



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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**20<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Wednesday, October 30, 2024**

Pages 1403 - 1440

**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
**(Nahendeh)**

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*Minister of Industry, Tourism and  
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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, October 30, 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, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson):** I'd like to thank Mary Jane Cazon for the blessing today.

Ministers' statements. Minister of Infrastructure.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 78-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SUPPLY  
CHAIN CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on the challenges faced this year in maintaining the Northwest Territories' supply chain and the steps our government is taking to address them. Our territory has been hit hard by a combination of record low-water levels, wildfires, rail disruptions, and added strain on our winter road systems. These issues have impacted the delivery of fuel, goods, and services to our communities. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you and the residents of the NWT that we have taken decisive action.

This season, barge operations were impacted due to record low-water levels on Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River. To ensure essential products reached the Beaufort Delta region, we rerouted cargo from Hay River to the Tuktoyaktuk Terminal. Despite these challenges, we successfully delivered essential petroleum products to all Beaufort Delta communities relying on barge transportation.

We also launched the Hay River Harbour Restoration Project, with dredging operations to support Marine Transportation Services, the Canadian Coast Guard, commercial fishers, and other harbour users.

We understand how vital fuel is to northern communities. In order to maintain sufficient quantities of fuel, Marine Transportation

Services and the fuel services division have continued to deliver essential fuel to the 16 communities served by GNWT and Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Wildfires this summer further complicated supply chain operations by disrupting transportation routes. Our highway operations and compliance teams worked tirelessly to manage these disruptions, ensure public safety, and keep critical deliveries moving.

Our ferries, which are an essential part of the Northwest Territories' transportation network, faced temporary shutdowns for unscheduled repairs this season. While these disruptions were unfortunate, I am pleased to share that we have implemented enhanced maintenance practices and increased monitoring to improve our operations.

Disruptions to CN Railway have also created a lack of direct rail access to Hay River and our marine terminal reducing our future fuel resupply capacity. The GNWT continues to explore options to resolve this issue.

Our winter road network remains crucial for connecting remote communities, especially in light of other supply chain issues. To prepare for increased traffic, we will be investing in increased maintenance to ensure these roads remain safe and in good driving condition throughout the season. We are also widening the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road where possible, adding signage, increased patrols, and checkpoints to ensure driver safety.

And Mr. Speaker, to support those affected by the low-water levels and barge cancellations, the GNWT recently announced funding for businesses in the Sahtu and Beaufort Delta regions. The government will also continue to pay the actual heating costs for eligible income assistance recipients and has increased the monthly subsidy rates under the senior home heating subsidy for Norman Wells. Additionally, the GNWT has donated \$150,000 to the Norman Wells food bank to ensure families can access essential supplies during this difficult period. This assistance will help offset the increased costs of shipping essential goods and services.

The GNWT is also committed to long-term solutions, and we are working with Indigenous and community governments and engaging with the Government of Canada to secure funding for the all-season Mackenzie Valley Highway. This project will reduce reliance on seasonal routes, strengthen climate change resilience, connect communities year-round, and boost economic opportunities. We hope that the ongoing environmental assessment will be completed next year, after which we can work to obtain the necessary permits and licences for this transformative project.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges we have faced this year are significant, but I am confident in the steps that we are taking. Through proactive planning, increased maintenance in collaboration with our partners, we are ensuring that northern communities stay connected and supplied.

I want to thank the GNWT staff, community leaders, and transportation partners for all of their continued efforts to overcome challenges. Together, we are keeping the supply chain moving and supporting the infrastructure that drives our territory's resilience and growth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 79-20(1):  
UPDATE ON EDUCATION ACT  
MODERNIZATION

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to start my statement in Dene Kede.

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, education is rooted in place and culture and cannot be nurtured in isolation. As guiding place of legislation from our junior kindergarten to grade 12 education system, it is Education Act includes voices and perspective Indigenous government and our education partners. If -- respect of other and our education partners. The 20th legislation will be -- will mark the first time GNWT codevelops legislation social policy with Indigenous government through Northwest Territories Council of Leaders education partners to modernize the system structure and governs a approach represents not just a legislative process but a critical step shaping system that reflects the value -- Mr. Speaker, modernizing the Education Act --

---Applause

Thank you, colleagues. [Translation Ends]

Mr. Speaker, modernizing the Education Act is not merely a procedural update; it is a transformational change in its potential.

For decades, our education system has operated under frameworks that did not fully consider the diverse needs of our students or the knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples. By revisiting and renewing this legislation, we aim to create an education system that is more inclusive, reflective of NWT communities, and equipped to address the unique challenges and opportunities in the Northwest Territories. This work holds the potential to close persistent gaps in education outcomes, foster stronger language revitalization, and provide students with a foundation that better prepares them for the world beyond the classroom.

Conversation and collaboration about how Indigenous governments and communities can meaningfully lead and participate in the governance of a system that educates future generations is crucial to reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, we are still reconciling with a painful history, where education was once used as tool of assimilation. Today, we seek to strengthen Indigenous voices, culture, and language at every level, from governance to the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, updating the Education Act is also intended to support improved student outcomes. Earlier this year, the 2022-2023 Report on the State of the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education System was published. While there were some promising results, the report highlighted persistent gaps in outcomes, including declining attendance rates and stagnant graduation rates. The data shows significant outcome gaps between NWT students and the Canadian average; between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the NWT; and, between students in Yellowknife, regional centres, and smaller communities. Addressing these gaps requires a multi-pronged approach, including modernizing the Education Act, updating regulations, and streamlining ministerial directives. This fall, ECE will be re-engaging with Indigenous governments and education partners on next steps to modernize the Education Act. This effort requires longer-term discussions and is a major part of writing a different education story.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most exciting aspects of this work is its potential to reshape the future of education in the North. By co-developing legislation, Indigenous governments can have a leading role in shaping their education systems, allowing for programs and approaches that are directly responsive to local needs, values, and aspirations. This ensures

that education is not only relevant but a source of empowerment. This kind of self-determined education system will create pathways to success that are grounded in the unique strengths of the North's people.

I am eager to see the positive impact of this transformative work ripple across the Northwest Territories for years to come. But I also want to emphasize how this must be a sustained effort and collaborative endeavour over the long term. I want to honour the work of Indigenous governments and educators who have, and continue to, work tirelessly in our communities. This is an immense undertaking, one that I am honoured to play a role in, and one that would not be possible without the collaboration of Indigenous governments, our education partners, and the educators and school staff. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Ministers' statements. Minister of Status of Women.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 80-20(1):  
NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO END  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about gender-based violence.

Two out of 100 residents in the Northwest Territories have reported intimate partner and family violence to the police. As of 2019, Statistics Canada lists the Northwest Territories as having the second highest rate of police-reported intimate partner and family violence in Canada, and we know that not everyone reports these incidents to the police.

Women are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence. Gender-based violence comes in many forms, and some of the people experiencing this violence may not even recognize their abuse because it has become normal for them.

In November 2022, the national action plan to end gender-based violence was endorsed during the annual meeting of the Ministers for the Status of Women. This 10-year framework provides direction to federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work towards a Canada free of gender-based violence.

In August 2023, the GNWT signed a funding agreement with the federal Department of Women and Gender Equality for \$16 million over four years, to implement the national action plan to end gender-based violence within the territory.

The GNWT's approach in implementing this plan is unprecedented as the funding is shared with other GNWT departments. The Departments of Health and Social Services; Justice; Education, Culture and Employment; Executive and Indigenous Affairs; and, Housing NWT are all working together to implement programs supported by the funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight some of the work being done through this funding agreement. An annual amount of \$700,000 was included to support the Women's Shelter network, which provides much-needed critical services to those fleeing family and domestic violence. The GNWT also supports non-governmental organization partners who are essential to the implementation and success of our collaborative efforts to create programs and services that support the implementation of the national action plan. This includes funding provided to the Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and the Northern Mosaic Network.

Mr. Speaker, when we negotiated this funding agreement, we wanted to ensure we got communities directly involved in coming up with solutions to help combat gender-based violence. The response was the development of the Gender-based Violence Community Initiative Fund. This funding contributes up to \$125,000 per application to community organizations to promote awareness and prevention of gender-based violence. With this funding, the GNWT has been able to support 15 different organizations' gender-based violence prevention and awareness campaigns and programs in their home communities.

An example is the Indigenous language terminology workshop that was held in partnership with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. This project brought language experts and elders together to develop terms related to gender-based violence and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It got the conversation around gender-based violence started in the communities. One elder was quoted, "I finally let go of my secret."

During the community engagement undertaken to gather feedback on the GNWT's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Action Plan, a concern shared was that organizations are unable to access funds because of limited capacity. In response, the gender equity division in the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs supports community organizations to develop their proposals and assist with preparing their reports.

Mr. Speaker, to be effective, we must also consider family violence, elder abuse, economic abuse, cyberbullying, lateral violence, and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. By implementing an inclusive, comprehensive and coordinated approach, we will promote gender equality, and work towards a society that is aware and free from violence and discrimination. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 398-20(1): INUVIK MARINE BYPASS ROAD

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And might I say you're looking rather dapper today. I guess I need a tie.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to borrow a statement from my esteemed colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes today from Hansard in October 14th, 2022. And I quote: Mr. Speaker, the bypass road in Inuvik is not only used by vehicles but is also used by the people out for walks, exercise, as well as other recreational activities. I can say even as far back as some of my colleagues in here will remember, phys. ed. classes where we had to run the 5-kilometer run in the school at the bypass. So it's used for many, many different activities. Now that the snow has started to fall at home, you can hardly notice one complaint -- you can notice one complaint that we've all had a part in for that road for months leading up to this time of year. Mr. Speaker, mud and dust, mud and dust. This is something that is so common to us up in the Delta. The dust some days carries throughout the town and could be a nuisance and even creep in -- and it does creep in -- to homes with open windows. Mr. Speaker, it can also be a real safety issue for vehicles and pedestrians alike. Flying rocks can also be very dangerous for the people that use this portion of the road, and that's not even talking about the mud that occurs when it rains; it also makes it very dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, the responsible then Minister, and I quote: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the department has reviewed the request to chip seal the marine bypass road. So the current cost estimate -- and I say that loosely because it may change -- is about \$1 million, which is about three times the cost that is incurred in the southern Northwest Territories. As there is no

paving equipment in Inuvik or in the community, we'd have to bring up contractors in from Whitehorse. In order to maximize local benefits to keep the cost down, we should align this work with some of the paving that's happening at the Inuvik runway. So, Mr. Speaker, I can commit -- and you're welcome -- to doing this work at the same time as the Inuvik runway. And I'm hoping with that answer, Mr. Speaker, I get no more supplemental.

So, Mr. Speaker, I may only have one question for the Minister of Infrastructure today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. You do look dapper as well.

Member from Range Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 399-20(1): REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL RENEWAL PROJECT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada tabled its report on the Stanton renewal project. The conclusion is that the GNWT cannot show this project provided good money for -- good value for money. Decisions were made without evidence and analysis, including changing from a renovation to a new build. Documents were found missing, including conflict of interest forms. The GNWT's unable to approve that \$71 million was spent on northern businesses as it had previously claimed. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. Deputy auditor general Andrew Haze said he was, quote, perplexed by the series of decisions that were reached by the government without doing updated analysis to identify value for money. Perplexed is a good word because if you were listening to the government at the time, you would have been told everything was fine.

Mr. Speaker, I used to call this a \$1 billion hospital much to the chagrin of the health Minister of the day who insisted it was a cool \$600 million. Well, Glen, it turns out I was right. \$1.21 billion, 62 percent over budget.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken about the need to better control our infrastructure costs before in this sitting of the House. This audit further adds to my concerns that our project management of major capital is lacking. At the time of Stanton renewal, this House was told the project was on time and on budget with tens of millions of dollars being paid out to northern businesses. Now we know that wasn't the case.



If anyone needed to wonder why this government is in such dire financial straits, then look no further to the persistent failures to ensure good money -- the good value for money analysis across numerous projects, including the bewildering decision to rent our own building for 30 years to the staggering cost of \$78 million, something the Finance Minister of today is defending as a good decision despite the opinion of the auditor general.

Mr. Speaker, the government is now saying things have changed - policies, practices, monitoring, all these things are now in place. But here's the thing. Back in the day, many of those exact same policies were in place; they just weren't followed. And because those decisions weren't followed, Northerners have been saddled with hundreds of millions of dollars of debt for the next 30 years. And, Mr. Speaker, we will deal with this report in good time, but if anyone thinks the GNWT has changed its colours and identified good value for money, I have a \$90 million windmill in Inuvik to sell you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 400-20(1):  
EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS CHANGES

**MS. REID:** Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of interest from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Assemblies on the topic of Extended Health Benefits before and after the program changes. As the Minister of Health and Social Services knows, I am keeping tabs on the roll out of this program and need ways to ensure that they aren't making choices between paying rent and their bills or having the medication that they need. I had many questions for the Minister and, happily, I got many answers that I would like to share.

As of October 16th, 618 residents are registered in the new EHB program. Applicants are assessed through income thresholds which are different in different regions of the NWT. Incomes above band 10 have to pay a deductible and co-share costs for their medication --

**MR. SPEAKER:** (audio) yes, we are going to fix it there. Yes, please and thank you.

**MS. REID:** Okay, I will stop.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, please and thank you.

**MS. REID:** It's gone back, Mr. Speaker. All righty, thank you.

Incomes above band 10 have to pay a deductible and co-shared costs for their medications. So far, 373 residents are above band 10; 245 residents are below that band and have their costs fully covered; 256 residents are currently 41 percent of all program beneficiaries are on the new EHB program that were not covered under the old one. This is good news, and I'm happy to hear that there are residents who now have coverage who didn't before. However, as mentioned during the last O and M budget session, this band cutoff is not a given moving forward. And this is where my concern for my constituents resides.

Asking people struggling with cost of living pressures on a modest income is not a place I think any of us want to be as a territory. I had a constituent reach out who was struggling with their placement in the band system because they are a household of one making rent, paying bills, and now having new costs they didn't have before September 1st was proving difficult. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you, colleagues.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, colleagues; thank you, Speaker. It's still with Frame Lake but that's okay.

After speaking with the Minister's office, I was able to assist my constituent in a solution that was not immediately clear to them when they applied. Payment plans are available. I appreciate that after this interaction, the Minister committed to better highlight that option to applicants because so far, only one resident has used this payment plan option. Mr. Speaker, I'll have further questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Members' statements. Member from the Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 401-20(1):  
NORMAN WELLS ECONOMIC CONCERNS

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the first early days of the Norman Wells oil field, a crew composed of six drillers and one oxen named Tommy began a six-week, 1900-kilometer journey northward by rail, river boat, and foot, to a site now known as Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, the drilling crew encountered many hardships with permafrost. By this time, river ice had frozen. A decision was made to wait out the winter. Mr. Speaker, they survived but Tommy did not but, heroically, supplied many a meal. And, Mr. Speaker, drilling

resumed in the following spring. A relief crew arrived, and oil was struck August of 1920.

Mr. Speaker, unique to history is the realization of oil field stakeholders' profits and royalties.

Mr. Speaker, I understand our government is aggressively pursuing federal emergency funding to alleviate the high fuel costs in Norman Wells. These oil field benefits certainly create a loud argument for relief aid.

Mr. Speaker, within the last 24 hours, I have received notice from one of many business owners and is closing their doors. Within those doors, our government is a tenant. Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough the stress this crisis has created. I recommend as last week the Government of the Northwest Territories must cover this lower than original cost with the position on federal reimbursement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 402-20(1):  
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY IN SUMMER AND  
FALL SEASON

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to address the condition of the Dempster Highway during the summer and fall season. The portion of the highway that I am referring to is between Wrangling River and Inuvik. This portion of highway has never been this bad before. I have been receiving calls, text messages, on a daily basis from concerned residents from all over the Beaufort Delta region.

Mr. Speaker, I've driven the Dempster Highway for many years, and I can attest the concerns of the residents of the Beaufort Delta when they state that they have never seen this highway in such bad condition. I had to go to Inuvik to catch a plane bound for Yellowknife. Even though we left at 9 o'clock in the morning, we just made the plane at 1 p.m. The cab driver was driving at a speed of 40 kilometers an hour because it was so rough. I have seen vehicles driving on the wrong side of the road just to avoid the potholes and rougher portions of the highway.

Mr. Speaker, I received calls from contractors stating that they have encountered many unexpected expenses during this time in question. A contractor from Tsiigehtchic had to send two of his vehicles down south because of damage to his vehicles. This has cost time and money to his business; time and money he will never get back. Other residents stated that they have unforeseen wreckage to their vehicles,

the tires and rims. Tourists were posting pictures of the damage that they have encountered while driving this portion of the highway.

Mr. Speaker, in past years the contractors have been taking pride in maintaining the highway from the NWT Yukon border to the Arctic Ocean, and they have been complimented on the excellent work they do. But for some reason, this year has been quite different and dangerous for the users of this portion of the Dempster Highway. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 403-20(1):  
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF  
CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY –  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL  
RENEWAL PROJECT

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the Auditor General's Report on the Stanton Territorial Hospital Project. The report estimates that as of June 2023, the Stanton project's overall costs, which were originally supposed to be \$750 million, Mr. Speaker, cost -- which were originally supposed to be 750, I'm sorry about that, are now in the range of \$1.21 billion over the next 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, this is -- this is the most expensive capital project in the history of the territory. Our current Ministers should not be blamed for the financial mess created by past government, especially the Minister of Finance of the day; it was Michael Miltenberger.

Mr. Speaker, our people are going to be the ones left paying for the increased cost of this project, an estimated 62 percent increase, Mr. Speaker. The deputy auditor general said he was perplexed by this series of decisions that were reached by the government. And I do agree.

The government did not include annual property taxes when planning for the new project which are estimated to cost at least \$151.6 million over 30 years. Operating costs for non-medical services in the new hospital are projected to increase by \$173 million over 30 years. The government's decision to sublease its own hospital cost \$78.6 million. It is absurd the government agreed to rent a building they already own.

Mr. Speaker, our small communities are hurting. People are not getting medical treatment in their own communities, and our programs and services need more funding. Mr. Speaker, the auditor general's report shows this project is going to have long-term impacts. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to have money we need to fix our health care systems or support operations in small communities. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Colleagues, I've heard two names mentioned here in two Member's statements with people not in this building. Next time I hear it, I will call you on it. Use their positions and just leave it at that. Thank you.

Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 404-20(1):  
DEFICIT MENTALITY IMPACTING  
FINANCIAL DEFICIT

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about our deficit mentality in this government. What I mean is the way we think about our deficiencies, our deficits, that ends up dangerously impacting our actual financial deficit and increasing our debt burden.

Now, the Premier and the Minister of Infrastructure often refer to our infrastructure deficit in this territory. The word deficit means a lack, something that we want that we don't have or something that someone else has that we don't have.

I understand that when Cabinet goes to Ottawa, we're competing to access federal dollars, so we use this language to point out the things other places have that we don't have. But when this idea of an infrastructure deficit becomes the only story that we tell ourselves, we get into big trouble.

Our deficit is compared to what? Compared to who? Should we have the same highway and electricity grid network as Alberta does? Should every community in the NWT have paved highway access? Should every community have the same recreation facilities? We haven't really defined our ultimate goals, what would even be ideal let alone wise or responsible, and so we're left always feeling unsatisfied, that what we have is just never enough. And the list of new things to build keeps getting longer and longer, and our spending grows and our debt

continues to break through every ceiling that is set.

Now, debt isn't inherently bad if you're investing wisely in building a solid foundation that will eventually return benefits. But with this deficit mentality, we rarely stop to ask why we need to build all these things beyond vague ideas about nation building and wishing that it will reduce our high cost of living. Looking back, has the Deh Cho Bridge truly made our nation stronger or lowered prices in any of our communities?

The Northwest Territories will always be a collection of many small remote communities, and no billions of dollars in infrastructure can ever change that. But instead of focusing on the isolation and the things that we lack, why don't we focus on the strengths that we gain from our remoteness and how it can bind us together and foster creativity. We have incredible people and incredible natural resources, like caribou, that continue to sustain people today, and that is something that none of the southern provinces have partly because they have too many roads. So let's stop referring to our infrastructure deficit and focus on our strengths and the wise investments we can make to build on what we already have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 405-20(1):  
SUPPORTS FOR NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING  
FERTILITY ISSUES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague from Great Slave -- note, I used the title, Mr. Speaker -- is putting forward some -- I'm listening to direction.

I understand my colleague from Great Slave is putting forward some written questions today, and I wanted to support her efforts and add my voice to the call for better supports for NWT residents who need access to fertility and surrogacy treatment.

Mr. Speaker, fertility issues are a medical condition which affect a significant number of people in the NWT. One out of six couples experience fertility issues. Infertility is a diagnosed medical condition as is recurrent pregnancy loss. I also want to note, Mr. Speaker, that like many disparities of care in our health care system, women are disproportionately affected by lack of coverage which I feel likely helps to explain why it is an area that is underresourced. Currently, men are

covered for urology appointments required for diagnosing fertility issues; however, I understand that women are not similarly covered.

In her October 17th response to the petition tabled by the Member for Great Slave, the finance Minister made a strong case for why fertility support is important. She highlighted the NWT's declining birth rate and noted that a decline in population, including the birth rate in the NWT, could have significant implications for the territorial economy. A result in demographic shift would likely result in a higher dependency ratio which has the potential to place increased pressure on social services and health care systems. A lower birth rate, combined with an aging population, might also deter investments in sectors such as education, housing, and local businesses that rely on a steady growing population base from local families.

After making these arguments, however, she noted that the NWT's tax base is too small to support fertility-related coverage. I note with interest, Mr. Speaker, that the Yukon, with a similar tax base to our own, has just announced that they are expanding their MLA travel subsidy to make fertility and surrogacy treatments more accessible. This is the first phase of a broader plan which includes exploring the possibility of a new tax credit for Yukoners undergoing fertility and surrogacy treatments.

I wish I didn't have to point to the Yukon so often, Mr. Speaker, but yet again, they have showing us what can be done in a northern jurisdiction that has the will to take actions they know will help keep people in the territory to raise their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member from the Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 406-20(1):  
HEALTH PROMOTION IN SMALL  
COMMUNITIES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the issue I have raised in the past which is promotion of health and well-being for residents in our small communities. Mr. Speaker, our government has a mandate to deliver health promotion programming to residents to ensure that our population is educated and can make healthy choices in a variety of areas such as quitting smoking, injury prevention, healthy eating, staying active, sexual health, and education around substance use.

Across the territory, and especially in small communities, we have high rates of alcohol use, smoking, chronic disease, and sexually transmitted diseases for example. It's important that people know what resources are available for education purposes. There should be campaigns that reach our youth, adults, elders so that they are aware of health issues, their risks, and how to prevent or manage these. In small communities, this can be done through community outreach, through radio announcements, culturally relevant material, any resources that can reach out to the population, rather than waiting for health issues and disease to develop which will require care in a health facility and ultimately cost this government.

I would like to see a healthy informed and thriving population in the communities I serve. I would like my constituents to have the information and resources required to make healthy decisions, decisions around substance consumption, nutrition, and sexual health. I am concerned that in my riding not enough has been done to promote health and keep residents healthy. There isn't enough information getting out there to the people. My worries that the people need to know that just because they aren't hearing about certain health risks or issues doesn't mean it isn't there. They may be at risk and just don't know it. Health promotion keeps people healthy as well as their families and ultimately our communities. I will have questions for the Minister of health later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 407-20(1):  
FOOD INSECURITY

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over 20 percent of the households in the Northwest Territories struggle with food insecurity, and most of those households are home to Indigenous families. When those children go to school hungry, their academic performance suffers severely as does their ability to interact with their peers. Hunger and malnutrition also have long-term lasting impacts on their physical and mental health adding to the disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children who suffer from chronic illness and depression. This is because nutritious food is becoming prohibitively expensive, especially in the smaller communities, and they don't have reliable access to the traditional harvested food which

sustained generations before them since time immemorial.

So far, the Government of the Northwest Territories has provided \$650,000 annually through their anti-poverty to support school run breakfasts, lunch, and snack programs. And this has been supplemented by the federal Jordan Principle program which has funded meals for students as well. But contracts under Jordan Principle are unreliable, and \$650,000 here does not go far enough to provide every student with a healthy meal. Yesterday, however, I was pleased to see the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment announce a new funding program to expand the territorial school program with the federal government.

I'm very hopeful that this new agreement will greatly benefit children across the Northwest Territories, but I hope there are provisions to expand school meals for Indigenous students with traditional food source and provide educational opportunities for both culture practices. Imagine school lunch programs which provides traditional meals, Indigenous cultural made with locally sourced ingredients and prepared with care because this is not just about the food on their plate. This program expansion is a unique opportunity to intertwine with traditional, educational, and cultural teaching. We need a school food program that can teach them the importance of balanced diet and the benefits of nutrition and the values of sustainable respect for the land.

By incorporating culture, education to the lunch program, we empower children to do well, to make better choices, but also to embrace their heritage. This approach fosters pride in their culture and nurture strong connections into their culture and community. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I know this agreement is still in the early phase, but I hope to learn more about the benefits it will have on the children in the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding and perhaps provide more room for input from my communities. I look forward to asking the Minister for more information later this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 408-20(1):  
SUPPORTING YOUTH WITH AUTISM

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say supporting youth with autism in the Northwest Territories is critical. We need to look at it through a multifaceted approach by addressing their needs, whether it's regional or in large centre, Mr. Speaker, like Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, imagine if you're in a small community and you have children or a child or there's other types of people with learning disabilities in your community, where do they go? Well, they come to Yellowknife often because the services and supports aren't there. Mr. Speaker, but what I also find here in Yellowknife is people are leaving Yellowknife to go to Alberta because supports for things like autism are there, not here, Mr. Speaker.

We have a duty to help these young people achieve the best and most full potential that they can. It may be limited in some cases because I'm also a realist and know that, but the fact is we have a duty to ensure that they can live the best lives that they can. This burden often falls on the big shoulders of parents who struggle with these challenges each and every day. Mr. Speaker, we cannot leave these young people who can do better, who want to do better, behind.

Mr. Speaker, lifetime pathways are being developed and formed when young people are born and then in their formative years, they're not getting the assessments and treatments and supports they need. We need early intervention because it's when it's when they're young it matters the most.

Mr. Speaker, we can help redefine some of those weaker pathways. We can strengthen the ones they've got because we don't want to miss this critical opportunity, because if we don't do this when they're young it's too late. In other words, collectively we must work together. How can we do this, Mr. Speaker?

Well, early intervention and diagnosis is clearly critical. Many families will tell me it takes them a couple years to get an assessment. Two, maybe three years already pass by without those critical interventions needed.

Educational supports, Mr. Speaker, we can only rely on the schools so much and there's not enough funding to go around, as well as focus on this particular issue. Mr. Speaker, community and family supports are critical. Mr. Speaker, when we have parents who have children with autism, you know, they end up having to leave work to cover for the SIP days, Mr. Speaker. After school programs don't exist for folks like this. Summer programs don't exist for this. It falls again on the family's shoulders.

There is limited, and I mean limited, funding through ECE, but it's barely enough to fund a couple families when we have more than our share. Mr. Speaker, there are mental supports for the families who struggle with this each and every day. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions later on this particular matter because it is critical for the North. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 409-20(1):  
PAT ROWE MEMORIAL GOLF  
TOURNAMENT

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, approximately 25 years ago, the Seven Spruce Golf Club decided that they should come up with a four-person best ball tournament. After thinking about this idea, the executive asked two members to reach out to various businesses in the community and surrounding areas. One of the businesses they reached out to, was the owner of Kingland. He directed them to speak to the parts manager, and since that meeting the partnership has grown. It started out being called the Seven Spruce Four Person Best Ball Tournament, sponsored by Kingland Ford, then it was changed to the Kingland Ford Four Person Best Ball Tournament, and the name was changed to the Aurora Ford Four Person Best Ball Tournament after Aurora Ford purchased Kingland.

With the passing of Pat Rowe, the executive spoke to the staff at Aurora Ford about changing the name to the Pat Rowe Memorial Tournament. After about ten seconds of the conversation, it was agreed that it would be the new name going forward. Now, with this in place, the executive started organizing the tournament. The first thing they needed to do was change the date for this year. It is normally held in July but because of organizational issues, it was decided to be held on the August long weekend.

As the executive started reaching out to businesses, they saw a huge support from local and regional businesses. They were very successful in getting businesses to sponsor the tournament. Like the merchants' bonspiel, they broke it down into the following categories: platinum, gold, silver and bronze. I have attached a list and will ask them deemed to be as read and printed in the Hansard.

Colleagues, as some of you were aware, Pat was always an active supporter of the golf course. He sponsored and did a lot of work on Hole 7 of the course. He was one of three local

business owners that paid for the screen porch addition to the clubhouse.

Pat was well respected. This year's tournament saw 13 teams, including three teams from Hay River and a team made up from Yukon, BC and a business owner from Fort Simpson. The winning team was a Fort Simpson team with a score of 12 under. I have been advised next year's tournament is going to see more teams from out of town. I can't wait for next year, to play with my sons again.

Sponsors of the Pat Rowe Memorial Golf Tournament.

Platinum (\$2,000.00 plus)

PR Contracting  
South Nahanni Airways  
Rowe's Construction  
Enbridge  
Aurora Ford  
Tire North

Gold (\$1,000.00 - \$2,000.00)

Northern  
Simpson Air

Silver (\$500.00 - \$1,000.00)

Bradbury Services  
Jiffy Lube Yellowknife  
Taylor & Company  
Rings Drugstore

Bronze (less than \$500.00)

Goose Flying Services  
Fort Simpson Beverages  
Fort Simpson Fire department  
La Dee Dah.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two pages that are here representing Inuvik Twin Lakes, Dallas Krutko and Keefer Ciboci-Raymond. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and acknowledge Melinda Zoe. She's a chaperone for the two young pages, Leela Bekale and Jaydan Zoe, from Jean

Wetrade School in Gameti. So I would like to acknowledge them and welcome them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to acknowledge a constituent who is serving as a page in the Assembly this week, Lucy Mackay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to say that I have a resident of Yellowknife South here in the room with us today serving as a page, Mr. Ben Mager. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 386-20(1): OLD STANTON BUILDING DECISION- MAKING

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, this is a question for Minister of Finance. Can the Minister explain why the government decided to sublease the Old Stanton Building at an increased cost of \$78.6 million? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity that arose to sublease the building was later in the procurement process. This has been some of the challenge with the audit is that there were multiple stages to what occurred from back in 2013 when the project first originated up to the last stage of that project which is when that decision was made to sublease. At that point in time, there was this opportunity because the investment that was being made by one of the partners to decommission, renovate, you know, clean up that old building, that involved a significant amount of investment and their intent was that they would lease that out to recoupe the significant cost to do that. When they were ready to do that, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services was also looking at that time for an opportunity to put a long-term care facility somewhere. They did do an analysis on the cost per bed. I'll remind

you, Mr. Speaker, that this was after COVID when costs of building and constructing new things had gone up. The cost per bed was quickly realized would be cheaper at the Legacy Building, then -- Liwego'ati Building than what it would be elsewhere and so a decision was made to pivot and to utilize that facility. Thank you.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yes, thank you for that information. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain what non-medical services in the new hospital are projected to increase by \$173 million over 30 years? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it probably is a bit of both departments here. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take that number back. That's a very specific number, and I'm -- while I'm familiar with the audit, I am not necessarily up to speed with what that number would be.

So in terms of the projected costs, we do have a fairly detailed analysis that's obviously been done when we got the audit in. We are looking at where costs are going over the course of time. There's some concern that we have seen with respect to the audit in terms of understanding the difference between the portion that is within the P3 project and the portion that may be connected to Liwego'ati Building and then on top of which there have certainly been changes in the health care sector with respect to the costs of delivering health care, particularly following after COVID-19, and the time when the projections were originally done, 2013, 2015, do not match up to the realities of what we were facing post-COVID and so there are some concerns in there. And that may well be the sum total of the explanation, but I want to make sure I fully get the number that the Member referenced. So, again, so aside from mentioning the concern there, Mr. Speaker, I will make sure that there's nothing missing in that number. Thank you.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. The auditor general estimates that the Stanton project will cost \$1.21 billion over the next 30 years. Can the Minister explain how the territory will pay the increase in cost? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this too, I do just want to just provide quickly before -- you know, we pay the costs that we pay for services, and certainly within health care, these are essential services for residents of the Northwest Territories. But, Mr. Speaker, the auditor general was bringing together what for us is the P3 project which is the Stanton Hospital as well as the Liwego'ati Building which is where the long-term care facility and now primary care are

housed. So this has been a conversation that I've had with the Auditor General's Office of Canada that does our audits over the course of many years. We do not see, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, the two projects as being one P3. That does seem to be how the math was -- come out here. Again, I'm -- you know, far be it for me to be the auditor on the floor, Mr. Speaker, but those two projects, from our view, are separate. They're both delivering health care services. We will, of course, prioritize to ensure that health care services continue to be delivered. There's a lot of work happening in that space to make sure that we're delivering the right services in the right way at the right cost. And as that evolves in both of those facilities, we'll continue to make sure residents are being served. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain what effects taking on this debt will have on capital projects and spending in small communities? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all communities across the Northwest Territories need to continue to be invested in, and analysis gets done, whether it's department of health looking at long-term care facilities, whether it's education looking at educational needs, those processes continue. One of the things that does come to me from looking at the audit is the importance of having good planning, is the importance of having good records, and quite frankly, is the importance of having all of that consolidated in one place with experts in that area and that is something that we do now have a much better handle on. Five years ago, Mr. Speaker, there was about five different sets of objectives associated to the procurement processes in the Government of the Northwest Territories. That is pretty difficult to maintain a coherent system when you're operating under a regime like that. And so, Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity to reinforce that having one set of objectives and principles, one place where all of that resides, is exactly the right way to deliver better planning so that every single community has access to capital in an appropriate way, in a planned way, and in a way that is transparent to all residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 387-20(1):  
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE IN FORT SMITH

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are going to be about exploring the options of what can be done. And the reason I put that in context, first, Mr. Speaker, because I don't want it to be thought it perceived in any other way. So that said, Mr. Speaker, I'm in possession of a letter from the Thebacha Leadership Council addressed to the Premier and/or Minister of Justice, and the question really comes down to is their concerns about their due diligence on the transition from an operational jail that has no inmates to the 32 jobs that may be forcing -- being forced through in the context of layoffs.

So I'm asking the Premier first, or I should say Minister of Justice, is what type of due diligence has been done on this initiative to say this is the right course of path and how have they worked with the community regarding this?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So earlier this year, this Assembly considered the main estimates which is the budget document for the Government of the Northwest Territories. One of the items in there was the Fort Smith Correctional Centre, the men's unit, and there were deliberations in this House and ultimately that budget was passed. And so the work that went in to the lead up to that is that we had a look at all of the programs and services we deliver across the Department of Justice, looked at what was legally required to be done, what programs and services were legally required to deliver, what programs are federally funded, so there would be no cost savings if we -- if we -- I don't know, removed those, and we looked at what services or programs are costing us more than we can justify. And so if we look across the entire correctional system in the Northwest Territories, we have a very low utilization rate, about around 50 percent it hovers, and we looked at all of the facilities and it was determined that the greatest cost savings would be if that facility was closed.

Now, this was not an easy decision. I lost many nights of sleep over this, had very, you know, spirited discussions at Cabinet but, ultimately, that's where we landed because it was -- we could no longer justify having that facility open for the few number of inmates that we in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to recognize the tone the Premier brought to that. I think it was certainly appropriate. I'm not trying to do jabby or clever questions. This is very important, and it's a very important subject for our -- Mr. Speaker, I just



want to make absolutely clear. 32 jobs in a region matter to a Yellowknife MLA because it affects us all in one way or another. That said, Mr. Speaker, the letter, including the phone calls I received, talked about finding a solution or a course of path for these jobs and this potential facility. Again, written from the direction and point of view of these people from the Thebacha Leadership Council feel that they -- the solution was dumped on them.

Has the department or the -- or the Premier, given this council any resources and time to be able to come up with an alternative solution to save the impacts and how this will radiate through the town of Fort Smith? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I recognize the impact that this will have on the community. I did travel to Fort Smith. I met with the leadership council, and I toured some of the facilities they have in the community. Some of those are GNWT facilities that they would like to operate out of. And the reason that, you know, we took those tours is I wanted to get the lay of the land of Fort Smith, see what resources that we had that could be provided to the community to assist in any sort of endeavour that they might want to embark on. The Department of Infrastructure has shared information with the leadership council about the operating costs of facilities in the community, and we're open to having discussions. So as soon as we hear from the community on what they would like to do moving forward, we're very willing and looking forward to working with them on that. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to put on the record that the meeting -- in the letter, it says the Premier was very cordial, it was a cordial meeting, again so I just want to emphasize his tone is appropriate in my opinion for this important discussion. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has had years to study this particular problem. I'm assuming they didn't make this decision overnight, and I'm certainly recognizing that.

Mr. Speaker, the Thebacha Leadership Council feels they've been given days or weeks to come up with a solution to counter or provide other options without resources. Is the Minister willing to find some resources to help the Thebacha Leadership Council find an alternative use, either for the facility, or an alternative path for these types of employees who want to remain in Fort Smith, who are valued members of not only Fort Smith but the region and our territory at large? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the leadership council has some specific

requests, I'm happy to hear those. We're happy to help however we can. If it's assistance looking for, you know, federal programs that could help operate a facility run by the leadership council or by an Indigenous government, we can assist with that. If there's information about the existing facilities in the community that they may be able to use, we're happy to assist with that. So I look forward to hearing directly from them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 388-20(1):  
PRIMARY CARE TEAMS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. So Yellowknife residents recently received a letter in the mail from the health authority informing us about the new primary care teams and crucially assuring everyone that even if they don't currently have a family doctor assigned to them, they would now be assigned to a team with a family doctor on it. So while that's a laudable goal for every resident, why was this commitment made at this time when each primary care team still only has less than two full-time equivalent physicians per team and that would mean that more than 5,000 patients would be assigned to each team; why was the commitment made at this time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the Member's question, what's happening here is that part of the primary care reform. So, you know, whether we move to four teams within Yellowknife, those teams have been equipped with -- from the ten teams that they had that did not have enough staff down to the four teams that -- you know, they've been placed and that way the remaining of the people in Yellowknife can be assigned to that team. Not every person on that team or in Yellowknife needs to have access to a physician. What they need is they need access to a health care provider. So within that team, they will be, you know, seen at the -- whatever their need is to the scope of the practice of that person that's on that team. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So does the Minister believe that the current number of practitioners per team, that's physicians and other practitioners like NPs, that

it is an appropriate number of practitioners per team to be able to serve this many patients, or is the authority striving for a different number of practitioners per team? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whether I believe it is or I don't believe it is, I think what the Member -- what I would like to provide so that the Members of this House and the Member for Yellowknife North wants, I think is getting to the bottom is are these -- you know, these -- like, these teams going to be what needs to happen. We don't know right now. So what is happening is the framework is currently being developed to provide clear direction and performance benchmarks for this initiative. And these are going to be completed by 2025 but the -- in the -- what was there, you know, we were getting concerns from inside within the physicians. The ten teams, we did not enough people to meet those teams so creating smaller teams, we're able to fill all the needs in those teams, and now we'll monitor to see whether or not that's going to meet capacity for the Northwest Territories.

And I'd like to add, you know, on top of all the move and everything into the new facility and the phone issues, you know, that has also put -- it's not necessarily -- like, the teams are not working. It's people in the public are having access issues to try and make appointments. And that, you know, comes down to frustration from the residents of the Northwest Territories, and we are trying to rectify those issues. So I just want to make -- put that on the record that it's not all about downsizing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister aware of any studies or plans that have been prepared in the past that would give us an answer to the question of how many is the right number of practitioners for a certain number of patients per team? Do we have any studies that would direct us towards what is the appropriate number of patients per team? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we can all say that we have studies and research and reviews on many different areas within the health care system. Specifically to primary care, there are -- there are -- you know, there are different things that have been done. Some of those things aren't -- they don't necessarily meet the primary care reform needs. Some of -- some past -- you know, if there's reports out there, they might take pieces of them that meet the need of primary care reform. But we are moving away from the way that we used to provide

services in the Northwest Territories. So what I can say is at this moment with primary care reform, we're using all of the past tools and any kind of reports or anything to try and make primary care reform, like, the best that we can for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So finally, why were our primary care physicians not consulted or notified that the health authority would be sending out this letter and making this commitment to residents at this time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are -- you know, there's the CEO, the territorial medical director. There is a vacancy that's being covered. How there are -- members of physicians that sit on the primary care reform team. So how and who wasn't informed, I can't -- like, I can't specify how that communication went to the physicians and how the information was released or how it was reported to them that it was going to be released at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 389-20(1):  
EXPANSION OF SCHOOL LUNCH  
PROGRAM

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions is for the Education, Culture and Employment Minister.

This new deal with the federal government to expand school lunch program is an excellent opportunity to improve both nutrition and academic performance of children across the North. But I hope that this program will have a strong focus on Indigenous children.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister will the expansion of this program prioritize cultural relevance for Indigenous students? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also a huge thank you to the Member. His Member's statement absolutely hit on all of the points of what this relationship between the GNWT and the Government of Canada is trying to achieve,

and it's so much more than food. And so the answer absolutely is yes. The program is based on the existing -- or the funding, sorry, is going to be funding through the existing Healthy Food for Learning Program that is maintained by Education, Culture and Employment, and those dollars flow out to education bodies. Education bodies will have the opportunity to work through community partnerships, to work with local harvesters and subsistence hunters, to prepare traditional foods in schools. Really, this work is going to be on a case-by-case basis depending on how each education body chooses to use some of it. And so some of the examples, Mr. Speaker, of how they're able to use some of this food is absolutely increasing quantities of food, hiring personnel to support the organization and food program delivery needs, providing food safety training, and also the ability to do capital or infrastructure investments or improvements. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. She answered all my questions. But anyway, I'd like to just look at how would this agreement work or take into consideration the unique northern circumstances in small communities; like, higher costs of groceries, traditional harvest, and then shorter growing season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very thankful that this program is willing to be flexible in how we administer it within the Northwest Territories within the criteria that I outlined for the Member. But that being said, the current formula funding for the Healthy Food Learning is going to be used, and that formula allows us to distribute based on student populations, also based on food cost indexes for the region the school is located in, and also the median incomes of communities. And so it will be flexible and responsive to where the students live and also the flexibility of the programming allows for things like capital investments and infrastructure improvements as determined by the education bodies, which is really important that we're able to actually work with education bodies and work with communities themselves in order to really get to where the students need these dollars so that it does have a positive impact in the classroom. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Right now the GNWT funds \$650,000 for NWT school food program. How much more funding can the NWT expect each year under the new agreement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

Canada-wide, the Government of Canada is putting 1 billion more dollars over the course of five years into classrooms across the country. I am really looking forward to being able to work with the Government of Canada to announce what that will mean specifically for the Northwest Territories, and I'm looking forward to being able to do that in the next few weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. Will there be any targets for this -- with the program and information made available as the program rolls out to measure its effectiveness? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as it stands with the existing program, education bodies already formally report on types of food and program -- that their program offers and the average number of children and youth served, and those are all available online through annual reports that are already published.

In addition to that, ECE is going to be engaging with education bodies to set more formal targets specific to this new funding. So that could be tracking the expansion and enhancements of existing programs and infrastructure improvements to really show what kind of impact these dollars are having to our classrooms to learning and ultimately to food insecurity of children in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Colleagues, we've almost spent 25 minutes and four sets of questions. So, please, make your answers more succinct. Thank you.

Oral questions. Member from the Deh Cho.

QUESTION 390-20(1):

HEALTH PROMOTION IN COMMUNITIES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of health. In small communities, how are health promotion activities rolled out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in most of our communities, we have community health representatives, we have health care staff, we have home care staff; however, you know,

there are some initiatives that are sent to the schools. You know, they may work with the health centre to get information if there's certain things going on in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What formats are used in health promotion campaigns to target different demographics such as youth and elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within each community -- and I had the privilege to go to the Sahtu, and while we were attending the AGM there for the Sahtu Secretariat, there was the CHR there and they were there in collaboration with health and the RCMP and they had a campaign going on for illicit drugs. You know, we've heard many times that there are those things. That was happening. And I spoke to the CHR, and she just goes out to the community and sees what the needs are in that community, and then she tries to design her program what's based best needs, and she utilizes her support, her team, within the health authority to be able to roll out any projects or things in her community. Thank you.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How do we ensure the right resources are reaching the people at risk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we hire these frontline staff in the community, they're usually members of the community, they're usually -- like, most of the CHRs that I have met along the tours that I have done as a health Minister are Indigenous people from the communities so they know their communities. They know that they can access -- they can do presentations in the school, they know that can -- you know, they can work with the home care workers to do community events. Whenever there is a community hall event, they can do those types of things. You know, that's where I think the -- if you have a CHR in your community and you want more things, I suggest that, you know, meeting with those staff to see what's going on in their community, how can you better support your community. I think we all as leaders in our community, we all go home after, you know, session is over, and we know who these people are in our community. And we know what we're hearing as MLAs, so how do we go back and we say this is what we're hearing, how could we do things better. And I encourage that MLAs do that within their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said earlier, I'm concerned in my riding that not enough's happening. What areas of health promotion are prioritized in small communities? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that there's -- you know, there each specific -- like, right now, we're hearing illicit drugs across the territory so the Office of the Public Health has started to be able to come up with the materials that are needed to give to the people on the ground. I believe that it's each individual community, whatever their priority is in their community they should be reaching out to the health centre saying we want education on this stuff. You know, we have elders that are asking this kind of information. Every community's going to do it different and that's the -- that's the good thing about CHRs, is that they're flexible to be able to do this. So that's what I would encourage, is every community may have their own priorities on what they want. The information within health is available, and if it's not available in their community, they can -- you know, like the Member, if she finds that these things are not available in her community, bring it back to me, come or send an email. We can direct where they can get the information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 391-20(1):  
EDUCATION SECURITY PRESENTATIONS  
IN SAHTU

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today is for the Minister of ECE. The Sahtu is approaching the winter road season which is the affordable connections to all five communities. And prior to our February the 5th sitting, I would like to take the opportunity to invite the Minister to support a road show to promote education, education security. I'm wondering if the -- my question to the Minister if she will support a group of beneficiary trades team to do a presentation to the high school students in each of the five communities in the Sahtu? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member knows that trades are near and dear to my heart, and I certainly want to see more trades apprentices and trades students in every region of the territory, and I am certainly willing to work with the Member, and we may have staff in each of those regions that are already there that can already support some of this work if I am unable, of course, to make it to all the Sahtu communities before the February sitting, keeping in mind that we have busy schedules, but I certainly want to support the Member in this. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that support. In consideration of the high fuel costs, would the Minister support the cost of this road show team? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I always like to make sure that we are working smarter, not harder, and that we are saving dollars for where we really need them in the territory, and so if there are staff already located in a community, for example in Norman Wells, we do have a regional superintendent who would be able to do some of this work within the school, and we may even have teachers within the schools that can help support having the conversations about how to access trades and how to get involved in trades within the schools. And so I certainly want to explore this with the Member and see how we can do this together and ensure that we are being fiscally responsible at the end of the day when we're doing that too. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks for the Minister for that support. I am anticipating we're looking at a group of six. Will the Minister work with my office to help coordinate the logistics and planning of this road show promoting education for trades? Will the Minister commit to seeking employer time off for the employee trades to participate in this? For example, this government has beneficiaries in the Sahtu that would fit this agenda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't have control over the operations of departments, and I know that the Member started this conversation by referencing the Sahtu winter road, and I think it's worth stating that the Sahtu winter road really is a good news story at the end of the day. It is maintained by contractors that are local Indigenous contractors all the way up the road and, you know, these are private employers, of course. I wouldn't be able to dictate or determine

whether or not they would give staff time off. But the good news is that what really we need in the Northwest Territories, when it comes to building trades, apprentices, is employers and those relationships with employers. And so I would love the opportunity to find out if there is space for added apprentices, and especially added SNAP apprentices, within those workplaces of those employers, and I think that would be a great start to building some new trades apprentices in the Sahtu. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 392-20(1):  
PAVING THE INUVIK BYPASS ROAD

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, I may only have one question for the Minister of Infrastructure. Would the Minister commit in this House to me, to the residents of Inuvik, to the former AOC Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, to finally pave the muddy, dusty bypass road in Inuvik when the paving project starts for the Inuvik runway project? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the paving project for the airport is right now expected to be over 2027-2028 and somewhere in the course of that, we will be able to include the paving of the bypass road. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. That was the quickest set of questions and answers.

Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 393-20(1):  
EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS  
APPLICANTS PAYMENT PLANS

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm using my colleague from Mackenzie Delta's microphone; he's been very gracious.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister of Health and Social Services doing to clearly communicate to EHB applicants that they have payment plan options? 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, we've communicated this in different ways. So the application web

page has information about the payment plan options under the EHB menu system. This is new. As this came about, as the changes started rolling out, we realized that -- you know, that some people were asking these questions so we started to make things available. We also have a series of EHB Facebook posts, if people are on social media. There are changes made to the introductory letter that are being sent, that are those that are being accepted into the program which does -- is going to be stating that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what benchmark does the Minister of Health and Social Services need to see demonstrated that the band cutoff as currently working is appropriate, and how is this monitored? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** So, Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, additionally, when the rollout of the program, we made a -- we made changes on, you know, when Regular Members had, you know, raised issues with this and rolling it out. So what we did do is we waived from September 3rd, 2024, to August 31st, 2025, the deductible for the first ten income bands to be able to determine what the annual costs, so those Members that fell within that band two to ten, so they could determine what their actual costs are for the year, and then they were aware of what their deductible would be coming up for September 1st, 2025. As for how we're monitoring that, you know, we are only into it two months now, I think just over seven weeks. So what -- we will be monitoring the program, collecting the data on number of applications received, number of approved applicants, and distribution of applications across the income bands. We don't have any claims data, but this will also become part of the information analyzed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just frantically writing here.

Mr. Speaker, EHB was touted as a way to address cost savings by putting some costs back to those who could afford to pay a portion of their medical necessities. Can the Minister explain what cost savings we are anticipating based out on the rollout of this program extrapolating on the data collected to date over the last seven weeks, I guess. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, we have less than two months of data so the information on that work is expected to take place after we have a year. That was the commitment, you know, that we would look at all of the data after a year of running the program. But our expectations of saving is geared towards the sustainability of

the program. So as residents are sharing the cost of the benefits, total program cost to the government are offset which will help sustain the new program. It's also important to note that more people are now eligible for EHB than previously. As the costs of drugs and medical equipment were increased, residents' contributions will help to offset those. But we will continue to work to sustain the benefit program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what I'm hearing is we'll understand the data after a year but we'll make changes after a year. It's a little unclear, but I'm happy to talk to the Minister further.

Can the Minister explain how we are saving money of the administration of the -- if the administration of the EHB program has been exported to Alberta Blue Cross? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the administration of the GNWT public benefit plan has been contracted to Alberta Blue Cross since early 1990s. So Alberta Blue Cross is a non-profit organization that processes benefit claims for multiple organizations, both government and private. And Alberta Blue Cross has the infrastructure, the adjudication expertise, systems to do this, whereas GNWT does not have the capacity nor the financial resources to deliver this service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister for Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 394-20(1):  
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY CONDITIONS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are in reference to my Member's statement with the highway, summer and fall. What were some of the factors that caused the deterioration of the Dempster Highway between Wrangling River and Inuvik this summer and early fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Mackenzie Delta. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been a tough year -- or a tough season for a lot of the roads in the Northwest Territories, including this stretch of particular highway. There were some challenges this year with maintenance, Mr.

Speaker. One of the contracts that had gone out -- it went out, and there was a request for a negotiated contract. That slowed down the procurement process. We were able to ask the existing contractor to continue to maintain the road but certainly not the same as having someone in place more permanently. So although the work was getting done, it wasn't getting done perhaps with the same frequency that it would otherwise, so add to that some snowfall and -- or sorry, some early snowfall and some wet conditions and it certainly made things a little more difficult. Thank you.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What contingency plans, if any, have been put in place to address similar situations in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have the relevant contracts now awarded and that will provide more consistency in terms of the maintenance that is occurring in that region. Mr. Speaker, there's also some particular contracts related to larger scale repair work, for example dip repair right at the crossing, so -- and along with a number of other projects. And, again, a couple of them certainly did get delayed over this summer season but I can say, again, that those are now awarded. And what I'd suggest with respect to contingency is ensuring that there's a wider degree of overlap in terms of the timing of when contracts come due for the maintenance so that we don't wind up in a situation where there's any gap in time or any reduced services. Thank you.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past, I suggested that major maintenance be conducted during the seasonal closure of the highway when there's less traffic and all maintenance can be completed, including dust control. Has this option ever been considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to look back over time and see the degree to which that has been considered but also whether or not that impacts any of the work that's happening. As I've said, for right now the work that is coming through in terms of some of the repair of potholes and ruts that have arisen over the course of the summer, that is getting dealt with as much as possible before too much snowfall. And with the snowfall, they are doing what they can to, you know, still monitor and do some ice blading, some snow plowing, to try to mitigate where there were some tough spots. So, again, happy to take that back, Mr. Speaker, and see whether it's been considered or whether it can be something that can be implemented. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Final supplementary. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are there any indicators from recent activities, or lack of activities, where you feel the government should take back the responsibility of the infrastructure throughout the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the -- in fact, I would venture to say most -- the vast majority of our roads are maintained by contractors, third-party contractors, and not by -- directly by operators in the GNWT's employ. And, Mr. Speaker, yes, we can certainly always look to optimize that we are doing the best we can, so perhaps what I'll do is take that away and just have a direct conversation with the MLA to see whether or not there may be particular stretches, particular contracts, particular areas, that need another look and I'm certainly happy to have that conversation to make sure that we are serving the community. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Infrastructure. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 395-20(1):  
FAMILIES WITH ADOPTED CHILDREN

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Range Lake families with adopted children are struggling to get their loved ones the support and care they need once they go -- once they age into adulthood. Their disabilities and circumstances are no fault of their own and yet they are not being supported by the system. Does the Minister of Health and Social Services agree that families with adopted adult children have a right to the care they need regardless of their ability? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Range Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to specifically categorize but I think all residents, you know, have a right to the care that they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, knowing that, can the Minister explain why there's not a suite of services available to adult children -- or to children in social services who age into adulthood? There's no Pathfinders. There's -- it's very difficult to get information. I have constituents struggling to find answers. And when they're given, they're sent back to square one. So can the Minister find a way to

make this process better and indicate if she'll make that commitment on the floor of the House? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, within our child and family services we have extended services to the -- before I think it used to be to 18 and now it's expanded to 24. My understanding within the system, these supports are supposed to be there to assist. However, this -- like, you know, coming from the Member, this is -- I've never -- I haven't had this come up through my office before so I'm willing to work with the Member to deal with, if there's a certain specific case or a family that's not getting the services that they require, I would work with the Member. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will confirm with the Minister, because we have raised this with her office, but I -- we'll get to the bottom of that. But, Mr. Speaker, there is a paid -- a very successful paid pilot -- or paid community caregiver pilot project in the past, but it was discontinued due to lack of funds. This is a crucial support for these adult children in this situation. Can the Minister commit to bringing it back, or at least exploring the project to see if it could be brought back, within the next fiscal year? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is another area within NTHSSA that is unfunded. It was a -- it was a pilot but it was unfunded so it added to the deficit. And so what was done with this project after review that the services could be, you know, done from within. But what I can do to commit to the Member is to going back to that information that I received and be able to respond to the Member later. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, all social services has to offer support for adult children in this situation is through employment. We have excellent NGOs doing work like the disabilities council of Inclusion NWT, but you need to be employed to get the benefit. So what is the Minister -- what does the department do for adult children in the system, in care, that cannot find employment; how are they supported? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't speak to the details of this case so I will look forward to having a further conversation with the Member and with staff within my department. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 396-20(1):  
APPROVALS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what is being done to address the issue of micromanagement and burdensome approvals processes in the public service? This question is for the Minister of the public service. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to encourage every public servant to take the opportunity to use, whether it's the red tape reduction working group firstly, which [redtape@gov.nt.ca](mailto:redtape@gov.nt.ca) -- always happy to get that in when I can. But to submit if there's a specific process that is burdensome. Obviously it's the frontline workers who know that best. If they're running into a process, running into a program, running into something internally or even outward facing that is red tape-esq, then raising it specifically to the attention of this group is really quite important.

There's -- you know, beyond that, Mr. Speaker, there's certainly a number of management courses, too, from the perspective of ensuring that managers are not micromanaging. There's a lot of management courses out there. We are rolling out new training in this area and can certainly go back and ensure that this is one of the modules that we have in there, is that we want to empower the public service and not micromanage them. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister led perfectly into my next question which was going to ask, Mr. Speaker, what are we doing to empower staff in the public service to contribute meaningfully to decision-making? So it sounds like we're on the right track, and I'd be curious to hear from the Minister what we're doing in that regard. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do want to give another shout out, as I have on more than one occasion, that when we first put out the Restoring Balance initiative, we went to the public service and the public service responded. We had over 900 public servants respond directly with over 1800 suggestions, many of which were directly involved in the planning of how to develop and build up the main estimates within that context, a number of decisions -- or suggestions around efficiencies,



department amalgamations, even fleet management came up in the course of there. So those processes and those kind of linkages shouldn't have to wait for a special initiative. It certainly would be my hope that public servants see the pathways to put those ideas forward. But, again, you know, there are opportunities, whether it's through the red tape, whether it's through town halls that I conduct periodically to put ideas like that forward, and hopefully people continue to see that. But, again, we also do need to take, you know, some responsibility within our management. Every manager should be encouraging that from their direct reports and so on and so forth up the chain so that there's always that continuous opportunity for learning as an organization. So, again, happy to ensure that when we do our development training that we are emphasizing that. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I certainly like what I'm hearing from the Minister today. This is exactly the kind of thing I hope to see. I mean, it's -- it's not lost on me that despite what the Minister is saying, I'm still hearing from people, you know, about these issues so we've got work to do in some areas. I know that there's a difference between different departments and different teams, but it's an issue that I want us to be focusing on.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of what we're talking about here is the concept of flattening hierarchy in the system. I'm wondering if that's a concept the Minister's familiar with and is something that she's looking at as the Minister for the public service, what we can do within the public service to flatten out our hierarchies, empower staff, create better efficiency in the public service, and empower our staff. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge I have become a bit of a generalist in this job, not an expert. So I'm not going to purport to be an expert in flattening hierarchies. I certainly will commit to take that back to the Department of Finance. We -- you know, things have come up here over this last session, looking at Indigenous hiring, looking at empowering public servants, and looking at morale. And so I've already asked that the department and I sit down and take all those under consideration as soon as session's over. I'm going to add flattening hierarchy to that list. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 397-20(1):  
OVERDOSE-RELATED RCMP CALLS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question is for Minister of Justice, and it's a continuation of the addiction first responder.

Mr. Speaker, we know that illicit drugs are now outpacing alcohol as a source of society's miseries. I know that some people say drug abuse is simply a personal choice. Well, that's not the case in -- that's not the case in many of the small communities where drug dealers are giving drugs to youth and even children who are tempted and treat it like a candy, you know. Our youth are vulnerable and victimized. We need to do more for them. Our young people are dying. So I just want to ask the Minister regarding this that how many overdose related calls did the RCMP respond to in the territory in the last year? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have those numbers on hand so, unfortunately, I'm not able to provide that to the Member at this exact moment. Thank you.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Do the RCMP in the NWT carry naloxone kits? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what first response or medical training do the RCMP have?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So at minimum, they have first aid training. I'm not familiar with other types of medical training they might receive. But they're not paramedics, and I know they're often called on when anything happens. It doesn't matter what, the police are often your first call. So I want to make sure that they are not paramedics. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Well, they are -- in small communities, we call RCMP first, you know, which is good -- yeah, it's good to know. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask this question because there are over 900 Tlicho citizens living in Yellowknife, and we have quite a few incidents in Yellowknife related to drugs -- drug issues. We even have one young man that was killed, that was murdered in Yellowknife, and that's still unsolved. So I just want to ask the Minister, he doesn't -- I know he probably won't have the answer but I would like to have it in writing later. So what is the average ambulance response time in Yellowknife currently? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. That probably would not be a Minister of Justice response, but if the Minister of Justice wishes to address.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's more of a city of Yellowknife issue. They might have those numbers. So again, unfortunately, I don't have that but I will be looking into this further and seeing what sort of stats I can dig up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 398-20(1):  
PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE PLAN

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have further questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

So there have been many attempts over the years to plan what a proper NWT health care workforce should look like. Most recently, the physician workforce plan was prepared in 2020, lays out a vision for how physicians fit into an integrated model. Now I've seen references to this plan, but I haven't read it because it's not public. So, first, to the Minister, can this workforce plan be made public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned that there are many documents that are drafted within the health and social services as we move forward, this document was created in 2020. It was used at the time and the people in the territory may be aware that we used to have a physician-centered care model in the territory. The rest of Canada, and everybody knows -- and especially in the Northwest Territories -- we want a wholistic model for the Northwest Territories. And so, you know, whether or not this report, there are many reports within the health and social services that try to guide the work that they do.

As we move towards primary care reform, you know, like I mentioned in the previous comments is that, you know, there may be pieces out of this that have been used. As to the detail and the extent of that, I'm not prepared to be able to answer those questions here on the floor today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us if she's aware whether this 2020 physician workforce plan makes any

recommendations on what would be an appropriate number of patients to assign to an integrated primary care team like the ones we have now made up of physicians, nurse practitioners, and other practitioners? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this is very operational on the framework, as the Minister I don't -- you know, that is not something that I -- that's not where my expertise are, as to just finding what is the right amount of numbers. I mean, in this House, you know, we've heard many people say everybody wants a doctor. Well, everybody does. And in Inuvik, you know, you can go there and depending on the time of the day, you may get a doctor, you may get to see the nurse practitioner, you may get to see the nurse. In the health centre, you may not even get a nurse because there is no nurse. And there's many communities that don't have that. And so where -- you know, where this report is or where we're moving with primary care reform, you know, we're moving forward, Mr. Speaker. We're moving forward to try and look at the model that we're using currently today in this health care system. We can say everybody needs 25, 30 doctors in every community, but is that realistic? Is that what we're going to be able to do? So we're trying to meet the needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories in the primary care reform model. And I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it's important to consider how primary care access can be improved in the smaller communities outside regional centres, and my understanding is that a lot of work has been done to lay out what this model could look like, including in the physician workforce plan, such as having physicians be a territorial resource and assigning the same doctor or locum to a small community. So have steps been taken to implement this kind of model for physicians being used as a territorial resource to better serve smaller communities with primary care access? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, within the primary care reform, you know, whatever tools that they had, whether it be the physician work plan, you know, I can't speak to exactly what parts or which sections or -- that are being used. But what I'm being -- you know, being advised of is that this plan is being integrated and parts of it that meet the needs of primary care reform. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just following up on that, does the Minister have any indication -- she says steps are being taken to follow up on those ideas and models. Does the Minister have any indication as to a timeline that we're looking at for implementing this integrated primary care model in communities -- smaller communities outside Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now, as the implementation of integrated care teams, they are in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and Fort Good Hope at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services.

Colleagues, our time is up for oral questions. Oral questions. Written questions. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Improving Fertility and Family Planning Supports in the Northwest Territories.

In June 2024, 189 residents of the Northwest Territories petitioned the Legislative Assembly to direct the Minister of Finance to investigate the impacts to the territory of a declining birth rate and how it may impact population growth; the increased demand for fertility treatments for individuals and families to conceive in the Northwest Territories; and, the feasibility of providing fertility treatments at no upfront cost to the Government of the Northwest Territories by providing a territorial tax credit for individuals undergoing fertility treatments.

Although the GNWT responded that there has been a decline in the birth rate from 2013-2022, and that a decline in population, including the birth rate, would have significant implications on the territorial economy, in addition to GNWT own source revenues decreasing, the GNWT noted that it has no mechanism to track demand for in vitro fertilization or IVF.

To begin to understand the scope of the issue more fully, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services: \* a)

What additional resources are required to begin tracking prenatal screenings so that the GNWT can collect data on individuals struggling with infertility;

What additional resources or processes are required to allow for patients to self-report their usage of IVF supports for the purposes of data

collection to better understand territorial demand for IVF;

What additional resources would allow the Department of Health and Social Services to better track the number of IVF referrals to fertility clinics provided to Northwest Territories residents each year; and,

Can the department provide a comprehensive list of fertility-related issues, which could allow for medical travel supports for residents, in comparison to other jurisdictions?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Infrastructure.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 210-20(1):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 11:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE MOTOR VEHICLES  
ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 211-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
11: AN ACT TO AMEND THE MOTOR  
VEHICLES ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 212-20(1):  
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING  
\$250,000 (APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30, 2024)

TABLED DOCUMENT 213-20(1):  
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-  
2023-2024

TABLED DOCUMENT 214-20(1):  
2024-2025 CONSOLIDATED BUDGET

TABLED DOCUMENT 215-20(1):  
NWT CARBON TAX REPORT 2023-2024

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following six documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Statement of Consistency for Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 (April 1 to June 30th, 2024); Public Service Annual Report 2023-2024; 2024-2025 Consolidated Budget; and, Northwest Territories Carbon Tax Report 2023-2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure and Finance. Tabling of documents. Premier.

TABLED DOCUMENT 216-20(1):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 12:  
BUSINESS DAY STATUTE LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 217-20(1):  
UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE  
RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
ACTION PLAN COMMITTEE ANNUAL  
REPORT, AUGUST 2024

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 12: Business Day Statute Law Amendment Act; and, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan Committee Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 45-20(1):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE TO FEBRUARY 5, 2025

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, November 1st, 2024, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when this House adjourns on Friday, November 1st, 2024, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 5th, 2025;

And further, that any time prior to February 5th, 2025, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice;

And thereupon, the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it had been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 11:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE MOTOR VEHICLES  
ACT,  
CARRIED

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the second time.

The proposed, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, will allow police to move more quickly with their investigations. The bill amends the Motor Vehicles Act to update and clarify the ways in which the registrar of motor vehicles can share information about drivers, vehicles, and holders of general identification cards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Question has been called. The motion is carried. Bill 11 has been read for a second time and is referred to a standing committee of the Assembly for further consideration.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 12:  
BUSINESS DAY STATUTE LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 12, Business Day Statute Law Amendment Act, be read for the second time.

The proposed Business Day Statute Law Amendment Act corrects an error when changes were made to the Interpretation Act in 2017 which has resulted in some government offices technically being required to be open on Sundays. This Act will amend the Business Corporations Act, Consumer Protection Act, Judicature Act, and the Mechanics Lien Act, to deal with this problem and to ensure Sundays

are not interpreted as business days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 12 has been read a second time and is referred to the standing committee of the Assembly for further consideration.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Tabled Document 193-20(1), with Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

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

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 193-20(1), 2025-2026 Capital Estimates, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We'll take a short recess, and we'll resume, two minutes for you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 193-20(1), Capital Estimates 2025-2026, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Does the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment wish to bring witnesses into the chamber? Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Yes, please, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Would the sergeant-at-arms please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Would the Minister please introduce the witnesses.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Chair, to my left I have Pamela Strand, deputy minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. And to my right I have Nina Salvador, who is the director of corporate services. And I know I got that title wrong, I'm going to say. Director of knowing everything.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** All right, thank you, Minister. The committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to detail contained in tabled documents? Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment begins on page 45. We will defer the department totals and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning on page 46 with the economic diversification and business support, with information items on page 47. Are there any questions? I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Robertson Drive dock rehabilitation, I have been talking about this with the Minister for some time as it is in my riding. Can the Minister explain where we are at with the environmental -- or I guess, it's a technical assessment that was being conducted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the Member is right, that we did work with Department of Fisheries and Oceans, their small craft harbours division, in order to do a feasibility study. Part of that study was an environmental site assessment phase 1 and phase 2. The feasibility study that was conducted by fisheries and oceans found that the location didn't adequately fulfill the needs of the GNWT, and so we are currently working with both Infrastructure and ECC on next steps on that one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the Minister for that. I'm hoping the Minister might be able to explain, then, what the department wishes to do at that location. I'm sure she's quite aware that that location is a bit of a public safety issue. The grade of the road going down to the water is dangerous for folks who are using recreational craft, and it is a well loved docking area. So if she can expand on that a little bit more, I'd appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And absolutely agree with the Member that it is certainly a location that is frequented by multiple residents of Yellowknife.

Currently, we don't have a final decision on this property. I wanted to be very transparent with this House as to where this project stands. We're continuing to work with ECC and Infrastructure on that decision, and as soon as I do have further information from both departments and am able to work towards a decision and have one and have further information for the House, I'd be happy to share it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Recognizing that the Giant Mine remediation project will be shutting down some public access to Great Slave Lake, I would anticipate that this dock and other public points of entry will be greatly increased. So does the Minister have any contemplation of that impact on the Robertson Dock at this time? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we're certainly live to that and live to the increase in traffic expected, and we're definitely optimistic about identifying more suitable space and we are also, at the same time as working through this information, proactively working on identifying additional spots within town. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so in this line item, there is quite a bit of funding contemplated and I understand from the Minister's previous comments that they're looking for another location. Do they anticipate using the full dollar amount? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Member is right, this project is 100 percent funded by the Canada Infrastructure Program and we, at this time, are not optimistic that this funding is going to be able to roll into another project in this year but certainly, when I kind of have all of these pieces brought together, I would be very happy to update the House on the current status of this project once we get to that decision-making.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Nothing further.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any more questions from Members? I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So on this project, can the Minister explain how the city of Yellowknife has been engaged in planning for the project and how it both fits into the city's land use planning and sort of other sorts of planning, economic development planning? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we work to be as engaged as possible with the city. I definitely routinely meet with the mayor of Yellowknife as well as the city manager. I believe I just had a meeting this week although it's been -- I think that was Monday. It could have been Friday, but I think it was Monday. And so I do try to be as engaged as possible with colleagues from other branches of leadership and make sure that we're working together as best as possible.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister speak to specifically engagement on this particular project and whether the city has raised any questions or concerns about this project? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I can definitely share that the mayor has not raised concerns about this particular project to me but certainly this project's lifetime predates my time in this seat, and so with your permission, Mr. Chair, through yourself, I'd like to pass it to the deputy minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the city has expressed the want and desire to have a multipurpose site. We know that Robertson Dock is maybe a bit distant from, you know, the downtown core, and that's always been I think a comment that we've taken into consideration, but the availability of sites has been very limited. So we continuously seek their feedback and as we look on the new sites, on the options for them, we're working with the city on that one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, no, just to close that loop, I just encourage the Minister and her staff to continue to work closely with the city. I think there's a lot of goals that are aligned and, you know, there's efforts and resources at the city level, too, for economic diversification and business support, so just making sure that people are all pulling in the same direction and we don't either duplicate efforts or end up working at cross-purposes when, you know, we have scarce resources in this territory and certainly need to do everything we can to support economic diversification, including the fisheries industry and really boost the infrastructure we have for that here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I'll go back to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I absolutely agree, and I'm all ears for any opportunity to work together and to combine resources. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** That's all. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Is there any other Members have questions? Okay, don't see none.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, infrastructure investment, \$2,250,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you, Members. Please turn to page 48, minerals and petroleum resources with information items on page 49. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'd like to ask about the -- one of my favorite topics, the MARS system and to see where we're at. I note the costs continue to escalate on this project and so does the implementation date. So can the Minister provide an update to the House. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on this particular project, the original budget was \$4.2 million over a three-year time period and throughout the project, because of different delays, it was readjusted to a budget of \$3.7 million over five years. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Okay, thank you for the correction from the Minister. So are we still on track to have this implemented according to schedule? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to acknowledge the Member's comment about according to schedule. I think that's an important comment that the schedule has changed over the lifetime of this project.

Where it stands right now is the first component of the MARS project is the LTOS portion of it, and that is the land tenure optimization system that is currently being worked on ISSS. Originally, that piece of the project was going to get done first and then MARS would get done afterwards. And what we're currently working on is how we can marry these two projects together so that they can actually be built in parallel to one another so that we can work on improving that timeline that I know that the Member is referring to. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. So the estimated completion is 2026-2027? Is that still what the Minister -- is that still in line with this project; will the project stick to that completion date? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. That is certainly my goal, and our current go live date is June of 2026. For

further detail, Mr. Chair, can I pass to the deputy minister, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Yes, I'll go to the deputy minister.

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the Minister is referring to the first phase of LTOS of next year for the oil and gas go live, or probably before that. The implementation of MARS is expected for Q1 of 2027. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, I appreciate that. I know some prospectors will appreciate the clarity on that, and I look forward to the successful roll out of these systems. Sometimes it feels like Elon Musk is going to get to Mars before we do, so. That's it for puns. Thank you for the update. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Any further questions from Members? Okay, seeing none, I'll continue on. Thank you, Members. Please turn to -- sorry --

Okay, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, infrastructure investment, \$1,421,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Thank you, Members. Please turn now to page 50. Tourism and parks with information items on page 51, 52. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my first question is on the Blackstone Territorial Park fixed roof shelter. To what extent does the existing facility generate revenues which would contribute to cost recovery? Do we have a figure for how much revenue that facility generates annually?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so that facility is at a cost of \$75 a night to the renter. And as far as the overall cost of running the facility versus what we get back, our park system across the territory generally does cost the GNWT more than it receives in revenue. So we do subsidize our parks and camping experiences for users. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My next question is on a similar line but for a different project. So there's Prelude Lake Territorial Park marina anchoring system. My first question is what is the substantiation for this project?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, a lot of our projects have to do with maintaining assets that are already existing and also ensuring safety at the same time. So the last time that the territorial park marina went through extensive renovation was in 2017. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you. I was hoping the Minister might go into a bit more detail about this one and why it's needed. In particular, why the anchoring system needs repair or building out in particular; if the Minister could go into a bit more detail about the substantiation specifically for this?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you for that. So I can certainly go through what I have as far as detail on the background of this project for the Member. So as I said, the last extensive renovation was in 2017. That involved removing and replacing 43 boat slip sections and adjoining floating structures. Engineered design called for concrete anchors which do not provide enough anchoring support for the size and location of the structure. This has resulted in damage to the dock structure, additional anchoring weights being added, and many hours of maintenance to adjust the chains at the beginning of the boating season and throughout the year due to fluctuation in water levels. ITI has limited the size of vessels able to park at the marina to keep the dock weight manageable and safe; however, it hasn't been enough to secure the structure and mitigate the risk of movement during weather events. Maintenance on the dock to adjust chain lengths requires staff to be hunched over for long periods of time handling heavy weights with chain operating from a boat and around water putting maintenance staff at an unnecessary risk of injury. So as a result, we're looking to improve the dock's current structure so that staff won't have to be put in this type of unsafe conditions, and we can also ensure that we are putting a dock in place that is more essentially self-sufficient. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.



**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So you know, in the original design for this project do we have a contractor in place who should have built it differently; is there a reason why it's kind of not being dealt with through the contract? Was it just simply an in-house project and we need to kind of improve upon our design next time? Can the Minister give a bit of detail as to whether there was any opportunity for kind of fixing this through a contractor.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, essentially, there's a lot of history to this dock and currently we manage the marina in-house. It's a legacy asset that we do have, and so we are the contractors. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And similar to my further -- previous question, is maintenance and operation of this facility fully covered by user fees? And if not, to what extent is it covered by user fees?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that's not information that I have readily at my fingertips. But if we can't pull it up before the Member's last question, I'd be happy to provide that information at a later date.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister at least just ask me what -- or sorry, let me rephrase that.

Could the Minister detail for me what the cost per slip is at least so we can kind of get an idea. Like, what's the annual cost per slip? That will I think pretty quickly give us an idea of...

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have that information but I'm hoping that it's going to pop up on my screen. Unfortunately, I don't know the cost per slip annually for a slip at Prelude Lake. But if I can get that information, I'd be happy to share it with the Member.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I mean, regardless of what the Minister brings back, I think I just wanted to share the opinion on the record that I do think a facility like this should be fully cost recovered. I don't think it's the government's obligation to be offering kind of marina services, things like this, or if it is going to be doing it, it should be doing it in a cost recovery model. So I'll await the Minister's answers back on that. But at this time, I don't think -- well, I'll ask a few more questions actually while I have a bit of time.

The next one is substantiation for the Fort Simpson Territorial Park gatehouse residence. Can the Minister give Members some detail on that one and why it's being requested?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So currently the park does not have a designated park contractor residence which, in some cases, does not provide staff to always be on site during evening hours. So to accommodate public safety, ITI has designated one campsite where the contractors set up their camper to make sure staff are able to be on site at all times however in this case the new gatehouse residence will be able to accommodate staff, would enhance visitor safety in the park, and provide a space where park staff are present at all times in the park, which is how we operate in some of our parks but in this location they don't currently have that available to them. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are all my questions at this time though I am kind of awaiting the Minister pulling up a bit of information for me.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my questions are about the proposed Cameron River Crossing Territorial Park, the tent pad camping area, which would actually be within my riding.

The first question, which aspects of this project are planned for 2025-2026 and over how many years is it proposed to -- the construction of the project is supposed to extend for? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, in 2024-2025 is the completion of the conceptual design access road engineering. There's also the site survey in addition to community consultation. And then in 2025-2026, we would have the building of the access road, gate installation as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister clarify, she mentioned 2024-2025. Is that money or work that's all -- is that money that's already been expended and work that's already been done? Or what was the reference to 2024-2025? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, that is dollars that would have been allocated in a previous capital budget. However, because of evacuation, we did have some carryovers happen so that that will be carried over into this coming capital season. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. And so are you able to tell us what is the budgeted amount for the work that is to be completed in 2025-2026? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, the total capital funding amount for 2025-2026 is \$315,000.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so are there any aspects of the project that are not included in that \$315,000 that would have to be completed in a subsequent year and, if so, do we know how much that would cost? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much. So there is a carryover amount of \$50,000, and that amount would need to be completed before the \$315,000 can be spent.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Yellowknife North Member.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. But my question was does the \$315,000 include not only an access road, does it include building all the campsites, does it include the outhouse, does it include the full cost of building the project? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So I -- sorry, I do understand the Member now. Thank you. So.

In 2026-2027, an outhouse and campsite development will be completed, so there will require additional funding in future years for that as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Do we have any idea, is there any cost estimate for what campsite development and outhouse development would be? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have that information on hand at this time, but -- yes, I don't have that information on hand at this time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So how much annual revenue is this new campground expected to bring in? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. That's approximately \$9,000 annually.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. So that is far, far, far less than the cost of building this.

Who was the target market for this new campground or the demographic that we are trying to cater to here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, about 53 percent of our visitors to our parks annually are non-NWT residents but that means that 47 percent are NWT residents that use our parks. In the case of this, we do end up with a lot of information about people camping on the side of the road and using those spaces. A lot of those people we know are Northerners as well, and so this is targeting both residents and non-residents. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So to clarify, the idea is to stop people from setting up tents on the side of the road and to instead provide a campground where they can set up tents? Is it to prevent people from doing anything, like, illegally camping or just that we feel that people would prefer to pay to stay in a tent campground beside the road instead of just camping somewhere else on public land? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is a project that kind of fills multiple needs in the territory and offers a type of back country camping experience for people that are looking to camp in something that's not kind of a designated Fred Henne style camp experience and so affords, you know, our back country rugged visitors and Northerners something other than a traditional campground type experience and also alleviates the need for some additional spillover when our sites are full up or when people want a different experience and they're camping in spaces that aren't traditionally for camping out at the Ramparts for example. So it fills multiple, multiple needs, and it also sits directly on a paddler route -- a well-used paddler route in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm really confused. The Minister is talking about back country camping, but my understanding was that you would be able to drive to this campground. Can the Minister clarify what aspect of this is back country? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I guess there's a lot of different people have different definitions and when you have to get out of your vehicle and you hike in with a backpack on your back and set up next to a road, whether that's 20 feet or, you know, 20 hours, it's still something that is different than the traditional camp experience. It is something that fills a need in the territory and so that's why this exists. I think that we'll have a multitude of different people using it. I could see people from, you know, along the North Slave wanting to go out for a weekend. I can see people from down south coming up and wanting to have an experience that isn't next to RVs and campers and a quieter experience. And so I think that this speaks to the need to have different experiences for people using our parks, and we don't have one of these types of setups in the North Slave at this point. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The last question is was this conclusion reached that we have, like, a hole that -- or a gap that we need to fill here, was that based on some kind of survey or -- like, who has the department talked to to determine that we have this unmet need or this market for this kind of campground? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we often hear about people along the Ingraham Trail who have cabin leases or who are using areas along the trail that they find people kind of camping in different spaces so it allows us to use existing space that we have within ITI in order to provide an experience that people are very clearly looking for. It operates on -- or will operate on an honour system and affords access to kind of off-the-beaten-path style camping both for residents and non-resident alike. It is another way for us to attract people to the territory and also another route for us to afford on land experiences for residents. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** That's all my questions at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Next on my list I have the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is about the 60th Parallel Territorial Park outhouse that's at Enterprise, wheelchair accessible outhouse. Is that -- you're going to build a new outhouse there, or is it going to go with the existing outhouse that's by the territorial park? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, this is the installation of a gravity-fed water system to upgrade the existing outhouses and potentially capable of supporting flush toilets. These enhancements would increase the number of total outhouses on site at the pullout to three. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member of the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is that going to be used year-round? Is that the year-round access? If it's year-round, it will be heated I'm assuming? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The answer to those questions are yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Oh, that's awesome. I have a lot of people that travel back and forth and they're probably really happy right now to hear that news. What is the cost of that going to be to build that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we've budgeted \$110,000 for this project.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Another question I have on another one is what is the fencing upgrades and security camera installation for Inuvik Happy Valley Territorial Park; why cameras and fencing? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, unfortunately, and I think that we've -- it's no secret that a lot

of times the capital dollars that we invest in capital investments often are vandalized and we end up in a very frustrating situation where we are trying to stretch our dollars as far as possible in order to serve residents of the Northwest Territories and we end up with things being vandalized and destroyed. And so this here is in response to arson, vandalism, theft, and trespassing occurrences that have resulted in infrastructure damage that has exceeded tens of thousands of dollars. And so this is not something we normally do at parks, but in response to trying to preserve the investment of hard-earned tax dollars of the people of the Northwest Territories, this is one of the things that we are trying out. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So that is just for monitoring for the winter months? Because it's closed in the summer, right? So are you doing this to monitor in the summer as well as the winter or just in the summer? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much. I believe that it is year-round, but I want to -- if you wait two seconds, I've got a staff member typing. But yes -- yes, we have summer -- or staff on site in the summertime and so this would be for the additional months but certainly would have them up all year-round, and they would be in place and able to afford us information year-round. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Nothing further. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Next on my list, again, I'll go back to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm just wondering if the Minister's had a chance to pull up answers to the questions I was asking about the marina anchoring system.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. So the cost of the slips are \$632.52 for each season. This includes taxes. And unfortunately, I cannot provide the Member with kind of the break-even point on that one at this point but would be happy to follow up with the Member further in writing. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess what I'm looking for is would the Minister commit to converting this facility to a cost-recovery facility going forward?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm certainly willing to provide the information to the Member and provide the information of what that might look like and examine the options that we have at our fingertips in order to see what the future holds for this slip. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So noting that as it stands, this is an asset management item and the substantiation that the Minister shared with us, I mean, I'm taking it that even if we do convert it to cost recovery, we would need this budget item to move forward for them to be able to carry out the work because I assume they'd need to kind of come up with some kind of model to sort of generate funds to be able to call it cost recovery. So can the Minister sort of explain how that might work -- yeah, so we can understand how it works in the budget.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to pass to the deputy minister for first crack at that one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

**MS. PAMELA STRAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So our costs right now are embedded within our O and M budget. For example, the parks contracts that we give, right now our current parks contractor manages that marina, and the maintenance staff open it every spring and put it to bed in the fall. And so those O and M costs -- I mean, surely, we will get the costs for what it costs to manage but you're right, you know, this is a big project for us. Generally, we don't have these type of line items in the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, yeah, I mean, my comments stand that I think facilities like this, you know, need to be -- I think we need to be thinking in a time when the government is having so much difficulty paying its bills, looking at facilities like this and targeting them for becoming cost recovery if we can. But at this time, I mean, we're looking at an item of asset management too and once we have an asset, we do need to maintain it. So I am in support of keeping this in here but would like the department to get that information to us and discuss how we can -- how we can recover our costs for providing facilities like this. Thank you. I have no more questions on these items for now, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any questions from Members? Seeing none.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, infrastructure investments, \$2,978,000. Does the committee agree? Mr. Morse -- sorry, I will go to the Member from Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 49-20(1):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 193-20(1): 2025-2026  
CAPITAL ESTIMATES – INDUSTRY,  
TOURISM AND INVESTMENT – TOURISM  
AND PARKS – REDUCE INFRASTRUCTURE  
INVESTMENTS,  
DEFEATED

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment -- sorry, just reading this motion here.

The Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Capital Estimates, be reduced by \$865,000. And I can give some more substantiation for that motion in a second. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Thank you. The Member from Frame Lake has put a motion forward to reduce the budget by \$865,000. The motion's in order. To the motion. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To give Members some substantiation for what I'm looking to do here, I'll just give my substantiation for each individual project I'm looking to remove from the budget.

First is the Fort Simpson gatehouse residence. In the substantiation, they note -- you know, as the Minister shared with us, this is a site where the current park operator maintains a presence

using an RV and this one, I just feel like adding new infrastructure to our parks right now, in a time when we are trying to conserve costs, is just not justifiable. I think that the way the park is being managed right now is reasonable, and so I would like to remove that line item.

The next one is the Blackstone Park fixed roof structure. The bottom line here is I don't believe this additional structure is a need-to-have and would prefer that this kind of money be going towards housing maintenance or construction. So I am suggesting that we cut that one knowing that we are not recovering or costs from these facilities. We can't keep adding to the number of facilities that we have to build and maintain.

The third item -- line item that I'm looking to remove with this motion is the Cameron Crossing Park. With this one, I simply don't agree with the substantiation for the park and, again, note that the cost of building and maintaining these facilities is growing and the more that we continue to grow these costs for construction, for maintenance, the more money that we have to pour into O and M, this is the slow growth, the death by a thousand cuts, that is preventing us from being able to afford to run the territory. And so I think we need to scrutinize these projects carefully and we have to look at what we can and can't build. I see this one, again, it's a project that would be a nice-to-have, but we are not in a government right now that is able to be looking at nice-to-haves. And so I'm very happy with the parks infrastructure that we have. I enjoy it myself almost every year. I've been to many of the parks in the NWT and absolutely love them, but I just don't think that we are in a time right now where we should be growing our parks infrastructure. So with that, Mr. Speaker -- or sorry, Mr. Chair, I have brought forward a couple of cuts where I'm looking at items where we're building new. Anything related to asset management I support, and I think we do need to be maintaining the assets that we've got, but when we're talking about questions about growing our assets, that's a different conversation. And I think -- you know, I've been very clear in some of my statements that I want to be focusing on our priorities. Our priorities include housing. And it would be my intention that this money be put, if possible, by Cabinet into Housing NWT's capital budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, you could speak to the motion. Is there anybody else that wants to speak to the motion? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I want to echo many of the points raised by my colleague from Frame Lake. I also am concerned with our fiscal situation and concerned with us continuing to build new infrastructure that is neither meeting basic needs, nor delivering us back enough revenue to cover the costs of building and maintaining and operating it. And in particular, when I was looking at the proposal for the new Cameron River Crossing Territorial Park, first I want to say I do appreciate that we have staff that are trying to think creatively and think outside the box of new ideas and ways that we can serve residents; I really do appreciate that. In this particular case, I'm not convinced that there is a significant market that is currently being unserved by our current options. I didn't hear any evidence that there was some kind of survey or like sort of, you know, scientific evidence or data that was collected on need. And certainly, I spend a lot of time out camping in tents off of the Ingraham Trail and many of those paddling routes that are in that area that were mentioned, and it was mentioned that this could be sort of an overnight stopover, and I've -- I've never found the need, and no one I know who does similar things, has ever felt the need to tent in a roadside established campground before heading out on the back country route that your destination is. So what we're looking at is \$365,000 just initially, and that doesn't even cover the cost of actually building the campsites or the outhouse, so we don't even know what that additional cost would be in future years. And so I just don't think it's a good idea to proceed with this idea -- with this project. Instead, I would suggest what I have heard a lot, from both residents, constituents, and people who frequent camping spots and cabin spots along the Ingraham Trail, is where we do have a dire need for improved infrastructure is out at Tibbitt. And that's just in the sense of needing more garbage cans and toilets. So it's an extremely well-used area. It's a jumping off point to many other canoe routes, cabin routes, and we don't even have, you know, garbage cans and toilets and so people end up just leaving, you know, refuse all over the place. And so to me, I think we need to start with just looking at our existing needs and just stick with the basics. So that's where I would, you know, direct us to look to first before we start thinking of brand-new projects as complex as a new campground. So with that, I'm prepared to support the motion of my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whatever the last two speakers said, I say the opposite. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Is there any other Members that want to speak to the motion? I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess a couple of things, and just off the top of my head while we're sitting here listening to colleagues and what they're saying about these projects, I guess where I will start is that, you know, while I absolutely respect that one of the priorities of this Assembly is housing, absolutely certainly, we also have other priorities of this Assembly, one of which is economic development and one of which is access to health care and also mental health. One of the things that comes to mind, for myself, is that during COVID, it became very clear how many residents of this territory rely on our parks to get out, get on the land in a place that is accessible, and where they also feel safe. And 47 percent of our park visitors are NWT residents that are using these spaces to have their outdoor time. So it has been substantiated by residents that these are important facilities to them.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories doesn't run these parks on an annual basis. These parks are run by businesses, by Northerners, who are contractors and who bid on RFPs and come in and do this work. The people who do the work as far as coming in, bidding on projects, and doing this work are largely northern businesses.

One of these projects is located in Nahanni Butte. That is a potential for local economic development outside of Yellowknife and in a community. Another one of these projects is in Fort Simpson. And one of the things that I think is really important to remember here is yes, there's the economic development piece but a lot of these projects have to do with safety. And so when we're talking about putting a gatehouse residence into Fort Simpson, the current person who had the contract uses an RV. That doesn't mean that the next person is going to have access to an RV in order to secure that contract and do that work. And that is a contract that will be going back out to RFP and will be put back out there.

In regards to all of these places, they are a driver of tourism which we know is definitely a light in our territory. We are finally back up to pre-COVID tourism numbers, and we hope to see those continue to grow with increased interest in the North and something that we

want to be able to support. Regardless of whether or not these dollars are here, we have an onus and a responsibility, we have a liability, to upkeep the infrastructure that we have. And if we don't upkeep it, then we have to spend money to tear to down. So the Blackstone Park fixed roof, that's an -- or that's an existing structure. So if I can't fix it, I'm going to have to come back to this house for money in order to tear it down. So either way I'm spending money on it.

I think it's also worthwhile pointing out, Mr. Chair, that this motion doesn't call for dollars to be specifically removed from this section. It calls for dollars to be removed from ITI as a whole. And I think it's worth noting that ITI as a whole has routinely seen budget decreases over the years but is constantly expected to do more and be a bit of a beacon as far as attracting investment to the territory and continuing to drive economic development and has some pretty -- they've got a pretty bossy Minister, Mr. Chair, who expects them to do a lot of things and expecting them to do that with less money is a huge concern for me. So I just want to raise that these are huge opportunities for local contractors to be able to take this on. And like I said, if I'm losing money here in order to do this work, I'm going to have to come back and ask for money in order to undue what's already there. So thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, the motion's in order. Question has been called. All those in favour to the motion, please put your hands up so we could read it for the record. Okay, thank you. All those opposed to the motion? Thank you. The motion is not carried.

---Defeated

Committee, I will call activity summary, department Industry, Tourism, and Investment, parks and infrastructure, \$2,978,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Thank you, Members. Please return now to the Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment summary found on page 45.

The Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment, 2025-2026 Capital Estimates, \$6,649,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 50-20(1):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 193-20(1): 2025-2026  
CAPITAL ESTIMATES – INDUSTRY,  
TOURISM AND INVESTMENT – DEFERRAL  
OF DEPARTMENT,  
CARRIED

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the capital estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion's in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion's carried. Consideration of the Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment, 2025-2026 Capital Estimates, total department is deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. And thank you, minister. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the chambers. Thank you.

I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. 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? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

---BRIEF RECESS

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 193-20(1) and would like to report progress with one motion carried. 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 for Tu Nedhe Wiilideh. Can I have a seconder, please. Member from the Deh Cho. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day, Madam Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kim Wickens):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, October 31st, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
  - Motion 44-20(1), Performance Audit of the Management and Governance of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority
17. Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills



## 18. First Reading of Bills

Bill 15, Northwest Territories  
Indigenous-Led Conservation Fund  
Establishment Act

## 19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the  
Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 193-20(1), 2025-  
2026 Capital Estimates
- Committee Report 17-20(1),  
Standing Committee on Procedure  
and Privileges Report on the  
Review of the Rules of the  
Northwest Territories Legislative  
Assembly
- Committee Report 18-20(1),  
Standing Committee on Procedure  
and Privileges Interim Report on the  
Report of the Chief Electoral Officer  
on the Administration of the 2023  
Territorial General Election

## 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

## 22. Third Reading of Bills

## 23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Clerk. This  
House stands adjourned until Thursday,  
October 31st, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

