question for Housing NWT, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Member from Monfwi, can you rephrase your question, please.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: What I said is right now what the housing is doing is that Housing NWT repairs program requires seniors to contribute 10 percent of repair costs, which is \$1,000, if they are making \$59,000 or more. So what I'm telling the Minister is that would the Minister commit to reviewing the income threshold for the repair program?

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, great news. In 2023, the copayment requirement for up to a thousand dollars was removed in the emergency repair program and the fuel tank replacement program. And the budget for that program was also increased to \$15,000. So that's good news. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And well that is good news to hear. That's what the previous Ministers have said. And I still -- recently, I forward her a letter -- letters from my constituents, the elders, who are in that situation where they have to pay \$1,000, which many of them are saying that they cannot afford, the 10 percent required for repair program, and I just recently send her some. And there are deadline attached to those. So can the Minister allow the 10 percent equity in the seniors repair program to be paid in installment by clients, because it is still in place. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we can do is we can refer this

back to Housing NWT and get the information to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. It's good that, you know, for them to review that. Okay, can the Minister commit to transferring North Slave housing office from Yellowknife that specifically deals with Tlicho communities to provide better services to people, especially the elders who are faced with many challenges. And I've said this many times. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd have to get back to the Member about the transfer and look into the information before I can commit to anything. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: This is in reference to the income threshold. So it's still -- it's referenced to income threshold. So will the Minister adjust the income threshold for seniors support program based on higher cost of living for elders in small and remote communities? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the review of the core need income threshold over the next year, this will be all reviewed and that will include seniors and elders living in small remote communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 18-20(1):
FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND SECURITY

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the issues I raised up around foreign investments in our minerals industry, the House of Commons committee on industry and trade is seeking a national security review into Vital Metals' sale -- shares of Vital Metals sold to a state-owned company under the Investment Canada act. The Minister -- the federal minister of industry has said he will block the sale of Canadian assets to state-owned enterprises. So my question for our industry Minister, industry, tourism and investment that is, is do we have a similar mechanism to assess security risks that are coming from foreign investment here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. I'll respond to many things; that's okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we don't have a similar mechanism to that. We here in the Northwest Territories, that type of responsibility would fall to the federal government under the Investment Canada Act and if they choose to do a review and they need the support of the GNWT, ITI would certainly participate in any means that they needed us to. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And obviously foreign affairs or global affairs is a federal responsibility, but it seems that given the interest in these minerals, and all critical minerals, that we ought to consider this issue. So is the Minister looking into how we can assess investment and maybe work with Ottawa behind the scenes on these kind of investments and whether or not they are in the best interests of Northerners. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, what I want to start off by saying actually here is that I actually want to thank the Member for giving me the opportunity to speak about this on the floor of the House. I know this is something that has been in -- I like to talk a lot, Mr. Speaker. Okay. Okay, right to it, then.

Foreign investment is not all bad, Mr. Speaker. Foreign investment is something that Canada relies on, and foreign investment is something that our critical mineral mining absolutely relies on right now. And so what I can say to the Member right now is we are constantly monitoring all of our investments in all of the companies that operate within the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. And to be clear, no one's anti-investment here but what we want is the right kind of investment. And when we know we have an adversarial government with a strangle hold on the market, this requires some new policy tools. The Yukon has a security council that's been created. Will the Minister work with the Premier to create a similar council to assess these kind of concerns? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is well aware of the securities council that the government of Yukon has put in place. We were excited to see some of the names on that council because those are people that we have had the opportunity to work with here at the Government of the Northwest Territories in the past and that we look forward very much to seeing the results of that securities council. But as far as what the Premier will choose to do,

that question would have to go to the Premier. I can say, though, that we have priority setting next week and this might be a topic of conversation next week for all of caucus. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of ITI. Final supplementary. Member for Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a helpful thing if we could build that into our priorities. What is the Minister doing to ensure we attract the right kind of investment from friendly sources in the United States and Europe? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we just had the opportunity as Cabinet -- well, there was four of us, plus we also had another MLA from the other side, the MLA for the Sahtu, that went down to Roundup in the last month. We had the opportunity to speak to many different players, so to speak, in the critical minerals and mineral extraction field and landscape. I also have the opportunity in the next month to travel to Ottawa where I will still be continuing to have conversations with private industry, with Indigenous governments, and also with the federal government. And all of these topics that we discuss here are going to be discussions that continue there.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's also really important in this conversation to reiterate that one of the most important things about this is relationships, and relationships are paramount when it comes to operating in the Northwest Territories. And that was a message that we delivered loud and clear when we were at Roundup and speaking with industry in Vancouver last month. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of ITI. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 19-20(1):
CARBON TAX REVENUES SPENT ON
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my first set of questions are for the Minister of Finance, and if there's time after, I have additional questions for the Minister of Infrastructure.

So currently the net carbon tax revenues after we hand out the offset payments, they go into the GNWT's general revenues, and this could be 14 to \$20 million per year but the public cannot see how these revenues are contributing to climate change solutions. So will this government commit to ensure that all net

carbon tax revenues go towards climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in the NWT with transparent public reporting on the spending? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly can ensure that all of the net revenue from the carbon tax goes -- is spent on some sort of measure that will assist us in our climate change adaptation and GHG reduction efforts, and those efforts are reported in the public accounts every year. What I suspect maybe actually the Member's after here is some sort of separated fund. The concern of having a separated fund is you then just earmark a handful of dollars when, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we spend far more than just the -- at this point projected \$11 million or so net revenue. 10 percent of that revenue now is being shared with community governments. And in the last year we had over \$16 million in the Department of Infrastructure alone on capital asset retrofits, Arctic Energy Alliance support, and engineering studies and grants being outgoing to monitor things like permafrost and permafrost change for instance. So I am very confident we are spending that net amount. It's how we're reporting it that clearly what we're doing in the public accounts, folks aren't finding it, and I am quite determined that we will find a better way to put that forward for residents. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So just one follow-up here: So I know that we've consistently heard from the government that it's not a good idea to have a specific revolving fund but I've also -- we've also heard from the public that there's demand for that kind of transparency.

Can the Minister explain if there are specific technical barriers or legislative barriers to instituting such a revolving fund which would provide greater transparency and understanding for the public as to how we're investing in climate change alternatives?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, having a revolving fund where you take a specific amount of money and put that aside, typically it's used for Crown corporations, for example for the airport where there's money in and -- going in and going out. It allows an entity to operate and conduct its operations with that revolving fund. Having it where there's a revenue source coming in and we take that percentage out, one of the concerns is that you actually wind up saying, all right, here's the \$10 million that we're going to use for this initiative. And I think the

Member's statement laid out quite well why carbon tax should really only be part of what we're doing, and we need to be looking at the impacts of climate change in the North, the impacts of GHG emissions. The fact that we're on the front lines of climate change, we need to be spending probably a lot more than just the amount that we're getting on the carbon tax to actually advance this. So that is one part of the hesitancy around a revolving fund. But, again, as I said, I do understand that we need to find a better way to explain to the public what we're doing with not only this fund but with a lot of the funds spread across multiple departments. And I am committed to finding a better way to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 20-20(1):

DIRECT APPOINTMENT TRANSPARENCY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the course of this Simpson government, they will be moving forward with probably hundreds of direct appointments. Previous governments have been known as if that's their hallmark to be proud of, these secret appointments.

My question for the Premier is how is the Premier going to bring some level of transparency to direct appointments that nobody knows about where they give permanent full-time jobs to time we know nothing about until one day they just show up at work? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I don't think this House is aware of people who are hired through the normal channels, let alone people who were direct appointed. So informing the Assembly of every individual that comes on board and is employed by the GNWT isn't something we do. We don't do it when someone enters a competition and is brought on or when someone is direct appointed. When terms of direct appointments, the only direct appointments I've seen come across Cabinet for quite some time are direct appointments through three programs: The Indigenous gateway program, the internship program, and regional recruitment program. And I actually just this morning had a conversation with the secretary to Cabinet about whether or not there are things we can do so those don't have to come to Cabinet. They are established HR processes. There's checks and balances in place. And we don't really need a political lens

on those types of programs. So I'm looking forward to the day when we don't deal with any direct appointments. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the current policy, which they operate on, allows any Cabinet Member to bring forward recommendations for appointments, and it has been used quite generously in the past and there's no way of suggesting it isn't going to be used generously in the future. That said -- but there's no transparency on what it does. And to get to the question in the context of the point, at least there's a public process for when the public service goes through a regular hiring process. That said, there's no public transparency on the number of people they hire or who they hire or when they hire. That's the transparency I'm asking for.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So when someone is hired through the internship program, it's because there has been an expression of interest put out -- and I'm sorry if that's not the proper term, but it has been advertised, and then people who have enrolled in the internship program can then apply. So that's public. The regional recruitment program is similar. I see ads for the regional recruitment program around my community. It's a way to ensure that local people are given the opportunity for employment. And so sometimes there's a sheet up in the drug store on the bulletin board saying that there's an advertisement. And in terms of the Indigenous gateway program, it's similar. It's also advertised. And those are the three programs that we see direct appointment come to Cabinet on, as well as deputy ministers. I should clarify that as well. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, he's talking about the public process. I'm talking about the direct appointment process that falls under the Executive Council ability to do so. And it's a bunch of recommendations all framework; I won't go through them today, we don't need to hear them, they know them, Mr. Speaker. But there's no public transparency on when they say a lady, you know, Joe Schmo, whatever it is, is all of a sudden being recommended to a department. Do you agree? Agree. There's no transparency on it being done. There's no transparency on any potential accountability when it comes to conflicts, friendships, relationships, etcetera. That's the type of transparency I'm asking for, Mr. Speaker, not about an application process that someone can duly apply for.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard a lot of the comments. I don't know if there is a question at the beginning of those

comments but if there is, I'd ask the Member to repeat it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I keep saying the same question different ways, but the Premier doesn't want to answer it, which is what type of transparency process can he bring to the Cabinet direct appointment process? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know that the Member is saying I don't want to answer it. I've answered the best I can. I don't know what people think is happening, and I guess that's what the Member is talking about. We don't have a bunch of direct appointments for our buddies coming through Cabinet. I can assure the Member of that. We have the direct appointments coming through these three programs. And if they're not coming through those three programs, I can assure you that Cabinet Ministers will have questions. Cabinet Ministers are still MLAs. They're still residents of the territory. They have the same feelings about direct appointments and about nepotism that everyone has. And I can't imagine what would happen if something came through across our desk, there was a conflict of interest and it wasn't declared, and it was clearly, you know, some shady dealing. That Minister would -- they would hear it at the Cabinet table. So I can assure the Member that the direct appointment process is not being misused by Cabinet, and that is going to be the case going forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary from Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's really tough to hear from a public justification, I assure you is the answer. I mean, that may work for a spiritual advisor that I can accept on that basis but that said, when it's from the government it needs to have some transparency. Mr. Speaker, how do we know that that's the truth? That's the problem. It's not I'm saying he isn't telling the truth, it's how do we know it's being a fair transparent process and what level of reporting can we see in this Simpson government? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So there's a number of steps that need to be taken before there's a direct appointment. There's guidelines laid out for the department, how they're supposed to work through this. There is an assessment by the Cabinet secretariat, which is independent from the departments. There's the Ministers. So if the Member has some examples of things that we can do, I'm happy to hear about it. But from what I've seen, the direct appointment process

works very similar to a normal HR process that we have in the GNWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

”

QUESTION 21-20(1):
ARREARS COLLECTIONS FROM ELDERS

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I talked about a motion that was passed on March 8th, 2023, for the government to stop garnishing elders and Indian residential school survivors' pension to pay for arrears. My first questions, Housing NWT collection policy states any tenant whose rent is overdue by two months should be filed with the rental officer for an order to pay arrears. Can the Minister explain the process Housing NWT follows when an elder on a fixed income has fallen into arrears? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Monfwi. Minister of Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An explanation on the process that Housing NWT would follow, it would be the local housing association or organization would reach out to the elder or the tenant whose house has fallen into arrears through the tenant relations officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good to know. Can the Minister explain what supports are in place for elders to avoid their files being handed to the rental officer. Are there any extra supports in place for elders on fixed income? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have a number of programs available to tenants whose housing payments have fallen into arrears. There's a list of programs that I can provide the Member to provide constituents if they do have questions. But we also have a local housing association or organization and the district offices that can provide that information as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. If the district office was situated in Behchoko or in one of the Tlcho region, we can really access their services. So can the Minister explain what happens to elders, especially those elders who are living on fixed income who are in arrears with Housing NWT, what happens to those elders when their files are handed over to the rental officer? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Elders whose houses have fallen into

arrears, their files would go to the rental office. The rental officer will try to mediate the situation and provide some sort of remedy at the time and will counsel the tenant to provide some sort of payment plan so they could pay back the arrears. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: From the rental officer, I think it goes to the court. The collection policy states that arrears should be given where collection is not possible, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain why elders living on pensions or retired fixed income who are behind on payments cannot have their arrears forgiven?

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I misheard the question again. If that could be repeated; I apologize.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Monfwi, can you please re --

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Will the Minister explain why elders living on pensions or retired fixed income who are behind on payments cannot have their arrears forgiven?

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing NWT works very hard to consolidate the arrears and work with the clients to enter into a payment plan to pay back some of those arrears and give them that opportunity through the tenant relations office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 22-20(1):
FUNDING FOR CHILDCARE

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the Minister's passionate about the issue of early child care, and I know that because I know the Minister. But the reality is that the Children's First Society in Inuvik are now using their contingency funds to make payroll. So I'm looking for a commitment from the Minister to say that they will provide at least up until -- up to the amount that they were provided through last year's financial statements to ensure that they can continue moving forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that the department is doing their best to work with stakeholders in the sector in order to determine what those numbers are going to look like. I know that in some instances, the department is actually working through individual numbers with individual organizations and actually sitting down with people and comparing so that they know exactly what the other is talking about, what the other is going through and what one another's goals are, because there's a real desire both not just with myself but within the department to see not less child care providers but more across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the department is working on that. From what I've heard from speaking with Children's First in Inuvik that they've asked or requested timeline. They don't have the funding numbers, nor do they have a timeline to when that funding will be provided. Can the Minister provide a timeline when they expect to find out when that funding will be available.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. And I think it's a fair question. And in acknowledgement of the fact that the sector and stakeholders are working with the department, I want to say absolutely as soon as possible with a target of early March so that they have that information before going into the next fiscal year and renewed kind of funding agreement piece is there. But I want to be respectful of the fact that they're still in conversations together, still working through it and want to give them that time to really be able to come those agreements together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank the Minister. One final question. I'm assuming this is in there, but I'll ask the Minister that are they taking into account obviously inflation and inflationary factors as they move forward for annual funding as years to come? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, inflation was not something that was built into the original agreement, and this is something that we are hearing across the country from all jurisdictions that have and share the same concerns. The funding agreements were signed before we saw record inflation across the territory, and unfortunately, we are all -- all jurisdictions are in the same boat with this one. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 23-20(1):
PORTFOLIO CHANGES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on questions asked by my honourable friend from Yellowknife Centre to the Honourable Premier around the -- switching portfolios. So prior to that change, there was one point of contact for our most vulnerable citizens, seniors, the unhoused, and persons with disabilities. So can the Premier just confirm that now there's multiple Ministers that these groups need to go to instead of just one one-stop shop? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There may have been a Minister responsible for seniors, but that didn't encompass ECE and all of ECE's programs that are geared towards seniors. So there was never a one-stop shop. There was a Minister responsible for something, and that Minister did not have authority over all of the programs delivered by the GNWT, all of the funds expended towards that group. And so I wouldn't say it's accurate to say there was a one-stop shop. There may have been the impression of that but by no means was that the reality of it. And so I was happy to hear that earlier this year the Minister of Health and Social Services and ECE met jointly with the seniors' society, and I think that's evidence that this is a -- this is a way to work together going forward and not just focus on titles that have no -- nothing behind them, no substance. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. I think the assumption from the public is that Ministers talk to each other, so what is the arrangement if a Minister gets a concern from an interest group that's not directly related to their portfolio, do they do nothing and wait for their colleague to jump in the game, or how does that work on the Cabinet side? I'm sorry; I'm not familiar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is collaboration across departments; however, if I have an issue as an MLA and it involves a senior and it's about income assistance, I'm not going to the Minister responsible for seniors. I'm going to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment because that's where the authority and the money is. So if there's an issue, you should go to the Minister who actually has the ability to deal with that issue. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When this Assembly determines its priorities, will the Premier be willing to either change portfolios or create portfolios to better meet those priorities? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not a fan of reorganization of departments unless there's a good reason and a good plan. It can be very disruptive. It can take away from actual work that needs to be done. You know, we don't need people spending time changing letterhead when they could be delivering programs. That said, I'm always happy to make changes that are for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories and if, based on the priorities, it appears that some reorganization or changes to portfolios or new portfolios are necessary, then I'm more than happy to entertain that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 24-20(1):
ENERGY FOR HOUSING

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So these questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. In contrast to the perception that there are no alternatives in the Northwest Territories to heating oil or heating with fossil fuels, can you give us some highlights or insights on the steps the GNWT has already taken and is taking to help residents or businesses either use less heating fuel or switch to renewable alternatives for heating, including in public housing units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is quite a lot that could be potentially said here, and I certainly -- while I don't want to speak for my colleague too much with respect to housing, I am able to happily say that there is already, as of this last year, the Housing Northwest Territories has its own energy strategy. There's also, of course, a variety of GHG grant programs administered by the GNWT. Arctic Energy Alliance has been a longstanding partner with the GNWT. Almost \$3 million goes to them for a variety of programs that include rebate programs for folks to make changes in terms of what they're doing to support energy alternatives in their own lives. \$12.9 million has gone through to Arctic Energy Alliance, and this is now where we're looking to the low carbon economy leadership fund. That's a federally -- a federal fund that we work with that also, then,

again is helping to support energy retrofits to examine people's energy uses. A significant amount of money also flow into Housing NWT with respect to public housing. Our own capital asset retrofit program earmarks money to start to get our own buildings that the GNWT is responsible for off of more expensive forms of fuel. You know, and, again, Mr. Speaker, I know you're trying to keep us succinct here but there's actually a tremendous amount that is happening. Again, the core funding to Arctic Energy Alliance. And also quite a lot of work now happening as well with, you know, electric vehicle rebates, the bike -- the electric vehicle or electric bikes which, I think, people laughed at when we first talked about it here. Well, to my surprise, it's been overexpended if I'm not mistaken. So a lot is happening in this space. A lot more can be happening in this space. And I do think that is -- that's the direction that the conversation around carbon needs to go and carbon fuels is around what we're going to do to reduce our use and change our habits. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could also explain steps that the GNWT's taking to facilitate more district biomass heating systems. So that's for larger buildings often that are close together, systems that link one big heating system and heat multiple large buildings, and that could include partnerships with the city of Yellowknife, the federal government, or industry or business partners.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thrilled again to talk about biomass. This is an opportunity where, you know, communities can come forward. There is -- there certainly is opportunity, and I would certainly want to extend the opportunity to speak further to communities, whether it's on small scale projects, which there is funding for under the community grants programs, funding under feasibility studies. There may be opportunities through, you know, and I'd certainly like to be able to perhaps resend some information, that I saw go out at the end of the 19th Assembly under the Minister of Finance's office, laying out a variety of different funds available for community governments to maximize. For example, we've got feasibility studies happening in Hay River and Wekweeti. Housing NWT is trying to make good on some of the work that they're starting under the strategy I mentioned before. Yellowknife, as looking, Bellanca building here in Yellowknife, has a biomass fired boiler system core. The Gwich'in Tribal Council. Mr. Speaker, those are just a few that I'm pulling together and I'm new to the portfolio. So it's an area of, I think, tremendous growth. And one last plug for us,

the Northwest Territories is actually a leader. We have 45 buildings already being heated on biomass. 32 percent of GNWT's heat as a government is from biomass. So we're well on our way, and this is really the conversation is to how do we push ourselves to be the true leaders for all of Canada. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, I know we're running out of time here, so I'll just ask a quick supplementary for now, and this should have a quick answer too. So -- okay, so for the past year, the GNWT has been doing public consultations around revisiting its 2030 Energy Plan, and I believe that the public engagement portion is complete and a What We Heard document has been -- yeah, so will the -- can the government share the What We Heard document with Members, ideally in advance of our priority settings, so we get much clearer insight into how the public and Indigenous governments are wanting us to chart our energy future and address climate change? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it so happens I've been asking to see a draft of this document for some similar reasons. I'm quite keen to have my hands on it. I don't know if we can get it ready in its format officially but in some sort of format where information can be shared with Members in advance of the priority setting, I'll commit to finding some way to get that information into the hands of my colleagues under confidential -- under confidential proceedings of this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Final last question, supplementary question. Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: That's okay. I feel like I could delve much more but I know we're running out of time. So I just appreciate the Minister's commitment to make that special consideration for the benefit of all of us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Time has expired for oral questions. Written questions. Return to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports on standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 13-20(1):
INTERIM ESTIMATES, OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES, APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30,
2024

TABLED DOCUMENT 14-20(1):
ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION
AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HYDRO
CORPORATION

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents: Interim Estimates, Operations Expenditures, April 1st to June 30th, 2024, and Annual Report 2022-2023 Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Being respectful of the time, we will have a quick break. Thank you.

---BRIEF RECESS

Everyone, we'll get going here. Notices of motion. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 10-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 9th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid;
- The Member for Mackenzie Delta, George Nerysoo;
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely;
- The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Robert Hawkins; and,
- The Member for Yellowknife North, Shauna Morgan.

And further, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Deh Cho, Sheryl Yakeleya;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers; and,

- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Notice of motion. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MOTION 11-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February the 9th, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Government Operations:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers;
- The Member for Monfwi, Jane Weyallon Armstrong;
- The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Richard Edjericon; and,
- The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Robert Hawkins.

And further, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart; and,
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MOTION 12-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 9th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers;
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart; and,
- The Member for Hay River South, the Honourable Vince McKay.

And further, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Yellowknife North, Shauna Morgan; and,
- The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Honourable Lesa Semmler.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notice of motion. Member from Great Slave.

MOTION 13-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 9th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:

- The Member for Deh Cho, Sheryl Yakeleya;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers;
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart;
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely; and,

- The Member for Nunakput, the Honourable Lucy Kuptana.

And further, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Monfwi, Jane Weyallon Armstrong; and,
- The Member for Thebacha, the Honourable Jay MacDonald.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Notice of motion. Member from Great Slave.

MOTION 14-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, Member 9th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development:

- The Member for Deh Cho, Sheryl Yakeleya;
- The Member for Mackenzie Delta, George Nerysoo;
- The Member for Monfwi, Jane Weyallon Armstrong;
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart;
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely; and,
- The Member for Yellowknife North, Shauna Morgan.

Further, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid; and,
- The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Richard Edjericon.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Notice of motion. Yellowknife North.

MOTION 15-20(1):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO FEBRUARY 20, 2024

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 9th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Hay River North, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when this House adjourns on Friday, February 9th, 2024, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, February 20th, 2024.

And further, that any time prior to February 20th, 2024, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notices of motion. Motions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

Motions

MOTION 10-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT,
CARRIED

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today regarding appointments to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Boot Lake. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to consider the motion which motion was given earlier today. Are there any nays? Seeing no nays, Member for Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS Rule 9.2(3) requires that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight shall report and recommend Members to the Standing Committees of the Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment:

- ”
- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
 - The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid;
 - The Member for Mackenzie Delta, George Nerysoo;
 - The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely;
 - The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Robert Hawkins; and,
 - The Member for Yellowknife North, Shauna Morgan.

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Deh Cho, Sheryl Yakeleya;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers; and,
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstention? Motion passed.

---Carried

Motions. Member for Boot Lake.

MOTION 11-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS,
CARRIED

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today regarding appointments to the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to consider the motion for which notice was given earlier today. Are there

any nays? Seeing no nays, Member for Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Rule 9.2(3) requires that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight shall report and recommend Members to the Standing Committees of the Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Government Operations:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers;
- The Member for Monfwi, Jane Weyallon Armstrong;
- The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Richard Edjericon; and,
- The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Robert Hawkins.

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart; and,
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Boot Lake. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed. Abstention? Motion passed.

---Carried

Motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

MOTION 12-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES,
CARRIED

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today

regarding appointments to the Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to consider the motion for which notice was given earlier today. Are there any nays? No nays. Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Rule 9.2(3) requires that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight shall report and recommend Members to the Standing Committees of the Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Procedures and Privileges:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers;
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart; and,
- The Member for Hay River South, the Honourable Vince McKay.

AND FURTHER that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Yellowknife North, Shauna Morgan; and,
- The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Honourable Lesa Semmler.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion passed.

---Carried

Motions. Member from Great Slave.

MOTION 13-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today regarding appointments to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to consider the motion for which notice was given earlier today. Are there any nays? Seeing no nays, Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Rule 9.2(3) requires that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight shall report and recommend Members to the Standing Committees of the Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:

- The Member for Deh Cho, Sheryl Yakeleya;
- The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Denny Rodgers;
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart;
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely; and,
- The Member for Nunakput, the Honourable Lucy Kuptana.

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Monfwi, Jane Weyallon Armstrong; and,
- The Member for Thebacha, the Honourable Jay MacDonald.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is passed.

---Carried

Motions. Member from Great Slave.

MOTION 14-20(1):
APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today regarding appointments to the Standing Committee on Social Development.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to consider the motion for which notice was given earlier today. Are there any nays? Seeing no nays, Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Rule 9.2(3) requires that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight shall report and recommend Members to the Standing Committees of the Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the following Members be appointed to the Standing Committee on Social Development:

- The Member for Deh Cho, Sheryl Yakeleya;
- The Member for Mackenzie Delta, George Nerysoo;
- The Member for Monfwi, Jane Weyallon Armstrong;
- The Member for Range Lake, Kieron Testart;
- The Member for Sahtu, Daniel McNeely; and,
- The Member for Yellowknife North, Shauna Morgan.

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be appointed as alternate Members:

- The Member for Frame Lake, Julian Morse;
- The Member for Great Slave, Kate Reid; and,
- The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Richard Edjericon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion is passed.

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Tabled Document 13-20(1), Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? Motion passed. Okay, the motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 13-20(1), also Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1). And, Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Do I have a seconder for the report of the Committee of the Whole? Member from Range Lake. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion has been carried. The report of Committee of the Whole has been concurred with.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, February 8th, 2024, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
 - Motion 9-20(1): Establishing a Public Inquiry into the 2023 Wildfires
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 13-20(1): Interim Estimates, Operations Expenditures, April 1 to June 30, 2024
 - Minister's Statement 4-20(1): 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season
 - Minister's Statement 5-20(1): Emergency Management Preparation

21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 8th, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:05 p.m.