



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, May 23, 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, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson): Good afternoon. Please join me in thanking Elder Marc Casaway for opening words and blessing today. Thank you.

I'd also like to thank the Aurora Fiddle Society's Fiddle Cats for the exciting performance today. What a wonderful way to kick off this sitting of the Legislative Assembly. It is great to see and hear our youth in this Chamber. Please join me in thanking the Fiddle Cats and wishing them success at the Pan northern Youth Fiddle Summit in Yukon later this summer.

Colleagues, I want to say a final thank you to our recently retired Commissioner, the Honourable Margaret Thom. Commissioner Thom was appointed as the 17th Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in June of 2017. For seven years, it was our pleasure to have her join us in this Chamber. She will be missed, but I am also pleased to announce the appointment of Gerald W. Kisoun as the 18th Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Kisoun, or Gerry as I know him, is an Inuvialuit Gwich'in elder who has dedicated his career to serving the people of the Northwest Territories. He served in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, worked with Parks Canada, and was Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories from 2011 to 2017.

Like some of you, I have known the new Commissioner for a long time. The first time I met him was at Colin and Rita Allen's kitchen table in March 1988. Throughout the years, it was great to hear his stories and you actually felt like you were there witnessing or living the event. As a family member, I am going to have to train myself to not call him cousin anymore.

Colleagues, in late April the Legislative Assembly hosted youth from across the territory who took part in our 20th Youth

Parliament. This year Commissioner Thom opened and closed the Youth Parliament. I presided from the Speaker's chair and the mace was in the Chamber for the first time. The youth also had the chance to meet their Premier, their Member of Parliament Michael McLeod, and the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Bill Blair.

It was an honour to share the Chamber with our youth, listening to them share their concerns and ideas freely in this Chamber. These youth are our future. Members, we are in good hands.

I would like to thank the staff who made this event possible and the Members who took the time to meet with their Youth Parliamentarian representatives and serve as pages. This is a great program, and it would not be successful without your support and dedication.

From April 29th to May 2nd, I was very excited to take our mace to the people of Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. Our mace is rich in history and symbolism and honours the culture of the Territories by bringing together the northern elements, carvings, metalwork, beadwork, quill work, and pebbles from each of the 33 communities. As your Speaker, I am proud to have opportunity to visit our communities and share the mace with our residents.

I was especially excited to be joined by the former Youth Parliamentarians in Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. In Tuktoyaktuk, we had Miley Wolki; and, in Inuvik, we had Kamdyn Alexie and Kurt Loman. I thank each of you for the warm welcome and introductions.

Members, today we continue the first session of the 20th Assembly. This sitting will be a little longer than we usually have this time of year as we are required to consider and pass the budget for the 2024 2025 fiscal year. There will be some differences in opinions and perspectives. We can and must be agreeable even when we do not agree with each other. Difficult conversations do not have to be, and should not be, disrespectful conversations. As Speaker, I believe I made my expectations clear and, in this Chamber, I expect to hear thoughtful, meaningful, and honest debate. I

expect our rules to be followed, and I expect each of us to show respect for each other, this institution, and the people we represent.

Members, it is my pleasure to inform you we have interpreter service for the following languages:

- Dene Suline Yati
- Inuvialuktun
- Inuktitut
- Inuinnaqtun
- Dene Kede
- Dene Zhatie
- Dinjii Zhu Ginjik
- Tlicho Yati, and
- French.

Members, remember to speak slowly. I repeat, please speak slowly as the interpreters, they need the time to interpret for us clearly. It is an honour for us to have these interpreters here. And please join me in thanking them for their service and dedication to using and preserving and growing our language.

I am also pleased to announce that we have added Dene Zhatie to our self-guided audio tour of the Legislative Assembly. We now have four languages available on the Smartify app.

Colleagues, I have received the following correspondence from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Gerald W. Kisoun. It states: Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of:

- Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2024-2025; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2024-2025,

during the first session of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Yours truly, Gerald W. Kisoun.

Thank you for your time and attention, colleagues. Let's get down to business.

Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 32-20(1): MANDATE OF THE 20TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, later today I will table the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2023 to 2027. This mandate will be our guide as we work to advance the priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

The Northwest Territories has always been a land of opportunity. Since time immemorial, it has sustained thriving and resilient Indigenous peoples, and it has welcomed and provided opportunities to new community members who have made the NWT their home. This land and its people have made significant contributions to Canada's cultural, economic, and environmental prosperity, and we still have much more to offer to Canada and the world.

The world, Mr. Speaker, is changing. We can see it in the shifting political landscapes at home and abroad, in the rising costs of goods and services, in the advancements in the technologies that are reshaping how we work and communicate, in rising temperatures, and the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters, and in virtually every other facet of life.

Mr. Speaker, as the world changes, we must ensure that our government is a source of stability for our residents that can be relied on to provide dependable and high-quality basic services. This need is reflected in the priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly, which were developed collaboratively by all 19 Members of this Assembly.

The priorities focus on housing, the economy, health care, trauma, and safety. Although this is a small list, addressing these issues is an enormous task and will require a departure from the status quo. To face these challenges in a changing world, our government must be flexible, have the courage and compassion to embrace risk, the humility to trust and to learn from each other, and the willingness to work together in true partnership.

The mandate is not an itemized list of actions the government intends to undertake. It is a guide to focus our efforts in those priority areas, and it is a commitment to change the way the government operates so that we can better serve residents now and into the future.

It is organized into six areas of focus:

- Housing

- Economy
- Access to Health Care
- Addressing the Effects of Trauma
- ” Emergency Management, and
- Public Safety.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that there is a housing crisis in the NWT. Ensuring that there is an adequate housing stock that meets the needs of residents is essential to the present and future prosperity of our territory. People need safe homes to raise their families, businesses need accommodations to attract workers, communities need houses to help keep teachers and nurses. The GNWT cannot address this issue alone but through collaboration and coordination with Indigenous governments, community governments, and the private sector, we will work to attract more federal investments in housing, make more land available for development, and increase the construction of new homes.

Next, we must ensure that residents can afford a good home, which means strengthening our economic foundation and creating opportunities for good paying jobs. This is more important than ever because we all know that residents are feeling the pressure when paying their rent or mortgage, groceries, heat, power, gas, and all the other necessities of life.

Thanks to the hard work of countless entrepreneurs, the NWT has a diversified economy:

- Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Professional Services
- Retail
- Fishing
- Agriculture and, the backbone of our economy,
- The resource industry.

This government is committed to doing what is necessary to grow our economy, including building our workforce through training opportunities, closing our infrastructure gap, cutting red tape and reducing administrative and regulatory burdens, and being responsive to the needs of the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the impending closure of our diamond mines, which, for a quarter century, have driven the NWT's economy. It will be difficult to replace their economic contribution, but we have an abundance of natural resources from traditional commodities, such as gold, to the minerals and metals needed to fuel the global transition to a green economy. And we will work tirelessly to increase exploration and development and ensure that our residents have the opportunity to benefit from these resources.

Mr. Speaker, this government is also committed to improving access to health care. Residents need to feel confident that they can access the basic medical care they need in a culturally-safe and trauma-informed way no matter where they are in the territory.

This will be no small task. There is a severe shortage of health care professionals across Canada. This means we must find new innovative ways to attract workers to the NWT while ensuring health care workers feel supported, so they want to remain in the field and in the territory. Of course, it is vitally important to incentivize and support Northerners to pursue careers in health.

As part of this government's work to provide better access to health care, we are committed to addressing the effects of trauma. This government is dedicated to ensuring that our policies and programs are designed and renewed in a trauma-informed, anti-racist, and culturally-sensitive way. We are committed to supporting Indigenous governments and other partners in developing and delivering culturally appropriate trauma treatment, mental wellness, and addiction programs. With a focus on healing, we will make programs and services easier to access through an integrated and person-centered approach to service delivery. We will encourage community wellness and self-determination by supporting, developing, and delivering community-based wellness programs that address mental wellness, early intervention, and holistic well-being.

Next, our government is committed to taking action that will improve our ability to manage and respond to emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT is on the front lines of climate change, so it is imperative that we strengthen our ability to respond to more frequent and severe climate-driven disasters and other emergencies. By learning lessons from recent emergencies and working in partnership with Indigenous and community governments, we will ensure that our emergency management systems are robust and effective, advance innovative climate

change mitigation and adaptation responses, and work to increase redundant community, energy, telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the sixth area of focus for the government over the next four years is public safety. From Yellowknife to regional centres to small communities, we are all feeling the impact that the increase in drug trafficking is having on our communities and, in many cases, on our loved ones. Ultimately, substance abuse is a public health issue but there must still be a focus on enforcement. We need to make the NWT a less inviting place for drug dealers to do business. We will focus on crime prevention through public education, early intervention, person-centered delivery, and community-driven solutions while at the same time ensuring communities and the RCMP have access to more tools to help combat the drug trade.

Mr. Speaker, these six areas are focused to concentrate government efforts on the 20th Legislative Assembly's four priorities but still broad enough to ensure there is space to incorporate and be guided by input from MLAs, Indigenous governments, the public, communities, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations. Specific actions, targets, and measures will be set out annually in the GNWT Business Plans to support a meaningful progress and transparent reporting.

As I have stated many times before, the GNWT cannot do this work alone. Success will only come through partnership with Indigenous governments.

We are committed to collaborating with Indigenous governments and residents to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our work will be further guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls to Justice. We will work shoulder to shoulder with our Indigenous government partners as we engage the Government of Canada to advance issues of shared interest, accelerate the settling and implementing of land claims and self-government agreements, and support economic reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT's relationship with Indigenous governments is integral to the future prosperity of the NWT, and I am excited to continue to strengthen relationships as we work together for the benefit of all residents.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I must mention the integral role of the public service. The public service is the GNWT's most valuable asset and deserves to be supported, validated, and respected. It is crucial that we create a positive environment that empowers employees to bring their best selves to work every day and to realize their full potential. To create this working environment, we must foster a culture that values and supports individual and team efforts, encourages empathy and efficiency in service delivery, and recognizes and incentivizes innovation and adaptability. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this mandate will help our government make meaningful progress in advancing the priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

I look forward to a busy four years working alongside Cabinet and Regular Members, Indigenous leaders, other orders of government, and of course residents, to set the Northwest Territories on a path to a strong and prosperous future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier. Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 33-20(1): NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that I intend to deliver the Budget Address on Friday, May 24, 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 155-20(1): SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supporting families with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, under the income assistance program, the GNWT requires applicants to provide proof of income which they can do through a notice of assessment provided by the Canada Revenue Agency. I have clients in my region who have filed their taxes with the federal government, and the GNWT has access to this information, but instead of the GNWT using the tools they have to access a client's CRA notice of assessment, they ask the client to provide the financial information.

Mr. Speaker, this unnecessary step is delaying the review of their file. While the income

assistance office tries to gather all the paperwork they require from clients, the burden is put on the clients to provide information even when the GNWT has the ability to obtain the information itself quickly and easily.

Mr. Speaker, people are struggling to navigate the income assistance program. The level of information required is confusing. It is hard to locate documents and information. Clients who are trying to access income assistance have no time and resources to navigate this system. There seems to be a lack of trust and empathy between the clients and staff. While clients are trying to access the income assistance program, having meetings, phone calls, finding people to support them, and even translators, they still have to pay their bills. In some cases, these families are supporting children or elders with disability. Mr. Speaker, as you know, family who are supporting those with disabilities face extra hardship and challenges. Not only do they carry more stress, they face greater financial hardship.

The Minister has spoke in this House about the changes coming to the income assistance program, and these are good changes. But, Mr. Speaker, we need these changes today. While we wait for these changes, families are being left out, forgotten.

I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 156-20(1):
LIQUOR TAX

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, the future of beer brewing belongs to craft breweries. Over the last ten years, Canada has witnessed a craft brewery boom as hundreds of these small businesses have sprung up across the country. Demand for a unique, locally sourced, craft beer grows exponentially year after year and, as a result, craft breweries have become a vital aspect of any city's economy.

In Alberta, craft brewers actually employ more people than the oil and gas industry. Thanks to the great talent of these brewers, the ability of these locally produced beverages to compete with the products of big namebrands instills a sense of local pride and purchasing them guarantees a strong investment back into the community.

Here in the North, it is no surprise that we have a highly esteemed craft brewer of our own, the

NWT Brewing Company. Based in Yellowknife and established by a team of young entrepreneurs, the NWT Brewing Company produces a diverse array of products sold across Canada, and their continued success contributes greatly to the North's tourism and hospitality industry. They have quickly become a staple in our community, providing dozens of workers good paying jobs and generating thousands of dollars each month into our local economy.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories remains well behind the curve when it comes to welcoming these brewers into the economy. And so the NWT Brewing Company struggles with outdated policies and regulations that other provinces and territories have updated. Furthermore, the NWT Brewing Company is dealing with skyrocketing inflation as the cost of some ingredients needed to produce their beverages have recently jumped by 80 percent. Together, these circumstances, along with high taxes, threaten our local craft brewing industry and only the territorial government has the power to create the economic environment they need to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I know we all want to keep the NWT Brewing Company in business producing tasty beverages of a sociable nature here in the Northwest Territories. Then that means giving them the runway they need to expand their production and keep their prices competitive so they can grow their market share and compete with bigger brands, not just in the North but across Canada. The Minister and I have had extensive meetings on the subject, but now is the time to see words turned into action. Let's act today to modernize our policies so our craft brewers can be confident that their future is here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 157-20(1):
MACKENZIE RIVER WATER LEVELS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Welcome back. Part 1 of 2, Sahtu climate change and unprecedented low water levels.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by expressing my deepest appreciation and sincere gratitude to NWT's Buffalo Airways for their recent announcement to provide air barge freight services to the Sahtu region. It's homegrown northern companies like Buffalo Airways that not only recognize a crisis but, most notably, step forward to help.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie River covers a distance of 1650 kilometers starting from the Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean. This waterway, and the coastal communities along it, are serviced by the Government of the Northwest Territories' MTS, or Marine Transportation Services. Mr. Speaker, with historic low water levels experienced by the many communities along this route, customers are on the brink of wondering are we going to see barge service deliveries at all.

Mr. Speaker, this vast distance presents numerous shallow points, including the Hay River harbour. Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu is completely dependent on barging resupply during summer months. This includes industry, governments, and commercial sector, and the public residents at large.

Leadership means making decisions, not allow us not to deny a low water situation but more importantly admit that we are facing an unprecedented crisis.

The 2023 sailing season last August cancellation of the barging services is a witness to the impacts of delayed and cancelled projects. Most recognized is the airlifting of two community power generators. These are minimal impacts on what is potentially expected. Assurances are in place and underway by this government. I request an extension to conclude my statement there, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, developing a sound logistical plan to ensure comfort in the short term is the only punctual way to do a project of this nature. However, the long-term solution for the Sahtu and is fully behind in support of the 20 percent secured capital committed to the all-season road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from the Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 158-20(1):
RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY ENTERPRISE
WILDFIRE

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to -- Mr. Speaker, on August 13th, 2023, residents of Enterprise were evacuated from their communities from the threat of a wildfire. As we have spoken about this in the House before, the evacuation of Enterprise was chaotic and traumatic. And for

some very unfortunate people, Mr. Speaker, the chaos of the evacuation has not ended.

Mr. Speaker, it is May 24th, 2024. It has been 284 days later, and some NWT residents still have not been able to return home. Some have already left. For many Enterprise residents, there is no home to return to and for people that did not have enough insurance coverage, there is no options.

The Prime Minister and the GNWT visited the community of Enterprise in the aftermath of the wildfire, and they made promises to support the residents. Yet, Mr. Speaker, residents feel these were false promises. The residents who do not have the insurance funds to rebuild new homes feel they have no option but to leave the NWT to find better options down south.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT prides itself in taking care of each other. We talk in this House about the need to help one another, to be there for our fellow Northerners in their time of need. I recognize the government can't be everything to everybody, but the reality is many people have left the North and there are many more on the brink of leaving because they don't have the resources to rebuild on their own.

We also have spoken in this House many times about the fact that we are in a housing crisis. How has the GNWT responded to the housing crisis created from natural disasters? We recognize that natural disasters are on the rise in the NWT. How will the GNWT work with federal and Indigenous partners to respond to this crisis with housing solutions that house Northerners?

I will have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 159-20(1):
INADEQUATE HOUSING IN MACKENZIE
DELTA

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to bring forth the concern of inadequate housing in the Northwest Territories; in particular, the Mackenzie Delta.

As we are all aware, housing is deemed a human right. It is clear that this government, or any government, cannot build enough houses to meet our needs. But with the collaboration of the Indigenous governments and the network within our communities, we can renovate the vacant units in our communities to house some of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, in the community of Fort McPherson alone, there is a waitlist of up to three years. If we work collaboratively with the network of organizations in Fort McPherson, Aklavik, and Tsiigehtchic, we may be able to get some of our residents into their homes, own homes with their families. At the present time, we have some of the most vulnerable residents who are couch surfing just to have a roof over their heads for the night.

Mr. Speaker, with the warm weather, these unfortunate people are somewhat lucky. But in the colder months, these unfortunates are left out in the cold.

In the community of Aklavik, they have a program where the local Indigenous governments provide housing for the homeless. The recipients of these programs are able to stay in the units until they can secure permanent homes for themselves. It would be very beneficial if this program would be made available to the other communities of Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Fort McPherson is renovating some of these vacant units so that they can assist their residents in having a home for their families. The local housing authority, the Tetlit Gwich'in Council, and Tetlit Zeh Development Corporation are networking to renovate these units, but they can only do so much with the limited financial resources they have at their disposal. It is evident that they have the network of trades people to do the work, but they require the financial resources to continue this venture to accommodate their residents in living in a place they can call home.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 160-20(1):
HEALTH CARE WORKERS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to read a letter I received this week from a constituent.

As a concerned resident of Yellowknife, I am urging immediate action on the critical issues facing the NWT's health system. Our chronic staffing shortages and overreliance on temporary physicians and nurses are compromising patient care and alienating our permanent staff. Our health care workers are enduring burnout from extended hours and high stress environments leading to distressing turnover and unsafe patient care.

The current impasse in collective bargaining reflects the government's neglect in addressing these concerns. Privatizing the delivery of care via agency staffing while the stop gap undermines care consistency, reduces accountability in health care, threatens cultural safety, and incurs exorbitant costs. The NWT must offer competitive wages and conditions to attract and retain dedicated health care professionals.

I propose the Legislative Assembly immediately consider improved working conditions such as legislate safe nurse-to-patient ratios following British Columbia's model, acknowledge and accommodate health care's unique roles with a distinct collective agreement for health care workers, also retention strategies such as offer housing allowances, child care, flexible schedules, and bonuses for permanent health care workers who make long-term commitments, enhanced access to care, such as increasing staffing and beds at Stanton Territorial Hospital, and introducing a walk-in urgent care service for at least four hours daily.

Investing in health care workers translates to superior care and safety for our residents. I implore you to take decisive steps in safeguarding our territory's health system.

I will have questions for both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 161-20(1):
AURORA COLLEGE

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on May 16th, the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment received a presentation from Aurora College leadership on the status of transition of public college to a polytechnic university.

Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged to hear from the president and board chair that they are committed to seeing the transition through; however, I am disappointed to note that they also shared that they are off track from the established timeline and are not expecting to be able to deliver the NWT a renewed polytechnic university in May 2025 as planned.

If we take a look at the implementation plan in the college's 2022 to 2024 mandate agreement, it is clear that a number of signs have been pointing to the transition beginning to get off track. A number of milestones have either been

already missed or will be. For example, community learning centre plans were supposed to be complete in December 2023, as was a three-year strategic plan. A made-in-the-NWT degree was supposed to be identified in 2023. Organization design was scheduled for completion in January 2024. And recruitment, marketing, and communications strategy for 2024 to 2026 is also not complete. The college was also supposed to have several new programs established in fall 2024 and has acknowledged that this won't be happening either. So I think it is clear that this project is not moving forward as planned.

Although the board emphasized to committee that they were committed to moving the transition forward, they also shared that they felt the project has been underfunded and is not receiving the required support to achieve transition goals. I find this incredibly concerning, not only because of how important the project is for our social and economic development goals but also because expediency is required for this project to succeed.

The 2018 foundational review, which sparked this transition, was clear that if the decision to create a polytechnic was made that action needed to be taken quickly because the post-secondary sector is becoming increasingly global and competitive. The review was also clear that if we lost commitment to this transition along the way and allow the project to be whittled down over time, it will not result in an institution which serves to build up our future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in the vision of establishing a world class polytechnic university in the NWT. My question now, at this critical moment, is whether our government is similarly committed, or are we simply going to give up and let this project fall to the wayside? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 162-20(1):
HAMLET OF FORT RESOLUTION FIRE
PLAN

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Fort Resolution have now been controlled by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs for a full year. The legislation stipulates that in these circumstances, the senior administrative officer must meet with the public to ensure proper transparency and accountability is upheld. It is essential for residents to observe and

participate in their public institution. They must also feel confident in their local government in the face of emergency and uncertainty as well.

I am glad to have recently brought several of my Cabinet colleagues to see Fort Resolution's problems firsthand. It is clear, though, that more work must be done by the government in response to the threats of the wildfire.

Fort Resolution is increasingly concerned with the lack of information sharing with the department officials and the administrator appointed by them regarding their emergency plan. It is legislated that all communities must create and retain and execute their emergency plan but without a local government in Fort Resolution, the task of providing such plans therefore falls on the Minister.

The territorial government surely has to be able to establish and carry out a comprehensive plan for Fort Resolution yet the community remains uncertain about the details of any emergency plan, especially in regards to wildfire threats. Over the last year, there has been ineffectively no functional fire department in the community, no professional volunteers, or fire brigade. They still don't know when they'll see or even get a functional fire truck that's properly maintained, a water truck, and a backup water truck.

Mr. Speaker, Fort Resolution is totally in the dark about our government's capability to keep themselves safe in a wildfire emergency, especially in the event of an evacuation. The threat of wildfires grows stronger by the season, starting earlier each year. Due to the inaccuracy of a community administrator, there is potential that the Minister may be putting the safety of the community at risk. I hope that our people will get some clarity in the coming days on this matter at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 163-20(1):
CARBON TAX

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on April 1st, 2024, the federal carbon tax increased by 23 percent. The federal government, in an attempt to offer relief to some residents in Canada, decided to exempt diesel fuel. This was welcome relief for those who

burn diesel fuel. Not so much, Mr. Speaker, for those who burn much cleaner natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, information provided by Inuvik Gas Limited states that from April 1st, 2023 to April 1st, 2024, the carbon tax charged to customers ranged from \$3.32 a gigajoule to \$3.93 per gigajoule. As of April 1st, 2024, the additional carbon tax rates charged will range from \$4.09 to \$4.83 per gigajoule.

The residents of Inuvik, Mr. Speaker, have been burning natural gas since 1999 and as such have reduced its greenhouse gas emissions significantly. The cost of the 23 percent increase to natural gas is equal or close to a 10 percent increase for the residents of Inuvik who heat their homes with natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, when the cost of heating your home is between \$900, in the early winter months, to \$1,400 as those months get colder, that's significant.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government must realize that the gigajoule cost for natural gas in the Northwest Territories is not 4 to \$5 a gigajoule. In Inuvik, Mr. Speaker, it's closer to \$40 a gigajoule. People are already struggling to make ends meet. The cost of groceries, gasoline, home and auto insurance, has all increased too much. To not exempt natural gas in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, is absurd.

Mr. Speaker, Inuvik is essentially being penalized to burn a cleaner fuel, and isn't reducing greenhouse gas emissions what this ridiculous tax is supposed to be all about? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 164-20(1):
EDUCATION

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mandate of this Assembly includes a focus on the economy, which is welcomed. But if you look closely, it actually refers to economic foundations, which is an important distinction. I believe that the most basic foundation of any healthy NWT economy is education.

Recently, we had economist Grant Clinton make a presentation to our economic development committee, along with the Chamber of Mines, and he noted that we tend to get excited about workforce training when a mine or a big project is about to open, but by then it's too late to reap the socio-economic benefits that we all want if we haven't already been properly investing in JK to 12 education.

We focus in our mandate on skills training, workforce development, and entrepreneurship, but I want us to step back. Are we successfully teaching our young people how to read and write? Are we teaching them how to figure out basic math problems? How many adults do we have who may be struggling to get work because they do not have enough reading and writing and math skills to be able to function independently in their lives?

To get some of these answers, I went looking on ECE's website under literacy where I found that our last literacy strategy framework was written before 2008 and has a great photo of a young, fresh-faced Jackson Lafferty who was education Minister at the time. It mentions a study from 2003, which found that 70 percent of Indigenous adults in the NWT cannot read or write well enough to fully participate in our society, as well as 30 percent of non-Indigenous adults. An even higher number are below functional literacy levels in math. So that's 76 percent of Indigenous adults in the NWT, and 38.5 percent of non-Indigenous adults. So that is not only a labour market issue, that's a human rights issue.

Being able to read and write and communicate in any language, well enough to fully participate in society, is a basic human right. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, there are many factors inside and outside the classroom that are causing this problem, but none are insurmountable if we tackle each one systematically. No one can focus on learning if they're hungry or if they do not feel safe at home. Many children have learning disabilities. Some have brains that work differently. But there are tools and best practices that we know have been shown to help in other parts of the world, so let's get serious about implementing them here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 165-20(1):
SUPPORTS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be back here.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, becoming a senior or elder is certainly a privilege and as I look around this Chamber, I see a lot of people heading in that direction. Some of us a little

closer than others, obviously. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, respectfully, I certainly hope we all join that rank and privilege of being called a senior or elder.

That said, as an elder in training, Mr. Speaker, okay, I view my part here is to help support the seniors and the previous generations that have brought us to where we are today. I view this as a great responsibility of myself, and I know in this room many of us believe strongly in supporting the aging and the dignity of our seniors.

It's a personal commitment of mine, Mr. Speaker, to dig deep every day on their issues because I do not take them lightly. Mr. Speaker, today I want to highlight the importance of empowering independent living of our seniors and the struggles they may have.

Now, Avens, in particular, was borne out of a kindness and need to support seniors in our community. It may have been started back in 1983 -- before a few of us might have been born -- and that said, it was designed to help lobby the government so programs and services and supports can be met and grow from there on in to help seniors. Now, the principle mandate, Mr. Speaker, hasn't fundamentally changed, which is the affordability for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, as I heard the Premier say just a few short moments ago, we must ensure residents can afford good homes. Thank you, Mr. Premier, for setting up my statement.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is the government support is shrinking and that cost is now being borne on those residents or renters at Avens. Mr. Speaker, the society has a -- sorry, Avens as an organization is a society, but it works similarly to a business, whereas in they cannot weather these costs forever, which means they fall on the individual renters.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corp needs to put back the hundred thousand dollars of support that they used to help support seniors with so we can maintain low and affordable housing. I had to slow down; it feels weird talking so slowly.

Mr. Speaker, ultimately I want to further finish my Member's statement by highlighting the words quickly by saying it's important more than ever because we know residents are feeling the pressures to pay their rents and, as such, I will be asking questions to the Minister of housing on how we can help seniors afford to live there later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 166-20(1):
EULOGY FOR ROY JOSEPH MOUSE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Colleagues, on April 1st, 1946, the Creator gifted Alexi and Anna Mouse with a son Roy Joseph Mouse, whose Dene name was Eh'tsoa.

Roy was born on the land and from that moment onwards, this is where you could find him. Roy carried the sacred knowledge passed down from the people of the region. He knew all the traditional traplines, hunting grounds, and gathering spots of various animals and, most importantly, the gift of giving. Roy was the quiet member of his family but when he spoke or had ideas, the family would listen to him.

I can tell you the family and friends would talk about how he supported and provided for his family and those around him by using the amazing gifts given to him by the Creator. People always said that he was very much about nurturing. He did this with his genuine humbleness, kindness, and always had a smile and would always offer his hand to shake when you met him.

Roy would always provide a safe place for those in need, provide moose meat for elders, make use of providing offerings to the land and, as his sister said, he would give his last piece of bannock to others in need. He was always so trusting of people.

Roy attended the Fort Providence residential school. His friends and family spoke about how his strength and survival skills helped him navigate during this moment in time. Those strengths helped him move forward but also gave him the momentum to pursue sports like hockey and helped him to be able to fight fires to help the region and territories. Everyone that spoke of Roy, said he was a hard worker, and you could see his work along the highways, the survival cabins, and trails that his brother and friends opened.

I can tell you, him and his brother Jonas were always the first people to walk across the Liard and go into town after freeze-up. Once we saw the brothers in town, we knew the ice roads would be completed and operational soon. The same could be said about the ferry. He and his brother would always be the first ones to walk on the ferry and hitch a ride into town. I can say I have had the honour of giving him several rides into town throughout the years and greatly appreciate his humour and wit.

Colleagues, I can tell you Roy will be sadly missed by his friends and family. However, in saying this, they are happy that he will be joining his family, especially his brother Jonas,

that have already joined the spirit world. God Bless.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Mr. Premier.

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Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 62-20(1): CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on February 20th, 2024, regarding Consultation with Members of the Legislative Assembly on Policies and Strategies.

The Member asked about the government's internal employee survey requesting input to suggest where the government can save money. When we released the fiscal sustainability strategy on February 12th, 2024, we noted that all Government of the Northwest Territories' employees would be given the opportunity to provide input. That same day, we opened an online survey so employees could provide anonymous feedback and suggestions to help us meet our fiscal sustainability targets.

Employee insight and experience are an invaluable part of the process as this government seeks to address the territory's economic challenges and ensure that every government dollar spent on programs and services supports the needs of residents and communities across the territory.

That survey closed on March 1st, 2024, and we received 928 anonymous submissions from employees, with more than 1,800 ideas and suggestions. The feedback from GNWT employees on fiscal sustainability has been amazing, and I am truly grateful for all the responses and ideas shared. I believe that this response reflects the level of commitment of GNWT employees to making the public service more effective for NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

I would like to recognize my constituent assistant Deb Richards. Welcome to the Assembly. And now your son can see that you actually come here and do some work, not just

leave him behind at home. So welcome. Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize several of the pages who are helping us out this week from Yellowknife North. We have Alexandra DaCoste from Alain St. Cyr; Nuka Gaudette from Alain St. Cyr, and also Sophie Hawkins at Range Lake North School, who are all Yellowknife North constituents.

And while I'm at it, I also wanted to thank the Aurora Fiddle Society for opening our session in such a wonderful way, and its director Andrea Bettger who is also a Yellowknife North constituent. Thank you.

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

For all those people that are here that haven't been recognized, thank you very much. We greatly appreciate you being here, and welcome to your House. So thank you very much.

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

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 154-20(1): STATUS OF AURORA COLLEGE TRANSFORMATION TO POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke to milestones being missed at the college and the president asserted that they are not adequately resourced to achieve transition. Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister's response to these revelations? Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I guess what I can say is just some facts around some funding that has been received by the college. So through CIRNAC, the college did receive \$8 million. In addition to that -- so, first of all, those monies were for planning through community and Indigenous government engagement and grants transformation, the centre for research excellence pilot, and also the Western Arctic Research Centre infrastructure. Those being the largest initiatives. So through that, the

capital investment of the warehouse was \$2.53 million, facilities master plan, \$1.36 million, research services team \$2.62 million.

In addition to that, the GNWT has also invested \$1.04 million in transformation to Aurora College on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker.

And I can also say that Aurora College has also used a portion of their base funding, because they did have two programs that were put on hold through this process, being a social worker program and the bachelor of education program, and they were able to use those dollars as well to invest in transformation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we are coming towards the end of the existing mandate for which a number of milestones have been missed. I'm curious what the Minister's plans are for a renewed mandate and, in particular, how we're going to ensure milestones are being hit in that mandate. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And my apologies to interpreters, not a great start out of the gates. I was speeding right through that last one. So I will slow down.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Member. So to start off, we've already missed some milestones as the Member referred to in their Member's statement. So I do have intentions of reissuing and working with the existing board of governors on the strategic mandate document with them. I will be issuing a letter shortly here that -- because the existing one expires in July, so shortly I'll be issuing a letter calling on the board of governors to, you know, let's work together and get the next one done. I have an intent to be very -- I don't want to use the word demanding, but I think this is a really exciting project and so why would we not want to throw our weight behind it and get it done. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I would like some further detail on what the GNWT is doing to support the college in showing their commitment to seeing this project through to success.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my role as Minister of ECE within the college is oversight over the post-secondary system for the whole entire NWT. The Aurora College board of governors is responsible for the oversight of the operational matters of the college. So even that being said, ECE does still provide funding dollars for this work to get done. We -- I do have meetings with the chair of the board of governors so that they can identify to me what their priorities are as a board and so that we can

work together in order to provide them with support that they do need that is appropriate for ECE to be able to provide.

In the last Assembly, there was legislation passed that made Aurora College arm's length and so we're now in a transition period of really respecting those new roles. So this really is the role of the board of governors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that answer. You know, the board of governors has kind of stated that they need support, financial support is needed. It's clear that they're not able to achieve milestones on their own. So I'm looking for a commitment from the Minister to show the GNWT's commitment to this project and seeing it through and would like to hear further from the Minister on that.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can make a commitment to the Member to follow up with the chair of the board of governors for sure. When I previously met with the chair of the board of governors and asked what their priority was, they identified their priority as housing. Not for assistance with transformation. And so I can go back to the board of governors and ask if -- where they're at, and I can reflect on the appearance before committee because I think that there was some information that was inconsistent with information that I have as well so I think it's important that we align our information and ensure that everyone's supported to move forward. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 155-20(1): LIQUOR TAX REGIME

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, the brewing industry in Canada accounts for 60 percent of the industrial brewing workforce. It's a really important local driver. Every province that supported their industry is seeing phenomenal growth and return on investments in these projects. Yet, in the Northwest Territories, we tax beer brewed 67 cents per litre versus Alberta, which only taxes 10 cents a litre. And this is the closest jurisdiction for comparison. It's attracting our brewing companies' interest because it's so much cheaper to do business. If they had done

business there in the exact same time period, it would have been \$162,000 paid in NWT tax versus \$9300.

So I'm going to ask the Minister, will she give them a break, this very small industry that accounts for 1 percent of our total share of sales, will she give them a break and lower the tax to 10 cents? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. I am assuming that it's the Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know, because I did have the opportunity to sit down with the NWT Brewing Company.

Mr. Speaker, the brewery markup is what is at issue here. So right now, the Northwest Territories Liquor and Cannabis Commission has a general rate. For everything that crosses the border up into the North, there is a markup rate on all alcohol products here. And that markup rate does take into account the fact that we have fairly significant social issues that stem from overconsumption of alcohol and alcohol-related dependencies. So that is still part of what makes up that market rate and what makes up the fact that our overall markup rate is high. We know it's high, and we've been asked in terms of when we go out to do reviews of the act and our pricing to keep it high to consider the social realities here in the Northwest Territories.

When there was a brewery discount initially put into place some years ago now, it was done knowing that we have exactly one brewery here in the Northwest Territories that would be able to make use of it. Having had the opportunity to meet with them, we initially had a production cap put on what that markup would be. Alberta's system is entirely different. I gather they have 10s, 20 -- I think maybe up to 70 different categories. So their system's quite different. But in meeting with them, we've said, look, let's go back, let's look at this, is it still working for you? Is it still something that will allow you to be a thriving business here in the Northwest Territories? And, Mr. Speaker, I remain committed to doing exactly that. Thank you

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not working for this -- for the NWT Brewing Company. And it's not working for anyone else who'd want to jump into this industry. The brewing company has said it's too onerous, we'd never do it again. So it's time to make it easier. Alberta has different categories, different tiers. Would the Minister add more tiers to our production -- to the production

markup so we could situate the NWT Brewing Company in a lower tier and still provide higher taxes to companies, bigger companies, that are producing more alcohol? Again, give them a break. We're not talking about reducing overall tax for all liquor. Let's tax Budweiser appropriately. Let's tax NWT Brewing a lot less. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so, again, the general markup rate does apply to everything that's coming across this border, including, you know, the bigger companies or whatnot. I would first note, Mr. Speaker -- there's a lot of folks that listen to us here -- there are rules with respect to interjurisdictional trade, and that does apply to the cross-border sales of alcohol across all of Canada. So certainly anything we do when we make changes in this space do need to be compliant with the trade rules, trade regulations. But to the extent that we are able to create a system that is more amenable to growing and positive business industry for a small business here in the Northwest Territories, again, Mr. Speaker, the beauty of being a small jurisdiction, you can sit down with your one company in this one space, bring in senior folks from a department and say, hey, look, what can we do to try to make our system one that is supportive and positive for that small business, keeping in mind, again, as I've said, that we have trade laws to work with. We have an alcohol strategy here that, at one point, was asking us to, in fact, raise the increases, raise the rates on alcohol. So trying to put all those things together, again, I certainly made a commitment in a previous meeting. Happy to make that commitment again. We want to see a small business succeed. Everyone in this room, I think, wants to see small business succeed, just need to make sure we're doing so in a way that takes those other things into consideration. If it means changing the production cap, changing the markup rate, that's something that needs to be looked at carefully and considered what else is happening in other jurisdictions and that is successful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister is aware of this and wants to help. But she can help by changing these rates. Another way she can help is by allowing manufacturers, liquor manufacturers of beer, brewing manufacturers, to be able to handle alcohol products that are brewed outside of jurisdictions that are in their stock. Right now that all has to go through the commission. Is she willing to make changes to the regulations that will allow companies like the NWT Brewing Company to -- license to handle alcohol to reduce the red tape and allow

them more control over their inventories and stop paying high rates to store those inventories in other jurisdictions? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is quite correct. The current Liquor Act, which is still the old Liquor Act that we're operating under, has some pretty limited mechanisms and actually is quite out of date. So in the last Assembly, we were very pleased to see a change to the liquor legislation, modernizing it. Still need to get those regulations put in place. So this is, in some ways, the right time to be asking what those regulations might contain because we are at the point of being able to put those regulations together in a way that can, again, respect the different social issues of balance but also looking at how we can best support an industry here in the Northwest Territories. And that may well include an opportunity for someone who produces a product -- is a Northwest Territories company but produces a product down south to be able to hold, move, warehouse their product. They currently can't. It's the right time to bring it forward, so I'm happy to certainly take that back to the department and look at whether that fits into the regime that we have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I've met with my honourable friend, the Minister of Finance. I've met with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, spoke with the Minister of health. How many more meetings do I have to have until we can get some clarity on where we're going with this? Just wondering if the Minister can advise. Is it one? Two? Three? When are we going to get some commitment to act on these problems instead of just appreciate that they're problems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, that clarifies for me the comment, I think, made earlier about being extensive meetings. Because I've had one meeting. But I know when we were meeting with the Minister of health, because there's an alcohol-managed alcohol program here in the Northwest Territories and some interest in whether or not a local brewery could participate to support that, that's a very different question, Mr. Speaker, from asking whether or not the production cap needs to change, the markup needs to change, regulations around holding or transporting need to change. That does sit solely within the Department of Finance. And, again, Mr. Speaker, I was, it wasn't that long ago, Minister of ITI as well so I'm conscious of

the need to increase small business. I'm conscious of the need to be -- have a positive and enabling environment for small business. That's something that I believe all my colleagues would share. I made the commitment in that meeting. I'm happy to make it again. We are going to look at these issues. But we want to do that in a way that, again, balances all of this. There are different ways to find good solutions to support this business within the context of the Northwest Territories, in a way that supports our business environment and also supports our social environment and adheres to our trade regulations. I believe we can make change; I just don't know what it's going to be at this moment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

ORAL QUESTION 156-20(1):
CARBON TAX

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, right now the residents of Inuvik are paying up to \$4.83 of additional costs on their gas bill due to the carbon tax.

My question for the Minister of Finance is what has this government done with regards to lobbying, imploring, begging -- I don't know, talking some sense into our federal counterparts -- to finally get an exemption on natural gas in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Well, Mr. Speaker -- Mr. Speaker, I'm often in a situation where I have to just say I agree and then want to sit down. So I've heard the Member's statement earlier. The carbon tax is a challenging one for the Northwest Territories. We're at the front lines of climate change. We desperately need to see change in terms of the approach to overreliance on fossil fuels. At the same time, this is a jurisdiction that doesn't actually contribute, certainly on the part of residents, very significantly to it. So I hear that concern. And I hear it particularly from parts of this territory who are on LNG, or propane, which are cleaner burning fuels.

I know I have raised this issue directly at -- not -- in fact, at the finance Minister's table. I had others from other jurisdictions also echo that call at the finance Minister's table. We've actually written letters to the extent of saying, look, is this the right way forward to best

achieve the goals of reducing fossil fuel emissions. I know that other -- certainly the floor of this House, folks do listen because sometimes the calls then come in as to what we may have said on the floor. So we've had multiple conversations, last government and this government, and I have no doubt that the federal government hears us.

Why they are doing what they're doing in the way that they are doing it, Mr. Speaker, I think earlier the Member said it was that the federal government attempted to offer some relief. Mr. Speaker, they are still political entities, and I think they have done something political. It just didn't suit our needs or our desires, but I don't know, I can't say why. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. The Minister speaks about the letters that have been sent and the conversations that have been had and meetings that have been had with her federal counterparts.

Can the Minister speak to any responses, if any, that they've received from the federal government on this request. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Well, Mr. Speaker -- Mr. Speaker, there's no exemption for anything other than home heating fuel right now after the fall round or spring -- fall round with the federal government. So I guess their response is that they've chosen not to do that. The ask also went from British Columbia. So we might even say, again, if it's a political matter, we have relatively small presence in terms of our representation in Ottawa. British Columbia has a very large presence in terms of their representation in Ottawa. They, too, did not get an exemption for LNG, which a number of their residents also rely on. So we're not alone, Mr. Speaker. Doesn't mean any of us are any less frustrated. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a territorial government, we do implement, I guess -- I'm not sure how much we control the cost of living offset, or the COLO, for the carbon tax.

Is the Minister willing to consider an offset increase in the COLO for those who burn natural gas to offset the additional increase in this \$4.83 that they're burning -- spending for natural gas? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, by maintaining our own system that complies with the federal rules, we do control how the COLO does get set. And what we have done in that regard, Mr. Speaker, although we adjusted it because there's a significant drop in revenue to the

GNWT with respect to not having home heating fuel anymore, we did still maintain and do an analysis to ensure that the existing COLO amounts should still be enough to pay for the additional amount from the tax, so -- which is challenging at a time when diesel costs have gone up and fuel costs have gone up and transportation costs have gone up. The cost of fuel overall has gone up significantly. COLO only is meant to respond to the impacts of carbon tax. And on average, average household in the Northwest Territories for its impacts with carbon tax, is still seeing that come back from the COLO. We can always -- you know, there's certainly the opportunity to always run those numbers again, look back at it again, but that adjustment was made and that consideration was done when the COLO amounts were varied the last session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when those adjustments for the COLO were made, I believe they were made in the last Assembly, and they were made prior to the 23 percent increase. I don't know if the Minister can speak to if they had been taken in consideration that diesel would be exempted and natural gas wouldn't be and whether or not that's something they're willing to look at going forward as maybe, as she said, take a look at those numbers again. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the COLO amounts were reduced, they were reduced by -- and the number did take into consideration the amount of carbon tax that was still being paid for propane and for heating fuel. It's not a perfect measure. I don't have data on exactly how many households use what type of fuel or what combination of types of fuel, because there are certainly some that are using a combination of fuel, so that does make it more challenging. I can't reach into each individual home and say this is the amount of carbon tax you pay.

We also, in the COLO, tried to take into consideration the indirect carbon tax that households are paying. So not only their home heating fuel, but what are the costs that have increased to businesses and to then spread that out so that those -- so those residents are also seeing an offset for that amount. And so what I'm here saying that that average resident will still see their impact on carbon tax considered in COLO. I can, again, certainly commit to providing the charting that I have. I'll start by giving that to committee, to my

colleagues on the other side of the House, so that we could all look again at exactly how the number was calculated, why we're seeing that that average continues to be met. That's -- I mean, that's really one of the benefits, I think, of this system is that it gives us all an opportunity to look at those numbers together. So I'll certainly commit to getting those charts over to them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance.

Colleagues, we've spent 20 minutes on three set of questions. So maybe speed up our answers a little bit so we can get all our colleagues to get the chance to ask questions.

Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

ORAL QUESTION 157-20(1):
AFFORDABILITY OF SENIORS HOUSING

MR. HAWKINS: I'm so excited, Mr. Speaker, and I'll do my part here.

The scorching issue I raised today is the crisis of affordability for seniors who live on fixed rent is quickly evaporating, and the NWT housing has reduced their contribution. Previous years, we've been reduced by a hundred percent -- and I'm trying to compress all of this in maybe one question, Mr. Speaker.

And whereby it was a direct drop in 14 percent of the support, will the Minister, just as the Premier has stated, recognize the pressures of those who are paying rent and the increases and problems it's causing, will she reinstate the previous level of contributions to help keep Avens rent affordable for those people on fixed income? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for Housing -- Housing NWT, that's what I'm looking for.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Unfortunately, we can't offer that at this time. The agreement was with CMHC. That agreement has sun-setted. So Housing NWT was administering that agreement on behalf of CMHC, and that agreement has expired. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I anticipated the Minister to hide behind CMHC funding as the excuse. Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister willing to do to help keep our seniors independently living with dignity? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What Housing NWT is willing to do at this time is meet with the tenants, those clients that need assistance, and provide them with support in applying for the Canada-NWT Housing Benefit. They can go through the forms with the tenants and provide that assistance at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm well aware of the Canada-NWT Housing Benefit and, as a matter of fact, it would be cheaper if the government reinstated the hundred thousand dollars and applied for it directly. But that said, would the Minister be willing to send a team down to Avens and work with the seniors collectively and process and file applications, as individuals but in a group setting, so we get it done efficiently and we take this fearsome burden that has caused enormous anxiety to this community. And we need it now. Will the Minister step up and send a team down there? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, we're willing to send a team down to assist those seniors that need assistance.

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

ORAL QUESTION 158-20(1):
COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS
GOVERNMENTS ON MACKENZIE DELTA
HOME RENOVATIONS

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know from all my previous Member's statements, I've always advocated for community-based programs that will benefit the community. This is no different. I want the best outcome for communities of the Mackenzie Delta.

I would like to know if the Minister or her department has had any discussions with the Indigenous governments, with either Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, in reference to collaborating to renovate vacant units within their respective communities? Thank you.

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

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Housing NWT has not had direct discussions with community governments at this time in Fort McPherson, Aklavik, or Tsiigehtchic. We have had regional discussions

with Indigenous governments but no specific discussions at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NERYSOO: I always, you know, want the best for the communities and dealing directly with communities rather than regional is my preference. Does the Minister or her department know how much vacant units are in each of the communities that can be renovated and occupied as soon as possible in the Mackenzie Delta? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And with the reference to working directly with community governments, we can do that. We can talk, and we can have discussions.

In terms of vacant units and those that could be renovated and have a move-in phase, I mean, we can look at that and provide those numbers to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister. Will the Minister look at working with the Indigenous governments and provide some financial resources to renovate some of these vacant units so some of these residents can have homes with their families?

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Mr. Speaker, at this time I think that we'd be willing to work with anyone interested in advancing housing in the Northwest Territories. So if a local Indigenous government is willing to talk to us, meet with us, they have ideas, of course we'd be willing to work together. We do have some SEED money that we can partner with to look at potential federal funds, so we're willing to do that. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's great news. Can the Minister look at working with other departments, such as Education, Culture and Employment, to create projects where we can train some of our residents to gain work experience and at the same time provide them much needed housing within our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of education could take this question as well. She's a big part of it, and she's the one advancing the work with the other departments.

But, yes, this is something that we talk about often, how we can work together as

departments, looking at bringing in advancing capacity, looking at more apprenticeships throughout the North, and just the entire labour workforce, how we can help boost that -- the workforce throughout the North. So, yes, we're willing to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

ORAL QUESTION 159-20(1):
ADULT LITERACY IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

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

My first question is does the Minister have any idea what currently is the rate of functional literacy amongst adults in the NWT?

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for raising this. And, unfortunately, ECE does not have this type of data. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So does the government have any plans to conduct a new survey amongst adults to find out what literacy levels actually are? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2012 was the first program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies Literacy Survey. And the second such survey, in order to provide kind of the second baseline of what that would look like, was launched in 2022. Unfortunately, at that time it was identified that it would cost around \$5 million for the territories across Canada to participate in that survey. So the three territories did not participate in the survey. And currently CMEC, along with Statistics Canada and the organization for economic cooperation and development and the three territories, are looking at other options to obtain this data, including the use of potentially an online version of this testing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in terms of children in our school system, does ECE monitor literacy levels amongst any or all of the grade levels to track trends over time to see if it's getting better or worse? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through our Alberta curriculum, when we were working with Alberta on all of our curriculum across the territory, ECE monitored literacy levels through the annual administration of the Alberta achievement tests. Those tests were done in, I believe, grade 6 and grade 9, so that we would have kind of a baseline and then you would follow students and be able to test them again and see where they were at. And those began in 2007.

With our transition to BC, we will eventually have the BC foundational skills assessments across grades 4 and 7 and graduation assessments across grade 10 and 12, which will assess student achievement and literacy and numeracy as well.

So one of the things that I think is important here is our Alberta achievement testing data trends showed little change over time and that contributed to our decision as well to switch to the BC curriculum. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So beyond switching to the BC curriculum, does the department have a plan to improve literacy amongst our NWT students? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently all of our regional district education councils and district education authorities each have their own literacy programs that they employ within their schools. In addition to that, our NWT adapted curriculum, through our English language arts curriculum, is also conducive to pedagogy for learning to read for our NWT students as well. ECE does plan to transition the adapted NWT version to BC's school curriculum and the implementation of BC's large-scale assessment tools as well. And these will be an integral part of improving student learning for the Northwest Territories. And so it allows us to really encourage deeper learning among students, and a lot of the success of that is based on project-based learning, which we know that students thrive in. And so I'm really excited to see the full kind of conversion to BC curriculum for all NWT students. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

ORAL QUESTION 160-20(1):
NOTICES OF ASSESSMENT COLLECTION
FOR INCOME ASSISTANCE CLIENTS

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, changes to income assistance are on the way, but changes could happen now to improve the lives of NWT residents.

Will the Minister provide a ministerial directive that ensures ECE staff reduce the burden on clients by taking all measures to obtain the financial information that they have access to on behalf of clients? Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member. I was taking notes and listening to the Member's statement and appreciate her sharing the lived experiences of members of her communities. Currently, the notice of assessment, if a client is unable to provide their notice of assessment to their client navigator, the client navigator is able to get the information directly from the Canada Revenue Agency. But, unfortunately, this is not available until after June. And so leading up to June, clients are required to provide proof of filing their taxes by April 30th and then able to also to work with their client navigators to access this information. Income assistance is a very heavily regulated and legislated program, and so it's not something where I'm able to provide a directive and break the law in order to do that. But I will work with the Member in order to find solutions with client navigators to be able work with constituents and residents to be able to do our best to access this information. Thank you.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay, well, I am surprised because I know that the income assistance program has access to clients' CRA notice of assessment. It's been in place for over ten years and they haven't been using it to lessen the burdens on clients to get all the necessary information. So will staff in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment have the authority to locate a person's notice of assessment with CRA? Will the Minister ensure staff take the necessary steps to obtain this from the CRA on clients' behalf?

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, the client navigators will work in order to access that information through the CRA. Unfortunately, that information's not available until after June in that existing year and so there might be some

information that the client navigators want to source for the existing month that they're in, so they might need to work with the resident in order to get that existing information. But absolutely, they can work with the resident in order to access that information through Canada Revenue Agency as well. Thank you.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Will the Minister ensure that families with disabilities are priority in the review of applications? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this summer is going to be the time where residents are going to see the launch of the new program for persons who are seniors and persons with disabilities for income assistance. So there has been a long wait for that new program to be activated, and currently staff are training on that new program.

One of the things that I think is really exciting about this as well is to acknowledge administrative burdens and to reduce administrative burdens, staff at ECE have already been using the new forms with their existing clientele, and they've been doing that for about a six-month period so that they can reduce the administrative program once that new income assistance program comes online with the new software as well.

And the other thing that I think is really important is persons with disabilities have doctors' notes on their files, and ECE has also been migrating those notes over to the new system as well in order to do their best to reduce the administrative burden for residents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been waiting for that program since last spring. It's almost a year now.

But, Mr. Speaker, people with disability living with challenges in their lives are forgotten people of our society, especially by this government. Therefore, will the Minister guarantee that people living with disability in the NWT are guaranteed income support? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Not everybody living with a disability in the territory would need income support. But those who apply and those who meet the criteria, absolutely would receive income support. And so I encourage anybody

who is in a situation where they need some additional supports, to contact their client navigator or work with their MLA as well in order to receive that contact information. Because, absolutely, we want to make sure that we're supporting residents to the best of our ability. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 161-20(1):
FUEL RESUPPLY FOR NORTHERN
COMMUNITIES

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My contribution to the time is I only have two questions.

As you know the Sahtu, like many other communities that are serviced by the MTS company, depend solely on the barging of goods and services and is a lifeline to sustaining these communities, including this government to the institution in these communities.

We are in a similar situation as last year with the recent cancellation notice given today on the barge and acknowledging that narrows down servicing the Sahtu communities along the waterway for seven out of 52 weeks for the whole year.

We have learned something with last year's cancellation. My question to the Minister of Infrastructure is what measures are taken for the fuel resupply and the inventory control considering the government cutoff at the end of March, and if we have enough fuel to last us until next winter road season? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is certainly not a good day for water levels in the Northwest Territories and certainly not a happy day that we've had to cancel the barge season. Having seen last summer and the challenges that there were from having low water, to have to begin this season at the same point certainly makes it very challenging.

Having gone through last summer season being as challenging as it was, MTS made itself -- put itself in a position where this winter road season and, frankly having sat down with leadership, including the MLA from the region -- sat down and made sure that the plan for the winter roads, usage of the winter roads, would work around ensuring a full resupply to communities. So I can say not every community

is resupplied by MTS or, rather, really, it's by the fuel services division who take responsibility. But for those communities that are, and so for instance this would include Fort Good Hope, Tulita, they are -- they were -- that was built into our planning for them. Fort Good Hope is coming now over the top along with several other communities. Again, having planned for this challenging year, bringing the resupply up from over the top and rather than up the Mackenzie from the South. We have others that relied on the winter road. So Deline, Colville Lake, they also were resupplied additionally this summer so that they can get to the winter resupply 2025 if they have to. That wasn't our first choice, but we already knew that it would be a challenging year.

So at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, with respect to fuel resupply, I'm happy to have the chance to assure communities.

And I'll just note Lutselk'e included, they are fine. That barge is going at this point. So at this moment in time, the communities for which the government is responsible do have enough to get through to the winter season will be getting a resupply this year. Thank you.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that reply and information here. We all learned something, and I thank the Minister for some heartfelt discussions we had prior to the winter road season closing back in our last sitting of February. Since then, we have delivered additional fuel with the assumption that there might not be any barge, so it was very comforting to know, looking back now, those plans were discussed, actions were taken, and the additional shipments of fuel went to some of these communities.

And my question to the Minister is, is there going to be inventory checks to see where we stand in terms of volume in the communities and the consumption of these communities? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can say that when we went through challenging times right around Christmas time and New Year's time, and we certainly were involved in terms of how to come at that moment when it was already of concern to do inventory of what was in each community. So I expect that we don't want to be in that position again. We'll be making sure that this time around, having come to the point where we know what our resupply was over the winter road season, that we can then monitor that over the course of time. Norman Wells, of course, does rely on Imperial Oil as being their provider, so. But, again, we all went through the

challenges of this winter together, including Imperial Oil. So when we reach out to them and say, you know, we need to know your plans and your situation, I am, you know, hopeful that they have taken that to heart and that they will be doing the same in terms of understanding what their inventory's at and what their resupply plans are. But, again, as far as the communities that the fuel services division is responsible for, which are all of the nonmarket communities, we are going to -- we already had looked. We already have made sure that they were at a point that they will either be resupplied for up to the point of 2025 levels, and we'll be making sure to monitor that we not be surprised by anything between now and then and that we get through to that winter 2025 season or, again, for the communities that are getting from over the top, that they get that in due course and as expected and as scheduled. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

ORAL QUESTION 162-20(1):
NURSE TO PATIENT RATIOS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And hopefully I can get to two sets of questions; we'll see how it goes, that would be great. My questions right now are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Will the Minister look into legislating nurse-to-patient ratios following the BC model? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minimum nurse-to-patient ratio are best addressed through the standards of practice that are more easily changed rather than through legislation, which is a similar approach being taken with BC but they are using a policy directive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, I'll modify my question. Will the Minister look at a policy change that would increase nurse-to-patient ratios following the BC model? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is working to improve nurse-to-patient ratios right now in long-term care. However, due to nursing shortages it's important that we use realistic numbers because our staffing levels change so much in the Northwest Territories. And I just

want to make sure that it's clear that nurse-to-patient ratios are already in place. This is why when we don't have enough staff, we can't perform essential tasks and sometimes we need to reduce services or temporarily close units because of a matter of patient safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister look at increasing staffing and beds at Stanton? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NTHSSA has informed me and the Department of the increase in volume and acuity of patients in Stanton. The thought was that, you know, the -- after COVID, we would go back to pre-COVID in-patient, but what we're seeing are sicker patients and the acuity of these patients. And I understand since 2023, the number of patients has been steadily increasing. That's put pressure on the in-patient and emergency departments. It's led to longer wait times for patients, and it's significantly increasing the work staff load.

I also committed in this House in February that I would not decrease staffing in critical areas affected by the end of COVID funding where we will review the need for resources to ensure patient care and manageable workloads. And this work is underway and will be reviewed to determine how we can ensure services are available.

So I do hear the Member and I do hear the concerns from the staff that, you know, they are working, the staff load -- I mean, the workloads are -- the patients are sitting in emerg, they're not moving to units, they're sitting in Hay River, in Inuvik, and they're not moving. So we've got some work to do in this area. So I just want the people and the Members to know that this is being looked at. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister implement an urgent care walk-in service for four hours per day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work is underway to make changes to the way we deliver primary care in Yellowknife with the goal of improving access. We've heard this from Members in the last sitting. While I will not commit to a specific walk-in clinic, I can assure the Members that we are working to improve access to the primary care in Yellowknife as well as other region as a priority as we know that we are opening up the

new clinic in the Liwego'ati Building, which the downtown primary care clinic, and all of these accounts, like, when I talk about staffing workloads in the hospital, we also have to -- I want to, like, try to educate the public as well as they don't always have to go into the hospital. There is 8-1-1. That is a service that is -- so people can know if they need to go in. There's a nurse 24 hours a day that they can call 8-1-1. But they're also welcome to go in. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from the Deh Cho.

ORAL QUESTION 163-20(1):
SUPPORTS AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS
OF ENTERPRISE

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are, can the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs detail what programs and services, whether federal or territorial, that were provided to the residents of Enterprise displaced by last year's wildfires? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Deh Cho. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the question from the Member from the Deh Cho. I don't have a full detailed list, but I can get her a full detailed list. But what we did do is we -- some of the programs and services that were available for the residents, so the federal DFAA was available, or the DAP program for us, the GNWT Evacuation Assistance Program, the Red Cross, and the United Way are just some of the programs that were available to evacuated residents. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for that. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has stated in the media that MACA has exhausted all options to support displaced residents who lost their homes and businesses.

Can the Minister confirm if all options have been, in fact, exhausted and also explain what those exhausted options are? Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT has engaged with many federal departments. We've also worked closely with the territorial departments to see what options we have, what avenues we have to work with the residents of Enterprise. We've worked with the Privy Council Office, Public Safety Canada, CIRNAC, and Indigenous

Services Canada. Those departments have reached out to all their federal counterparts to see what other options are available for residents. And we've also worked with -- they've also worked with departments such as CMHC for the residents that are affected in Enterprise and Behchoko. Thank you.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Any other avenues that have not yet been exhausted within the federal government that may be available to provide support to the displaced residents of Enterprise? Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated previously here, we did work closely with the federal government. As far as I'm aware, we've basically gone down every avenue that we could. You know, I'm willing to ask the department if there's any other directions we can go in but at the time, as far as I know, we've basically resourced out every federal department that we could to find any assistance for our residents. So I'll work with the Member to see if there's any other options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

ORAL QUESTION 164-20(1):
SUPPORTS AVAILABLE FOR HAMLET OF
FORT RESOLUTION

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to CBC Radio this morning, and Minister McKay was on the radio talking about the fire season from 2023. And he also spoke about the uninsured homes in that community and they're not able to help them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm deeply concerned that the hamlet of Fort Resolution has no fire plan for the 2024 fire season, and we may find ourselves in the same situation going into the 2024 fire season.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of MACA Jay MacDonald. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what are the issues in the last year to put in place a 2024 fire plan. Will the Minister commit to put in place a 2024 emergency fire plan as soon as possible for the community of Fort Resolution? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume this is for me as it related to community emergency plans.

So when it comes down to the emergency plans for wildfire, the communities don't normally in their emergency plans, like the territorial emergency plan, doesn't get specific into an emergency or a specific event. It goes through what to do in that type of emergency. So when it comes to wildfire, that is ECC. So that would be an issue with -- or a topic with ECC.

The community emergency plan that was being worked on here, most recently they had a meeting back in April. There was engagement with the Deninu School, the RCMP, the nursing station. There was one more that was there. But they did have a meeting where they went through the community emergency plan, and that is still being finalized and we're hoping that the community emergency plan will be released here within the next -- by the end of the month, so within the next week or two. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for getting the wrong Minister.

Anyway, the hamlet of Fort Resolution has one fire truck that needs complete servicing, including all equipment on the fire truck. The water truck also needs complete servicing and not to mention getting a backup water truck.

Will the Minister commit to discuss these issues with the hamlet of Fort Resolution as he's also responsible? Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did ask for an update from the department in regards to the fire truck in Fort Resolution due to being asked about it previously. And the last update I got was that the fire truck located in the community was in working order and is capable of being operated. However, there may have been some confusion with the operators at the time when operating it in an emergency. So the fire truck is there. It's available. It's going to be looked at. In fact, MACA's in the community right now, going to have a look at it hopefully today, and hopefully we should have some news by the end of the week -- or tomorrow, or the end of next week, the status of that truck.

As for the water truck that's in the community, there is one operable water truck in the community working right now delivering residential water. And there is a backup water truck, which most communities don't have, which I was very surprised with. But there is a backup water truck that the community has. It is currently out of order but, as far as I heard yesterday, that the parts had arrived at the dealership in Hay River and is being repaired, and hopefully should be back in the community any time now. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Will the Minister commit to holding a public meeting with the SAO and the GNWT emergency management officials, local leaders, and community, going into the 2024 fire season and to give comfort to the residents of Fort Resolution? Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as I was saying earlier, the community emergency plan is just being finalized. They have worked with the community -- have done community engagements. They worked with the agencies in the community to upgrade it and update it. So as soon as that is completed, there is a plan to have a community public meeting. And, again, that would probably be within the next couple weeks or so because they're calling for that community emergency plan to be done here in short order. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Mr. Speaker, I just got back from Fort Resolution; I had a meeting with my constituents. And at that meeting, I just wanted to know that if the hamlet of Fort Resolution is getting a new SAO? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were notified a while ago, a month or so ago, that the current administrator is completing his term. And we have looked for a replacement SAO for MACA, because they are the public administrator, and the individual is agreeing to work there so far and I am hoping we could -- if they haven't been notified, the community should be notified here soon of who's going to be in there working for MACA as the public administrator/SAO. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Colleagues, our time is up. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7 on the orders of the day. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Range Lake has asked for unanimous consent to come up with orders of the day number 7. Any nays? We have a nay.

Written questions. Mr. Clerk. Return to written, sorry. Sorry, let's try this again. Written

questions. Return to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 2-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SECTOR
POSITIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a Return to Written Question No. 2-20(1) asked by the Member from Range Lake on February 27th, 2024, regarding the public sector positions in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Member inquired about the total money value of all job positions added to the Government of the Northwest Territories public service since 2019-2020.

The Member also requested a regional breakdown of all job positions added to the Government of the Northwest Territories public service since 2019-2020; the vacancy rate of all job positions added to the Government of the Northwest Territories public service since 2019-2020 by fiscal year; the total money value of all vacant job positions added to the Government of the Northwest Territories public service since 2019-2020 and the approximate length of time job positions added to the Government of the Northwest Territories public service since 2019-2020 have been vacant by fiscal year.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table this information.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 3-20(1):
EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS POLICY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Mr. Speaker, I also have a Return to Written Question No. 3-20(1) asked by the Member from Range Lake on February 28th, 2024, regarding Extended Health Benefits.

The Member inquired about the changes to the Extended Health Benefit Policy, and I am pleased to provide the following information in response to his questions.

The Member asked for an explanation of the income assessment process to determine eligibility for all benefits, including exact income amounts in dollar values.

To access the new Extended Health Benefits Policy, residents must submit an application that includes their Canada Revenue Agency, or

CRA, income statement. This statement will be used to assess and adjust their net income on Line 236000 based on factors such as the region of residence, cost of living, and family size, that includes total number of dependents.

The adjusted income will then determine the benefits for which the individual or family are eligible, as well as any cost sharing arrangement that may be applied.

When applying as a family, both the applicant and their spouse's CRA Income Statements will be used to determine the net income of the family unit. Seniors' eligibility and benefits remain unchanged.

For each application submitted, the Department of Health and Social Services reviews the applicant's CRA Income Statement, determines the region of residence, and adjusts the net income by family size, placing the individual or family in one of 30 income bands in the approved Income Thresholds and Cost Sharing Arrangement.

Each dependent reduces the net income of the family to account for additional family expenses. Then the individual, or family as applicable, will be assigned an income band which will set their cost share requirements for the benefit year.

If a resident's adjusted family income is under the low-income threshold band, they and their family members will be eligible for vision, dental, prescription drugs, and medical supplies and equipment benefits under the Extended Health Benefits Program, at no cost. Medical travel to access eligible dental and medical supplies and equipment benefits is also covered.

If a resident's adjusted family income is above the low-income threshold band, they and their family members will be eligible for prescription drugs and medical supplies and equipment benefits. They may need to pay for a portion of their family's drug costs through a deductible and then co-insurance payments, up to their family maximum amounts. They will also need to pay co-insurance payments for medical supplies and equipment benefits up to a family maximum of \$500, \$1000, or \$1500, depending on income level.

Eligible Persons who have employer or similar plans offering health, vision, dental, or transportation benefits must continue to seek reimbursement from the employer or similar plans prior to accessing Extended Health Benefits.

The income threshold levels and cost sharing arrangement by income threshold band and region will be publicly posted in the near future.

The Member asked for an explanation of the cost-sharing model for residents above the low-income threshold, including defined reasonable family maximums and a list of all eligible benefits.

Eligible residents assessed above the established low-income threshold band will receive prescription drug and medical supplies and equipment benefits and will be required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of these benefits. Medical travel to access medical supplies and equipment benefits will be covered.

Regarding Drug Benefits, the Extended Health Benefits Policy uses the federal government's Non-Insured Health Drug Benefits List as the Northwest Territories pharmacare formulary, with some exceptions.

The cost share arrangement for drug benefits includes several elements; a deductible, which is the amount of out-of-pocket expenses paid for drugs before assistance kicks in; co-insurance payments, which require the resident to pay 30 percent of the drug costs while Extended Health Benefits pays 70 percent of the drug costs of each prescription; and drug family maximum, which means that once the total out-of-pocket expenses paid are equal to the Family Maximum, there will be no further costs to the resident for that benefit year.

The total out-of-pocket expenses paid by Extended Health Benefits eligible residents will not exceed 4 percent of the individual's or family's net income.

Regarding Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefits, the Extended Health Benefits Policy uses the federal governments Non-Insured Health Benefits' Medical Supplies and Equipment Guide and Benefit List and Maximum Price List as the approved NWT Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefit list and price list.

A wide range of Medical Supplies and Equipment benefits are available to eligible Northwest Territories residents including hearing aids, bathing and toileting aids, mobility aids, prosthetics ostomy supplies, compression garments, orthoses, incontinence aids, medical supplies, oxygen and respiratory equipment and supplies, and visual aids.

Benefits also include freight/shipping of eligible medical supplies and equipment.

The cost sharing arrangement for Medical Supplies and Equipment depend on income level and include co-insurance payments, which require the resident to pay 25 percent of the Medical Supplies and Equipment costs, while Extended Health Benefits pays 75 percent of the Medical Supplies and Equipment costs per item. The arrangement also includes a Medical Supplies and Equipment Family maximum, which is the total amount of co-insurance payments an individual or family must pay out of pocket for Medical Supplies and Equipment each benefit year. Medical Supplies and Equipment Family Maximums are set at \$500, \$1000, or \$1500 depending on income level.

This means that eligible Northwest Territories residents will need to pay a 25 percent co-insurance payment for each eligible Medical Supplies and Equipment cost up to their assigned family maximum.

The Member inquired about how many Northwest Territories residents will no longer receive extended health benefits after September 1, 2024, and requested a regional breakdown of how many Northwest Territories residents will no longer receive extended health benefits after April 1, 2024.

Effective September 1, 2024, the new Extended Health Benefits Policy reduces barriers to access of health-related benefits to Northwest Territories residents who are not covered under the federal government's Non-Insured Health Benefits program or the Metis Health Benefits Policy.

According to Non-Insured Health Benefits data, in 2023 there were 28,000 Non-Insured Health Benefits eligible clients in the Northwest Territories. Additionally, the Metis Health Benefits Policy currently has 1,700 registered clients. In total, approximately 29,700 Northwest Territories residents are covered by these two programs. The residual population is eligible for the new Extended Health Benefits program.

Residents currently accessing benefits under the Seniors and Specified Disease Programs are eligible to apply for benefits under the new Extended Health Benefits Policy provided they continue to hold an effective registration with the Northwest Territories health care Plan. Seniors over the age of 60 will continue to receive the same extended health benefits they currently receive.

The Member requested the total reduction in expenditures anticipated from the changes to Extended Health Benefits after September 1, 2024?

The new Extended Health Benefits Policy represents a change to better align with the key objectives of good public policy: Equity, fairness, and sustainability.

We expect the costs of the new policy, which provides benefits to those that did not previously have access, will be sufficiently covered by cost-sharing and effective drug cost management. These changes are about providing more access to benefits with the available funds. We will be monitoring the costs and the trends in benefit recipients as the updated program rolls out.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 4-20(1):
PRIVATE AGENCY NURSES

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question No. 4-20(1) asked by the Member for Range Lake on February 28th, 2024, regarding Private Agency Nurses.

The Member asked for a breakdown of the total costs for agency nurses by fiscal year since 2019-2020. The health and social services system did not start using agency nurses until 2021-2022. For 2021-2022, the total cost was \$531,568. For 2022-2023 the total cost was \$5,330,579. For 2023-2024 the estimated cost was \$4,441,235. This is an estimate as actuals are not yet finalized.

The Member asked for a breakdown of the total costs for agency nurses based on expenditure categories, those being salaries, overtime, per diems, travel, accommodations, performance bonuses, and any other form of remuneration. This information is quite detailed and later today I will table this information.

The Member asked for the total number of nursing staff positions in the public service that could be funded from an equivalent expenditure as on agency nurses. For 2023-2024, the total expenditures by Health and Social Services system on agency nurses was \$4,441,235. The average cost of a registered nurse position in 2023-24 was \$143,000. Based on the 2023-2024 expenditure on agency nurses, this was equivalent to 31 registered nurse positions. It is important to note that the need that required the use of agency nurses is a direct result of not being able to fill critical functions. Recruitment efforts to fill all nursing positions is of the utmost importance and continues in a labour market that is both limited and highly competitive across the country.

The Member asked for the total number of registered nurses recruited to the public service

since 2019-2020. Later today I will table this information.

And finally, the Member asked for the total number of registered nurses who have been terminated, retired or otherwise left their employment since 2019-2020. This information will be included in the information I will table later today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 5-20(1):
MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question No. 5-20(1) asked by the Member for Range Lake on February 28th, 2024, regarding the Municipal Funding Gap.

Increases approved by the 19th Legislative Assembly totalling \$5 million to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs Community Government Funding budgets was distributed according to three Ministerial policies: Operations and Maintenance Funding Policy, Water and Waste Services Funding Policy, and Community Public Infrastructure Funding Policy. While the \$5 million investment may not have kept up with the inflation as measured by the consumer price index, the additional funding represented a significant proportion of the funding the 19th Legislative Assembly committed towards initiatives.

To the Member's question regarding the current value of the overall municipal funding gap for the Northwest Territories, the difference between total territorial calculated costs and community government funding for 2023 is approximately \$52 million, of which an estimated \$18 million is related to general operations and maintenance, \$19 million is related to water and waste, and \$15 million is related to capital.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs acknowledges that the department's budget is lower than the full cost-calculation. However, because the GNWT is not the only source of revenue for community governments, the department calculated costs are not an appropriate measure of community need or a funding gap. The department uses this as a tool to allocate its community government funding budget based on the relative share of that community government to ensure that funding is distributed equitably.

The objective of the policies is for community government funding to be distributed in a fair and equitable manner. The distribution formulas measure the total cost of typical

programs and services for all 32 community governments and each community is allocated their proportionate share of the budget.

Each community government makes its own unique decisions on the types of programs and services they offer to their residents and how they will generate revenue to cover the difference between costs and funding provided by Municipal and Community Affairs. Community governments have the same financial realities and challenges faced by all levels of government and must take these into consideration when budgeting and planning for the priorities of their residents. The challenge of sustainable community governments is a shared responsibility across all levels of government. As such, MACA does not attribute any parts of its funding calculations toward inflation. I will provide a summary of funding provided by the department by community once the 2024-2025 Main Estimates are finalized. It is well established that all levels of government are in a period requiring both fiscal constraint and well-planned priority setting. It is important for us to tackle our shared challenges together with community governments and to focus on how we can collectively best serve the residents of the NWT. The department continues to advocate for increased funding to community governments and remains committed to supporting community governments to implement their identified priorities and needs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports on standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Mr. Premier.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 67-20(1):
MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 2023 TO 2027

TABLED DOCUMENT 68-20(1):
DRAFT INQUIRY ESTABLISHMENT ORDER
(2023 WILDFIRE SEASON PREPAREDNESS
AND RESPONSE)

TABLED DOCUMENT 69-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO PETITION 1-
20(1): A CEASEFIRE AND END TO
CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR THE PLAUSIBLE
GENOCIDE IN GAZA

TABLED DOCUMENT 70-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 23-
20(1): CALL TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS
IN GAZA

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TABLED DOCUMENT 71-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 152-20(1): PUBLIC SAFETY

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following five documents: Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2023 to 2027 Draft Inquiry Establishment Order (2023 Wildfire Season Preparedness and Response); Response to Petition 1-20(1): A Ceasefire and End to Canadian Support for the Plausible Genocide in Gaza; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 23-20(1): Call to Uphold Human Rights in Gaza; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 152-20(1) Public Safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 72-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES PUBLIC SECTOR
POSITIONS 2019-2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 73-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 9-20(1): HOME HEATING
REBATES

TABLED DOCUMENT 74-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 19-20(1): CARBON TAX
REVENUES SPENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE
ADAPTATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 75-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 41-20(1): LUTSELK'E ROAD
ACCESS

TABLED DOCUMENT 76-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 46-20(1): CARBON TAXATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 77-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 133-20(1): POLICY ON
INDIGENOUS HIRING

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following six documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Public Sector Positions since 2019-2020; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 9-20(1): Home Heating Rebates; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question

19-20(1): Carbon tax Revenues Spent on Climate Change Adaptation; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 41-20(1): Lutselk'e Road Access; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 46-20(1): GNWT Carbon Taxation; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 133-20(1): GNWT Policy on Indigenous Hiring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 78-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 47 2(1): YELLOWKNIFE
WELLNESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

TABLED DOCUMENT 79-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 78 2(1): ACCESS TO FAMILY
DOCTORS RESPONSE

TABLED DOCUMENT 80-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 103 2(1): ALCOHOL STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSE

TABLED DOCUMENT 81-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 109 20(1): EXTENDED HEALTH
BENEFITS POLICY RESPONSE

TABLED DOCUMENT 82-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 111 20(1): PROVISION OF
HEALTH SERVICES TO NUNAVUT CLIENTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 83-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 148 20(1): HEALTH CARE IN
NWT COMMUNITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 84-20(1):
FOLLOW UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 150 20(1): LONG TERM CARE
HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 85-20(1):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RETURN
TO WRITTEN QUESTION 4-20(1)

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following eight documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 47-2(1): Yellowknife Wellness and Recovery Centre; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 78-2(1): Access to Family Doctors Response; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 103-2(1): Alcohol Strategy Implementation Response; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 109-20(1): Extended Health Benefits Policy Response; Follow-up Letter for

Oral Question 111-20(1): Provision of Health Services to Nunavut Clients; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 148-20(1): Health care in NWT Communities; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 150-20(1): Long-term care Health Support Services; and, Further to my Return to Written Question 4-20(1), a Table of Additional Information for Return to Written Question 4-20(1). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of social services. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 86-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 12-20(1): CHILDREN'S FIRST
SOCIETY FUNDING

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 12-20(1): Children's First Society Funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and PUB.

TABLED DOCUMENT 87-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 80-20(1): SUPPORTS FOR
ELECTRIC VEHICLES

TABLED DOCUMENT 88-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 105-20(1) AND ORAL
QUESTION 112-20(1): MUNICIPAL
FUNDING GAP

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 80-20(1): Supports for Electric Vehicles; and, Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 105-20(1) and Oral Question 112-20(1): Municipal Funding Gap. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs.

TABLED DOCUMENT 89-20(1):
REPORT OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL
OFFICER ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF
THE 2023 TERRITORIAL GENERAL
ELECTION

TABLED DOCUMENT 90-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY
COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR 2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 91-20(1):
SPEAKING UP FOR FAIRNESS – 2023/24
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES OMBUD

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I have three documents to table: Pursuant to subsection 266(2) of the Elections and Plebiscite Act, I wish to table the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on Administration of the 2023 Territorial General Election. Pursuant to section 99 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I here table the annual report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner to the Legislative Assembly for 2023. And finally, pursuant to section 43 of the Ombud Act, I hereby table Speaking up for Fairness the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud. Thank you.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 26-20(1):
APPOINTMENT OF OMBUD

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 27th, 2024, I'll move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Ms. Krista Carnogursky be appointed as Ombud for a term of five years in accordance with the Ombud Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly.

And further, that the appointment become effective July 1, 2024.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notice of motion. Member from Range Lake.

MOTION 27-20(1):
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 67-
20(1): MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES 2023
TO 2027, TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, May 27th, 2024, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Frame Lake, that Tabled Document 67-20(1): Mandate of the Government of the

Northwest Territories 2023 to 2027, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Notice of motions. Motions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

Motions

MOTION 26-20(1):
APPOINTMENT OF OMBUD,
CARRIED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today regarding the appointment of Ms. Krista Carnogursky as Ombud. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Member from Yellowknife Centre is asking unanimous consent to deal with the appointment of the Ombud. Any nays? Seeing no nays, Member, please proceed.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, colleagues.

WHEREAS section 4(1) of the Ombud Act provides that the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint an Ombud as an officer of the Legislative Assembly who is responsible for exercising the powers and performing the duties set out in this Act;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management was tasked with recruiting the Ombud and has recommended an individual to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make a recommendation;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Ms. Krista Carnogursky be appointed as Ombud for a term of five years in accordance with the Ombud Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHERMORE that the appointment become effective July 1, 2024.

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? Any abstentions? Seeing none, the motion has been passed.

---Carried

Notice 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, Member's Statement 4-20(1), Member's Statement 5-20(1) -- sorry, I think that's Minister's Statement, sorry. Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Minister's Statement 20-20(1), with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Minister's Statement 24-20(1), and would like to report -- and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Do I have a seconder? Member from Monfwi. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstained?

Reports of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, May 24th, 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Replies to the Budget Address, Day 1 of 7
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
16. Tabling of Documents
17. Notices of Motion
18. Motions
19. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
20. First Reading of Bills
21. Second Reading of Bills
22. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - 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
 - Minister's Statement 17-20(1): Reaching Average \$10 a Day Child Care in the NWT

- Minister's Statement 24-20(1): Health Human Resources Recruitment and Retention

23. Report of Committee of the Whole

24. Third Reading of Bills

25. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, May 24, 2024, at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

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