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**LEGISLATIVE  
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**HANSARD**

**Friday, February 7, 2020**

Pages 39 – 60

**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**  
(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**  
(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**  
(Sahtu)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**  
(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*

**Ms. Julie Green**  
(Yellowknife Centre)

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**  
(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

**Hon. Katrina Nokleby**  
(Great Slave)  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Mr. Steve Norn**  
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**  
(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**  
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**  
(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**  
(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

**Hon. Diane Thom**  
(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**  
(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Justice*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Friday, February 7, 2020****Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Hon. Katrina Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Diane Thom, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 10:00 a.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Good morning, colleagues. We have a personal explanation from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I want to provide a personal explanation to this House today about the matter of the termination of the associate deputy minister of post-secondary education renewal.

Media reporting yesterday gave the impression that I was not consulted by the Premier on the decision to terminate the employment of the former associate DM. I want to state clearly that this was not the case.

The fact is over the last number of months I have had a number of discussions with the Premier's office regarding the management of Aurora College and the Aurora College transformation team. Two weeks ago, I approached the Premier and expressed my belief that a change needed to happen, and it needed to happen sooner than later.

While I was not personally involved in the negotiations that took place following that discussion, nor was I aware of the final details of the arrangements, I was certainly aware of the ultimate outcome and support the Premier in her decision.

I want to assure Members that Cabinet believes firmly in being accountable to the public for its decisions, but there is a fine line between being accountable and ensuring that we respect the dignity and privacy of our public servants.

We will make every effort to communicate openly about what is happening in departments, but we have to be sure that we do not say anything uncomplimentary or unprofessional in public.

As a result, we cannot and should not be discussing individual public servants in the Legislative Assembly or in the media, and I will not

be commenting further on this matter in public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 4-19(2):  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANDATE**

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, later today, I will be tabling the Mandate of the GNWT 2019-2023. The mandate will guide our actions as a government and serve to hold Cabinet accountable as we work to advance the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

The Northwest Territories faces unprecedented challenges. We have been elected in a time of global economic uncertainty, increasingly complex social issues, and multifaceted impacts of climate change.

In the face of these challenges, I truly believe that the only way our Assembly can fulfill its promise to the residents of the Northwest Territories is to work together in the true spirit of consensus government. I speak on behalf of all Cabinet Members when I say we are committed to a government that is open, collaborative, and cooperative.

The mandate is built from the priorities we set together as newly elected Members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly in October 2019. It is strengthened by the input and advice we received from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

I wish to thank standing committee for their willingness to work with us. Our shared commitment to cooperation and collaboration as Members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly gives me confidence in what we can achieve over the next four years.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that all Members of this Assembly will see their insights, ideas, and suggestions reflected in this mandate. I trust that residents will see a set of clear and measurable actions needed to make progress within the life of this Assembly and to hold this Cabinet to account

as we work towards achieving our priorities. I look forward to working together in advancing the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly through the implementation of the mandate.

Our mandate provides a path forward, yet it is not written in stone. We will encounter the unexpected, and we must be able to adjust course as needed.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke of challenging times and the need to work together to actualize our priorities. Working together cannot be done in the isolation of this House. We need to take the time to listen to those impacted by our services and to people working on the front lines of some of our most challenging issues. We all need to work together: Cabinet, Regular Members, Indigenous and community governments, and the federal government. We must remain mindful of each community's unique challenges and opportunities. We are committed to meaningful, positive change in the way this government does business.

Very soon, this Assembly will debate the budget and what that means to advancing our priorities. We must bear our overall fiscal situation in mind as we make decisions in the weeks ahead, and we must exercise caution to only commit to actions we have the means to achieve.

Mr. Speaker, there will always be more that we can do, but we know our needs outweigh our resources. This Cabinet welcomes the insight of Regular Members and looks forward to discussing how we can best apply our limited resources to achieve our priorities, but now more than ever we need to be realistic in our expectations, creative in our approaches, and focus on making the most of what we have.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly brings together leadership from across the Northwest Territories, from backgrounds as diverse as our landscape and peoples. We have been called a historic government in terms of our gender balance. We have begun to foster effective dialogue between Cabinet and Regular Members, in the spirit of consensus government. We have expressed our desire and willingness to make the changes our people want to see, especially in the area of Indigenous relations, social outcomes, and economic outlook.

The 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories sets the direction for how we can seize opportunities to make this a pivotal term in the governance of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 5-19(2):  
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT  
ON EDUCATION SYSTEM

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada was tabled on the Audit of Early Childhood and the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system in the Northwest Territories. The report focused on five areas: inclusive schooling; Indigenous language and culture-based education; equitable access to quality education; programming, staff qualifications, and training in licensed early childhood programs; and how these areas worked to support student outcomes.

The tabling of this report is timely, falling at the beginning of a new Legislative Assembly that has made it a priority to increase education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada. The recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General align with the areas where we have already begun to make changes or are planning to invest more resources and improve programming, and we have accepted their recommendations.

While we are making some headway and seeing promising results with programs like Northern Distance Learning, small communities remain in greater need of support.

One of our highest priorities over the life of this government is to ensure equitable education delivery in all communities across the territory. We will be increasing our efforts to address the achievement gap among small communities and larger centres, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, to ensure that our education system is on par with the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, later today the department is holding a technical briefing on the five-year evaluation of the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Renewal and Innovation Framework. As with the Auditor General's report, this evaluation provides us important information on where select programs are working, where they need to improve, and whether they should be restructured to meet the needs of students.

We expect to table our management response in the coming weeks to incorporate the recommendations of the Auditor General and the findings of the Education Renewal and Innovation Evaluation. A renewed education renewal innovation action plan will follow later this year.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that education is a cornerstone for a healthy and successful life. However, we can only be successful through the work of many partners, and education is only one of the building blocks. We will continue to work across

departments and with Indigenous governments, parents, students, and with our education and community partners to ensure we close the gaps to improve student outcomes and provide youth with our best efforts for the future they deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 6-19(2):  
2020 HOCKEY DAY IN CANADA

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to rise and speak to Members about the celebration of the 2020 Hockey Day in Canada being hosted here in Yellowknife. The celebration was launched on February 5<sup>th</sup> and will continue to the 8<sup>th</sup>.

This event marks the ninth year of the festive celebration, celebrating hockey, one of Canada's national sports. Norman Wells, Detah, N'Dilo will also play host to visits associated with Hockey Day in Canada, as well as Deline, which is the birthplace of hockey in Canada.

The festivities will bring children's hockey and officiating clinics, various hockey games, school visits, NHL celebrities, and, of course, the Stanley Cup to Yellowknife.

Celebrities participated will be part of the festive, including television host Ron McLean, along with NHL alumni Lanny McDonald, Brian Trottier, Paul Coffey, Wendel Clark, Darcy Tucker, and former Women's National Team member Cassie Campbell-Pascal.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the City of Yellowknife for planning this event. Thank you to the sponsors, including Scotiabank, for your support of each of the great community event. Thank you to all of our guests for coming to the North. We hope you are enjoying our world-renowned northern hospitality.

I would also like to give special thanks to all of the volunteers who help make this event happen in all the different venues.

There have been a number of events that are a part of the celebrations, including:

- The Music of Hockey with performance by local artists, hosted at the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre this past Wednesday evening;
- The banquet held last night, which featured Ron MacLean, and NHL Alumni Hot Stove discussions in the Stanley Cup;

- An NHL Declaration of Principles Breakfast hosted by NHL Alumni Andrew Ference this morning; and
- Later this evening, the Celebrity and Alumni Classic hockey game.

As mentioned earlier, there have also been various hockey and officiating clinics and school visits scheduled throughout the festivity.

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful community event, which not only honours the great sport of hockey, but also showcases the North, Northerners, and the incredible spirit of the community that we all share in this very special place. Thank you once again to all involved for making such a wonderful event happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON APPRECIATION TO THEBACHA CONSTITUENTS

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to use my Member's statement to take the time to give thanks and appreciation to my constituents of Thebacha.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend, on February 1, 2020, I had an open house for my constituents in Fort Smith, and it was a very well attended event. My constituents really enjoyed having the opportunity to meet with their MLA and hear the updates I had to share with them for what I have been working on since getting elected.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be the Member representing Fort Smith. Showcasing your community at this level is a tremendous opportunity for all Members of this 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly. I also would like to thank the staff who serve the Members of this Assembly for their hard work and ability to keep us informed always. I want to wish everybody a great weekend, and I look forward to continued dialogue on matters that concern the community of Fort Smith and the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, it is high school graduation rates in our territory. I wouldn't want to be in the Education Minister's

shoes because of yesterday's tabled Auditor General's most recent report on performance audit on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education across out territory.

Regular Members had the opportunity to meet with the Auditor General staff to hear about the findings, things that shocked me, Mr. Speaker. ECE is using an outdated method to calculate graduation rates. The audit found that ECE reported a graduation rates that are 72 percent in 2017. Using a more accurate method, the Auditor calculated the actual rate was 44 percent, Mr. Speaker. We are graduating less than half our kids, and ECE is telling us they are closer to three-quarters. Now, that is a cause for a red alert across our territory; not only that, in my riding of Nunakput, Mr. Speaker.

To make matters worse, the audit found students in smaller communities had lower graduation rates, fewer kids than Yellowknife. The overall graduation rate is 44 percent, and what does that say about our graduation system for our kids in Nunakput, in our smaller communities, and other ridings?

The audit was pretty critical of the practice of social passing, which is something I have been against for a long time. In the past, I have brought this up seven times in Member's statements, and it has to stop. That percentage of students repeating grades from dropping out "increased dramatically" from students from grade 10, the year in which social passing is no longer an option. When we keep moving our kids through the system, even though they are not keeping up academically with their peers, we are treating them as no better than cattle through a slaughterhouse, Mr. Speaker. We are setting them up for failure.

We have to stop social passing. The policy of this government has to stop. We have to take responsibility for making sure that our kids are learning and understanding the curriculum before they are moving on to the next grade. Period.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Government Operations is holding a public hearing and audit on this report and will be making recommendations to this government on how ECE should be implementing changes across the audit on their deficiencies. I am putting this Minister on notice and the Members to expect to see detailed implementation with a plan, timelines that are provided to Regular Members to have input into fixing this mess that our education system is in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to highlight a couple of areas from the Auditor General Report on Education in the Northwest Territories.

Under the section of planning, supporting the delivery of education, where it says the department did not take sufficient action on key elements of education delivery, the slow process on Indigenous language and culture-based education: in my community, the schools have had language classes, and they have language teacher. These teachers are amazing, but we are losing our language. We are losing Inuvialuktun. We are losing Gwich'in in our communities, in our region. We have few elders left and a few adults who can speak fluently. Who will continue to teach this when they are gone?

The students are not using their language beyond the classes. This is not enforced on them.

I will have to say, Mr. Speaker, our school in Inuvik has done many improvements in providing culture-based education, and I want to commend them on that. They do moose hunting. They do trapping. They do geese hunting. They do a lot of ice fishing. They go from kindergarten to whatever high school grade that wants to go with them.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do something before the remainder of our language speakers are gone.

I am going to move into the section of improved support for inclusive schooling, like my colleague. Leaders, families, education boards, DEAs have been saying for years this is not working in our students. The idea seems great, but without adequate funding, adequate trained staff, and money for continuous training, this has failed our children, and we see it in grade 10, where there are 40 percent who have to repeat and another 15 percent drop out. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable.

I will move into the section in monitoring the delivery of education where they did not adequately monitor the education system with data collection analysis. This goes to my colleague. Now that it is public, we know that our graduation rates are worse than previously stated, and especially in our Indigenous students, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in order for us to succeed in all aspects of life, we must be able to ensure that our children are receiving the best education. If we all can receive equitable education and graduate more of our own NWT residents, we will be less reliant on the outside workforce to provide the jobs



in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Education.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ON-THE-LAND TREATMENT AND AFTERCARE

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] When we talk about addiction, there are a lot of different issues surrounding that. A lot of community members are on a healing path, and sometimes they go through difficult issues with dealing with their wellness.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is a 28-day program, and that does not mark the end of the journey for such people. It's just the beginning. They are also having issues with an after-care program. Once they return, they do not have that support system in the community. We have a lot of elders who can help the community. Maybe we need to take a look at this issue. [Translation ends]. [English translation not available].

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL ISSUES

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In my statement yesterday, I spoke about the ongoing problems with the new Stanton Territorial Hospital building. I got a first-hand look at some of the issues while I was a patient in the emergency ward for a day in mid-December; frozen doors, alarms ringing, and a multitude of locked doors. At the same time, a constituent of mine was a patient upstairs for almost two weeks. He said that it seemed to him that a new problem would emerge every day. Problems included frozen doors, plugged toilets, alarms ringing, and freezing cold patient rooms. He was covered in blankets and saw staff walking around wearing long underwear and draped in blankets themselves. It seems no one could get or stay warm in this brand new, \$350-million building. My constituent came to the conclusion that the boiler was too small for the size of the hospital and the demands of northern cold. I don't think the heat regulation issue has been resolved because I continue to hear of patients complaining they are cold.

The problems at the new hospital are not only about the building. A letter from a group calling themselves NWT Nurses said they were working nonstop in the lead-up to the move in May and afterwards, putting their own health as well as the health of their patients at risk. An official in the

Department of Health said in early June that the hospital had a 13-percent vacancy rate, equal to 37 nurses. In July, the Union of Northern Workers launched a campaign called "Worried But Working" to draw the public and management's attention to the nursing shortage and the workarounds required by the problems of the building itself. The union requested a steering committee be struck to find solutions.

Mr. Speaker, it has now been eight months since the new hospital opened. The former head of the hospital said it typically takes six months for a building like this hospital to stabilize its system, but six months is up, and many of the problems reported at the beginning continue. What about the nursing shortage? Have new hires alleviated the problem of nurse burn-out? It's time for the Minister of Health and Social Services to update the public on efforts to address the start-up issues at the new hospital. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIES

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to touch on the topic that the Government of the Northwest Territories has been initiating climate change strategies to combat the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. Nowhere in any of the documents says that we will accept only 10 percent moving forward, and I assume with this climate change strategy we are going to go in 100 percent.

My concern is because I know in our communities for the past 10 years, we have been putting wood pellet boilers into our schools and our health centres on the new builds, so we have been going that route for quite some time. The only company in my community that does not adhere to any climate change strategies to combat greenhouse gas emissions is probably the power provider in my community, which is Northland Utilities, and they are not the only ones. There is NTPC that is in other communities that are burning only diesel generation plants, and, when you drive by them, you just see a puff of smoke coming out of their plants. They are not in any way trying to help the residents of the Northwest Territories lower their costs of power, especially for electrical power. We don't see that. We don't have a voice anywhere. There is no watchdog in our government to really tell these guys, "Hey, we want you to look at alternative initiatives."

Getting back to my statement, there was a document in 2014 that discussed or stated that they

were planning on running the transmission line to Fort Providence. Since that time, as I was looking around, I didn't see any further discussion or statements or reports in this regard, so I assume it just went by the wayside; it was put aside. Especially that initiative at that time, there was no notices or letters or anything given to the Hamlet of Fort Providence that there was an initiative, and currently there isn't. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** We have a concern here. We've got a strategy out there. Nobody is really adhering to it, especially the power companies, and, like I said, the watchdog group is not there. We thought the Public Utilities Board would have been, but apparently they have other duties to regulate them, that they don't ask the power companies to come up with any type of a strategy. I think I am going to have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER HOMELESSNESS SERVICES FOR MEN

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is important to me at this moment in time is the homeless situation for men in Hay River. We have a number of people living on the streets in this cold weather. With all the resources we have at our disposal, we allow it to happen. Why? Because these very people who we know, who we grew up with, and who are our friends do not routinely contact us as they are just trying to stay warm and stay alive. In this situation, we have to be proactive and take the first step in making contact and identifying immediate solutions before somebody freezes to death.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine yourself walking around outside all day, trying to keep warm, with no place to stop and rest? I know I cannot. You can only understand it if you live it. Maybe we, with some of the bureaucracy, should go live on the street for a few days or a week so that we can get some small understanding of what some people have to go through day to day, month after month, year after year. This government needs a reality check when it comes to the homeless, and experiencing living on the street may just do that.

When we talk about addressing the homeless situation, that is usually what we do: just talk. There are all types of temporary solutions that would

work. However, when this government gets involved, it morphs into an unattainable major project that goes nowhere due to lack of funding, liability issues, government red tape, and the "not in my backyard" argument. Government has to be involved in a supporting role to identify and commit the resources required to support workable solutions identified and put forth by the community, and those people who are homeless, as well.

In Hay River, we currently have a group of concerned people and institutions working together to provide a temporary and immediate solution for a men's warming shelter to cover off this winter. This is not an easy task when you need an acceptable location, building, power, water, fuel, permits, and the volunteers to make it happen.

I will be looking to the Minister of Housing and the Minister responsible for Homelessness to provide some immediate financial support to assist the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre, who is willing to take this project on and turn it into something more permanent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CO-DRAFTING IN REGULATION DEVELOPMENT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. In dealing with the huge legislative landslide at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, one of the most contentious issues was consultation with regard to regulations, especially regulations required to implement post-devolution legislation. There do not appear to be any standards or process for developing regulations that might include public consultation or even co-drafting with Indigenous governments.

Virtually all of the Indigenous governments involved in the co-drafting of the post-devolution resource management legislation requested in writing that they be involved in the development of regulations. This was largely based on the manner in which those bills had been drafted, where very significant matters, such as resource royalties, requirements for benefit agreements, and more, had been left to the sole discretion of Ministers or Cabinet. There are no provisions and no requirements for public engagement or co-drafting with Indigenous governments for any of these regulations to implement these new laws.

Regular MLAs worked very hard. We proposed a number of possible solutions to the reasonable requests of Indigenous governments, NGOs, business, and the general public for involvement in the development of these regulations. Public notice

with an opportunity for comment, opportunities for Ministers to enter into agreements on co-drafting, a legislative requirement for consultation, and other options were all attempted, but failed to get any support from the previous Cabinet.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Justice on how our government is going to put into practice its open government policy and reconciliation with Indigenous governments in regulation-making going forward. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the success of healthy, inclusive, creative communities starts with housing as a human right. Article 25 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights assures everyone the right to housing and a dignified standard of living. Article 23 of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples invokes self-determination in health, economic and social sufficiency, and housing.

Canada's first-ever 2018 National Housing Strategy puts \$40 billion behind a human rights and distinctions-based approach to housing. Housing is a key pillar to the United Nations' sustainable development goals and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The emerging international Green New Plans recognize that housing is critical to the knowledge economy and a climate-sensitive industrial system.

Why is housing so critical, Mr. Speaker? Housing is more than a roof over our heads. Safe, affordable, accessible housing has proven to support better outcomes for our people, our communities, and our social cohesion. It is the foundation for strengthening our educational outcomes, our economy, our health, and social justice. How can children be ready to learn if they have not slept? How can adults meaningfully contribute to our economy if they do not know where or how they will keep their families safe at night? How can elders age in place without appropriate accessible housing? How can communities promote inclusion, belonging, and participation without affordable housing options that connect family to our shared responsibility to care for each other?

Housing is dwelling in this land, and it is caring for this planet. Our lack of appropriate housing is making our vulnerable populations -- women and children, our Indigenous people, seniors, and people with disabilities, mental health and addiction issues -- even more vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, when we think of our social priorities, we think of Health and Social Services, Justice, Education, and ITI delivering programs independently, but what becomes of all of those investments when a parent cannot cover rent, when a child isn't ready to learn because they have not yet slept, or when the vulnerable are homeless?

Housing as a human right is square one. Without it, we risk the loss of dignity, inclusion, employment, safety, personal fulfillment, and freedom, as well as our ability to be innovative, resilient, and caring because, Mr. Speaker, we are then less than human. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR GARY VAILLANCOURT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gary Vaillancourt came north from Sudbury, Ontario, in 1977 to fly helicopters, but where he hailed from, I think he would deem irrelevant, as the North was his home and captivated him for over 40 years. Gary was a hardworking, enigmatic individual, one of the first houseboaters on the Yellowknife Bay. It is with a heavy heart, and as a member of his community, that I mourn his passing.

I think Gary would scoff at the idea of me giving him an address in the Legislative Assembly. Unfortunately, our last interaction was him yelling at me about where to park my canoe, but Gary deserves this address. Without him, we may not have the colourful bay life that charms visitors and characterizes the Yellowknife landscape.

Gary was a baron of the bay, housing many and helping more. He was a community-minded innovator, who worked tirelessly and dreamed big. In the early '80s, Gary and friends, such as John Alexander, Chris Holloway, and Scott Mitchell, built the first permanent houseboats. The barges were built out of 50-foot trees, telephone poles, and discarded aviation barrels. This was not the last houseboat that he would build, but rather the start of a floating empire.

Gary was fiercely independent. It drove him to learn many trades, and he was always willing to share his immense knowledge. Gary was a pilot, musician, builder, philosopher, and embodied the creative spirit of the North. The extent of his contribution to the culture and vibrancy of this city really cannot be measured.

Gary is survived by his daughter, Molly, who is with us today in the gallery, a large community of

friends, and many ambitious floating homes. Thank you, Gary. You won't be forgotten.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL

**MR. NORN:** Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about medical travel in the NWT. I feel like a broken record, but I feel like I need to drive this point home.

Since taking office, I have already dealt with several medical travel-related issues with constituents, and with each passing case, I am seeing the same issue come up again and again. I am seeing cases where people are dealing with some fairly serious medical issues and are in need of further assistance, so they are sent to Yellowknife or Edmonton for treatment. Doctors will recommend a medical escort; however, our medical travel personnel are denying medical escorts in the vast majority of cases I have seen so far.

In most of these cases, it is elderly people who require medical travel services, and of the cases I have seen, English is almost always the patient's second language. Right there, we have two strong reasons for why patients in these cases should be approved for medical escorts. We also have to consider the state of mind and body that some of these patients may be in when being sent for medical travel purposes. It can be a daunting and stressful experience when being sent alone to a strange place while undergoing serious medical issues. As well, I am hearing first-hand accounts of people being denied a medical escort, even when a doctor recommends that an escort be provided for the patient.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that our government is trying to cut costs where they can, and I believe they are doing it to the detriment of the needs of our constituents when it comes to medical travel and medical escorts. I hope to see more compassion on this policy front over the course of this Assembly. This area is in need of review, and I know that this issue affects all regions of the NWT, not only mine.

In closing, patients in care deserve the best care possible and patients need to be informed of what's going on with their bodies, and these policy gaps put lives at risk. There are language barriers there that need to be addressed immediately, and I am hoping that the Minister of Health and Social Services can speak to that a bit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services shortly. Marci cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce my neighbour and constituent, Paul Falvo, who is joining us here today, and his daughter Juniper, who is one of three Pages from Yellowknife Centre in the Assembly this time. I would also like to thank the other two Pages for their work with us this week. Thank you.

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

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this moment to recognize three visitors in the gallery. We have Baldeep Bajwa, who is the branch manager for the Yellowknife branch of the Scotiabank. We also have Lucie Guertin, who is a coach with Scotiabank; and the vice president of northern Alberta and NWT region, Tanja Perry, who are all here for, I'm not going to say this right, Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada. Thank you for coming.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize one of our Pages here today, a constituent of Range Lake riding, Ms. Brenna Willis. I think this is a couple of times she has been here, now. Welcome to the House. Thank you.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome one of my constituents here today. Her name is Belinda Formaniuk. She is a grade nine student at Sir John, and she likes dogs, music, and reading, but I think she likes us more because this is her second time Paging for us. Thank you.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Molly MacKinnon and her mother. Thank you for visiting us here today.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to recognize a couple of Pages, Monika Kunderlik and Riley Hans. They have Paged with us before, and I know they are very attentive to all of their duties, and I want to thank them for all of their help in the House this past week. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber, and I hope you are enjoying our proceeding. It's always nice to have an audience with us in the House. Mahsi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Colleagues, today is the birthday of one of our Members. Please join me in wishing Minister Paulie Chinna a happy birthday. Also, I was told she was wishing for all the questions today. Just kidding.

---Laughter

Item 7, oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 21-19(2): ADDICTIONS TREATMENT AND AFTERCARE ON THE LAND

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] When I talked earlier, I mentioned about alcohol and addiction, how to do treatment for people. [Translation ends] The first question I have is: what programs are currently in place here in the Northwest Territories to provide addiction treatment and addiction recovery care? How many programs are there in total? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to talk about the Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Action Plan that supports the priorities of this 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly by increasing the number and variety of culturally respectful, community-based mental health and addictions programs, including after-care. I would also like to address the Member's question on what are the types of programming that we have for mental health and addictions.

We have a number of programs, Mr. Speaker, including the Community Counselling Program. We also have the Northwest Territories helpline. We have facility-based addictions treatments. We have the On-the-Land Healing Fund. We also have a

program for family violence shelters. We have a "What Will It Take?" family violence campaign. We also deliver prevention-promotion workshops, including mental health, first aid, and applied suicide intervention skills training; also, "Talking About Mental Illness."

**MR. LAFFERTY:** I was strictly referring to addiction treatment and addiction recovery care. However, I will move on to the second question, on-the-land treatment programs. How many on-the-land treatment programs do we currently have in the Northwest Territories and where are they located?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The Department of Health and Social Services delivers the On-the-Land Healing Fund in partnership with Indigenous groups. This budget is approximately \$1.8 million a year. It supports community development facilities focused on mental health and addictions. The Member asked which locations, and I can get back to the Member on the location of the on-the-land healing programs.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Since we do not have an actual treatment centre here in the Northwest Territories, I would like to know the costs over the last 10 years. How many clients have we sent to the southern institutions, and how much did that cost this government?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I will commit to get back to the Member on exactly the numbers that he is requesting. I apologize. I don't have that with me right now, so we will get back to the Member on the numbers.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, I would appreciate all the detailed information that the Minister will be providing. My fourth and final question is: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action has 23 calls upon all levels of government, including the territorial government, to increase the number of Aboriginal professionals, retention of Aboriginal professional healthcare, and also training for all those health professionals. Do we currently have in place all these areas of interest that have been highlighted as part of the calls to action in our communities, in our 33 communities, Mr. Speaker? Masi.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I don't have that information at this time. However, I will note that the department provides a number of services and supports for mental health and addictions, including child and youth care counsellors, facility-based addiction treatment, psychiatric care and treatment, the Northwest Territories helpline, and the

partnership with the land-based Indigenous groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 22-19(2):  
RESULTS OF EDUCATION AUDIT

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. What is the Minister's reaction to the findings of the audit, and in these findings, what concerns him the most? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I first took over this portfolio, I soon after became aware that we would be receiving a report of the Office of the Auditor General. Personally, I was happy to have this at the beginning of my term because, as a former Regular Member, I was on the committee that looked at these reports and I know how valuable they are.

I am happy to have the information. I wish I could say that it was a glowing audit. It wasn't scathing, but it obviously shows that we are not doing as well as we would like and that we can do better. There are certain areas that are more concerning than others, mainly because we made progress in some areas that have happened since the report. For example, the languages; we have done much since the Auditor finished the report that wasn't reflected in there.

There are things like the graduation rate, which was mentioned earlier. There is no universally accepted way to calculate graduation rates, but you never want to see something that shows that you are not graduating half your population. There is nothing in there that I can say is shocking to me. I have been a Member. I have talked to people in the community. I hear the concerns about education. We are very concerned. We are developing plans to move forward.

I want to also state that the Member noted that we are treating our students no better than cows to a slaughterhouse. I just wanted to comment that, when a student goes into a classroom, teachers treat them much better than cows to slaughter. We have a dedicated staff. We have about 800 teachers in the territory. I want to let them know that I support them and I support their efforts. Going forward, I am going to make sure that we hear from them and we hear how to make these things better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Let's just get this straight, too. I support my staff in the communities, in my riding, and across the territory. I sat on the education committee in my home community of Tuktoyaktuk for the last three-and-a-half years, and I support them. I support my youth, my youth who ECE is failing. It is not this Minister's fault. It is prior. At the end of the day, the department has to be committed to adopting a more accurate method in getting graduation rates in the NWT, to get more information broken down by the riding. That is all I am asking for. We have our haves and have-nots in our ridings. In the small communities, we are have-nots.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The thing I love about education is everyone is committed. I know that the Member is passionate about education. I just want to reiterate my support for our teachers, as well.

The department has looked at the methodology they use to calculate graduation rates, and we have made a change that more accurately reflects what you would call a true graduation rate, even though there really is no such thing. Different jurisdictions use different rates.

For the territory, we have a lot of in-and-out migration. We have a small population. There is nothing that suits us perfectly. We tried looking at other graduation rates around the country. When we applied them to our situation, some groups of our population were graduating at over 100 percent. Clearly, it is not a cookie-cutter approach. We have created a method now that more accurately reflects, I think, the number of students we have graduating.

To the Member's point about this data collection, we have also created a framework regarding this data collection. We are going to begin reporting yearly on a lot of these indicators. I know that this is the second report, and the first report made lots of comments about the lack of data. This one makes those notes, as well. I have to say that we have come a long way in 10 years, and we have even come a long way since the work on this report was completed.

We now have a lot of that data that we did not have before. The thing we have to do now is analyze it and figure out exactly what it is telling us. Education is difficult because you can have the best teacher and you can have the best facilities in a class, but there is a lot going on outside that classroom. There is a lot going on in students' lives. It is hard to say, "This program, is it helping students effectively?"

Those are the kind of things that this data is going to help us with. We are going to develop our

program so that we know that it is working, so that we can do a better job serving our students.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Education is key to our success in our territory and to our people and to our youth, because our youth are our future. Will the Minister make a commitment to the Assembly to provide a draft copy of the department's implementation plan in advance so the standing committee can have a public hearing?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The process with these reports is that the department develops an action plan, which it then provides to the standing committee prior to the public meetings that are arranged between the standing committee and the Office of the Auditor General. I guarantee that the committee will have a draft prior to that meeting.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that response in regard to the advance notice on public hearings. Is the Minister prepared to take a closer look at social passing and consider ending this damaging practice where we are setting up our students for failure on social passing in the small communities across the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** The term "social passing" is a bit of a misnomer. Students aren't passed into the next grade. They are placed in the next grade. If they don't achieve, if they do not get the credits, if they don't do the work that they need to pass, they do not pass. They are placed in the next grade with their peer group, and they have lesson plans that are adjusted in order to meet that.

I am not going to commit to eliminating social passing because, right now, there is no requirement for a student who doesn't achieve a certain level to be placed in the next grade. That is a decision made by the administrators, by the teachers, and by the school after they have a conversation. Every parent and student has a right to remain in a grade. If a parent and his teacher feels like the child needs to stay in grade 4 or 5 for a second time around, then that is their right. They can have that conversation, and they can do that.

What I do commit to is working to better prepare students so that this doesn't become an issue. If we focus our efforts on early childhood and we ensure that students don't fall behind, we ensure that, when a student comes out of JK, kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, and they are at those levels, we are not going to have to worry about social passing anymore because they are going to have the skills and ability to pass on their own merits. That is what I commit to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 23-19(2):  
ECONOMY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The questions I have today are for the Minister of ITI and Infrastructure. Yesterday, I made a statement on the economy. The reality is that, outside YK, the government is the economy. My first question to the Minister is: what is your department's plan to put our northern businesses and residents to work as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier will be formally introducing our government's mandate during this session. I do not want to get ahead of the process and speak to it in content in any detail today. However, I can confirm that our mandate will lay out actions and investments to address the priorities that we have identified. Those include more jobs, more business opportunities, and growth and diversity for our economy.

Our mandate includes initiatives that are aimed at increasing employment in small communities; increasing resource exploration and development; ensuring government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and businesses; increasing economic diversification by supporting economic growth in and outside the non-extractive sectors; and setting regional diversification targets; and we are going to adopt a benefit retention approach to economic development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I thank the Minister for that answer. The second question is with respect to the BIP policies. What will your department, ITI, do to ensure that our current BIP policies are doing what they are designed to do, with respect to the application of them, fairness, and monitoring, to ensure that our northern businesses and residents are really benefitting from them?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** The Government of the Northwest Territories Business Incentive Policy and the Northwest Territories Manufactured Products Policy are designed to ensure that government purchases are made through Northwest Territories-owned businesses and to leverage our government's purchasing power into investments in the Northwest Territories' business and manufacturing sector.

After speaking with stakeholders the last several months, I recognized that there is a need to improve upon the Government of the Northwest Territories procurement and the Business Incentive Policy. The Departments of ITI and Infrastructure are working to address this and are looking for areas in which we can strengthen the government's procurement processes. We continue to offer training to increase awareness of our contracting opportunities and of the procurement process. In fact, workshops were held in January in Norman Wells, Tulita, and Hay River.

We have committed to a review of procurement generally and the BIP specifically. It will be an opportunity to put everything on the table and to find a solution together. ITI is currently considering the process and results of past BIP reviews and will develop some options for how best we can move such an initiative forward.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** The next question has to do with payment to contractors. We find that, in talking with a number of contractors, they have been waiting for payment for up to five, six, seven, eight, nine months. What I would like to ask the Minister is: what will your department do to ensure that our northern businesses are paid in a timely manner for work done? Just so that we can avoid financial hardship and that we're putting them under.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I do acknowledge that prompt payment of invoices is really critical to our small businesses in the North. We do have a government set of standards and expectations for the payments of these invoices, but I do acknowledge that that system is not always working properly.

The Financial and Employee Shared Services division of the Department of Finance is responsible for processing and issuing payment for all supplier invoices for goods and services provided to all Government of the Northwest Territories departments, including the Housing Corporation and health authorities. As the Minister of Infrastructure, I can tell you that it is an individual department's responsibility for managing the contracts, which includes timely processing of invoices for payment by our finance department.

If this is an area that the Member feels is lacking, and I have heard from others that it may be, I think that we need to look into including information on the payment terms and that process with our regular workshops that we are doing on procurement, so I will commit to including that in the next set of workshops.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another area is the red tape. I think that contractors find that the amount of paper that is required to be filled out for payments, and for other areas, as well, is starting to increase to the point where they actually have to hire somebody to manage that. Yet, there is no opportunity to recoup that.

I would ask the Minister if her departments are looking at the paperwork and requirements they put out to contractors and whether there is something that they can do to reduce that amount of paper requirement. Thank you.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** As the Members are probably aware, one of the reasons that I ran for office was my own frustrations with some of the red tape and inefficiencies that I saw in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Now, sitting on this side of the table, I can appreciate that it is a lot larger vehicle to steer and change course on.

I do acknowledge that there are issues generally throughout the entire Government of the Northwest Territories with red tape. It has been a conversation that we have all been having as a larger group, as well as within Cabinet. All I can say is that it is one of the commitments of our 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly to streamline our processes, to get more efficient, and one of the ways that we will be doing that is to be looking for stakeholder feedback and then putting those messages into our processes going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 24-19(2):  
ELECTRICAL SERVICE IN DEH CHO

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Infrastructure is aware from my opening statement regarding the transmission line from the Taltson Hydro to my community of Fort Providence, I just wanted to raise a fact that I just looked at.

The cost of transmission power in Fort Smith is currently at 23 cents a kilowatt hour. When I was there in 2006, it was 17 cents a kilowatt hour, and they were able to put electrical baseboard heaters in units without having to deal with diesel appliances, the furnaces, and stuff. In my community of Fort Providence, we're on diesel. We are on a diesel plant, and before the territorial subsidy rate, which is about half, covers it, the rate in Fort Providence is 84 cents a kilowatt hour.

There is a significant difference there before the government rebates come on. We are paying pretty high, and the government is on the hook for paying all of that, too, because they are subsidizing the whole territory for power. Like I alluded to, there's



no watchdog. There is nobody actually talking to our own power corporation, the NTPC, either, about what they're doing to help the territory save on power. That's my concern there.

Anyway, getting back to the transmission line to Fort Providence, can the Minister provide an update on the initiative to run the line into Kakisa and Fort Providence? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can the Member please direct -- you mentioned Infrastructure, but it sounds like Public Utilities Board? Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're correct. Some of this does lie in other Ministers' departments. However, I can provide the Member with an update on the Kakisa transmission line, Fort Providence to Kakisa. It is a key initiative of our 2030 Energy Strategy. It roughly represents about 15 percent of our total reduction target for electricity generation. The proposed \$52-million project involves the construction of the 170-kilometre line from Taltson to Fort Providence, Kakisa, and Dory Point. The extent of the project is to use the surplus hydroelectric power from the Taltson system, the existing system, to virtually eliminate the use for diesel generation in the communities. There will be still emergency backup that would be diesel-generated.

The delivery of hydro power to the customers in these communities should eliminate about one million litres of diesel consumption each year and will help us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. This project is one of the best projects that we have under the 2030 Energy Strategy in terms of greenhouse gas reductions, and without it, the Northwest Territories cannot meet its commitments that we have made.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has already set aside its 25-percent share towards the funding of the project, and we will be seeking 75-percent funding through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program this year. There are over \$250 million in federal funding allocated to energy projects in the Northwest Territories over the next 10 years under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The Government of the Northwest Territories must apply separately for federal approval for each individual project. The proposed routing for the transmission line is to follow the highway from Hay River to Fort Providence, with an extension into Kakisa and the Dory Point area. The Government of the Northwest Territories will be initiating appropriate engagement and consultation activities on this project in early 2020. Once consultation has been initiated, the Government of the Northwest Territories will apply for federal funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, we will undertake the

environmental baseline work, and we will undertake the detailed engineering design and costing.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, just a reminder, we are halfway through, so please keep your preamble and questions or answers a little shorter, to the point. Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for the update on the initiatives. It's much appreciated. I am wondering if the Minister can provide the report or the update to the Hamlet of Fort Providence on the initiatives and their strategy to get it going, because nobody in our community actually knows what is happening. I can't find any reports anywhere, and I am just hoping that the Minister can provide some written record for our community, and also for myself.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Yes, I will commit to the Department of Infrastructure providing a report to the hamlet on where the project is sitting at, and I will apologize to the Member that the communication has not been maybe what the hamlet was expecting and for yourself, so we will correct that, and we will do better in the future.

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

QUESTION 25-19(2):  
CO-DRAFTING IN REGULATION DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Justice. There do not appear to be any standards or processes for developing regulations that include public consultation or even co-drafting with Indigenous governments, so can the Minister tell us if there is a process and/or standards for making regulations in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Justice.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regulations cover a wide breadth and variety of different types of topics. There is a variety that range from items that are fairly technical, some that are community-specific; in some cases, consultation is built into the legislation itself, so, no, there is not a single set standard at present in terms of how regulations are drafted in the Northwest Territories.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that, and I will just give her an example. In the federal government, they have a gazetting process that does allow for a 60- or 90-day period of public comment. We have nothing here, apparently, or a

patchwork. I want to ask the Minister whether Cabinet has a position or has taken a position on public consultation during development of regulations, particularly the regulations on post-devolution resource management.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** This topic has certainly come up in front of Cabinet, and it is one that has already come up in terms of the Department of Justice taking a lead and being aware that this is something where we can do better. As far as what that will look like, at the present time I can't say, but it is our intention that we can have a better system in place to determine, as I said earlier, which regulations should be subject to public consultation, what that process would look like. It is our intention to build that in so that it's more clear, so that the public knows, so that this House will know, which regulations would be subject to a consultation and then what that will look like for those particular regulations.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that response. We have something bubbling away maybe on public consultation with regard to development of regulations, but can the Minister tell us whether Cabinet is committed to a co-drafting process for the development of resource management regulations?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Again, that has also come up at Cabinet, that has also come up in the Department of Justice, and, similarly, there are obligations within the devolution process to the intergovernmental council to ensure that, in some circumstances, there will be a process that engages those partners. That protocol is also being worked on, and so, again, I am in the same situation of, while I do not have a specific that I can provide to the Member, I can assure the Member that that is in progress and it is actively being worked on right now to develop some things so we have some standards in place and so there is not this uncertainty around which ones are subject to a more consultative type of drafting process and which ones are not. That kind of uncertainty should be eliminated.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that response. Clearly, we need to clarify, or the Minister needs to clarify, what the process is going to be moving forward with development of regulations in terms of public consultation, co-drafting with Indigenous governments. I am glad to hear that there is something bubbling away, that it's on their radar, but can the Minister tell us very specifically: is she going to work with and consult with the appropriate

standing committees before final decisions are made by Cabinet on this?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** It certainly is the desire of Cabinet, as I hope the Members are seeing, to be more consultative in our approach. There are two different streams we have spoken about; firstly, more public consultation and developing that process for all regulations generally to determine which ones go through that process and which ones don't, as well as items that go through the intergovernmental council, and that may be subject to somewhat different processes. Certainly, once there is a stage for which regulations should receive general public consultation, I would commit to taking that through to committee and ensuring that they have an opportunity before a final decision is made to see what the approach, what the protocol, might look like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 26-19(2):  
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES PRESERVATION

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said before, my questions are for the Minister of Education. What is the plan of the department to ensure that we are preserving our languages, especially in my region, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit languages, before they are gone and we have no one to learn from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to this the other day. This is not an easy task. We have to combat 150 years of degradation of Indigenous languages in the territory, and it's tough, especially when the numbers of speakers are dwindling. You know, we have a division within the department that is focusing on this. They are very passionate about it, and they have been making strides to work with Indigenous governments and work within schools by helping to develop curriculum, which we are rolling out across the territory in the next couple of years, and it will be fully implemented. The action plan that is being developed in response to the OAG's report as well as our own internal findings will address these and flesh these out a bit more. We are going to be looking to renegotiate or negotiate a new agreement with the federal government regarding money for languages. However, we can't do this alone. The government can't solve all problems, especially when it comes to something as close to people and as vital to culture as language, so partnerships are going to be key.

**MS. SEMMLER:** More so with my question, I think what I am looking for: is there more of a plan to train language speakers who we currently have so that they can be instructors or teach other people?

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** As I spoke the other day, the department has some partnerships with the University of Alberta, the University of Victoria, and we are making strides to train people to help revitalize the language. We have a mentorship/apprentice program which pairs fluent speakers with those wishing to learn so that they can then learn.

These are a few of the things that we are doing, and as the Member is well aware, there is work going on within the education authorities, as well. She was a former chair of the Beaufort Delta Education Council, and she knows what vital role they play, as well. I know that each of the education authorities is doing work, as well, in addition to the things that the department is doing, and we like supporting that, as well.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I am going to go on to a different topic within the same Member's statement. What is the plan to ensure that our students are getting the education and support that they need to move to the next grade on track, so that, by the time they do reach grade 10, we are not losing them to dropout, and then we see the high unemployment rates because they are not eligible to get jobs and stuff?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** When the Premier asked newly elected Ministers what portfolios they would want and why, one of the things that I said when I said I would like Education is that one of my goals is to eliminate the need for social passing for inclusive schooling, because all of our students would be on track right from junior kindergarten.

Some of the things that the department has already done are things like junior kindergarten, which will begin showing results. We are going to see that. There is a group of kids out there who have access to more quality education earlier, and that is going to pay big dividends going forward. We have things like the child and youth care counsellors, which are rolling out across the territory, to help students with issues that hinder their ability to learn. We have a territorial support team, which teachers and administrators can reach out to so that they can get help with things like mental health. We have an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist, behavioural specialist, a speech-language pathologist all on staff to help teachers work with students to address some of their needs.

Clearly, more needs to be done, and I am willing to look at different ways of proceeding with this. Inclusive schooling social passing is controversial, but the other option is that students don't get placed

in the next grade. They just get held back, and the consequence of that is higher dropout rates. We want to find that ground where we are not losing students to dropout, but we are adequately preparing them. We are working on it. I look forward to getting into more detail as we go forward, as we develop this action plan, but I am committed to providing more supports.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one last question: how do we ensure that the data that is being collected in each education board, because they are different and they are governed differently, is being analyzed so that we are getting the same information across the board, so that, when we do sit here as a government, we are able to deal with those concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** We have a framework. The name is escaping me right now, but it deals directly with this. It deals directly with data collection and how that data is processed. We have standardized the way that we are now collecting this data from the education councils. My colleague is right; there is a separation between all of the education authorities, and separated from ECE, as well.

I think that one of the things that we need to do, and this was mentioned in the Commissioner's address, is look at our Education Act and see if there is a way to better integrate our systems. Not to get rid of the regional authorities, but to facilitate that type of information-sharing and collection that we need in order to be able to analyze what we are doing and ensure that what we are doing is generating results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 27-19(2):  
TECK FRONTIER RESOURCES PROJECT

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and ultimately, the Minister responsible for Climate Change. Previously in this House, he refused to take a position on the Teck Frontier Resources Project in Alberta, a project that will make sure that Canada does not meet its emissions targets and will end up with the Northwest Territories dealing with 40 years of effluent from Alberta. Why is the Minister refusing to take a position on this project?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that NWT residents and Members are concerned about the potential environmental impact of the proposed Teck Resources oilsands mine proposed downstream from here. As I said previously to the Member for Frame Lake, the bilateral agreement with the Government of Alberta was signed in March 2015 to help preserve equality and quantity and the biology of the water flowing into the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House and the public that I have already spoken to Smith's Landing Chief Cheezie about this issue and will also be reaching out to the Alberta government to emphasize their commitment under the Alberta-NWT bilateral agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I recognize the importance of transboundary agreements and the work that the Department of ENR is doing into monitoring, but our public service must remain impartial and, at times, an issue become one of partiality. This is one of those such issues.

In the past week in Ottawa, members of the Liberal Party's own caucus were criticizing their Cabinet for approving this project. Once again, I am questioning why we elect politicians who refuse to take political stances. I would ask the Minister: what is his position on this project?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I know that politicians are supposed to take stances on things. It is easier when you are on the other side to do it. Right now, what I am trying to do is work with the Government of Alberta to do what is right to actually implement the transboundary water agreement. That is what I am working on. I don't want to get up here and say, "Here, I'm greatly standing against it or supporting it." What I am trying to do is do the work right, then we can go from there.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I appreciate that answer, and it is the job of a department to make sure that the work is done right. It is easier on this side of the House to take a position. My position is that this project should not go ahead, and if it ruffles some feathers with Alberta or the Liberal government in Ottawa, I am fine with that, because if we are going to take meaningful action on climate change, we must take positions. We must draw a line in the sand. In this case, the tar sand. What benefit does the Minister of ENR see that this project provides Northerners?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Tar sands, drawing lines here. What I am trying to do right now is work with the Alberta government to make sure that the quality of water coming out is good for our people. If it isn't, that's when we come out and work again. I don't want to make a political stance saying yes or no about this. What I am trying to do is do the job,

which is working with the Alberta government to make sure that whatever project they are doing does not have an impact on us. That is the most important aspect of it. That's what we're trying to do. I don't want to come out here and say yes or no to something until we do the work first.

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

QUESTION 28-19(2):  
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR HOUSING

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister responsible for Housing, but I see that she is not here, so I am going to redirect towards the Premier, if I can, please. What I would like to ask today, Mr. Speaker, is: how has this government engaged with Indigenous governments in partnerships to create housing in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I was unclear if it was Indigenous partnerships or just partnerships, so I would have to ask clarification on the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Specifically, with Indigenous governments.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation takes working in partnership very seriously. There are many Indigenous governments, actually, that are moving into doing housing projects. I will give an example of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation who, in the last Assembly, actually did a partnership with the Housing Corporation. The Inuvialuit Corporation received funding from the federal government. They worked closely with the NWT Housing Corporation to define the housing needs of people in their region. Then both the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and NWT Housing Corporation worked together in making sure the project was on the ground.

This government is committed to doing more and more partnerships like that. The previous government had always felt, in fairness, that the money should come through the GNWT to allocate

to Indigenous governments to have control over the housing, make sure the needs were being met, et cetera. This government is taking a different stance. We have already talked to the federal government in that we are actually totally fine in actually advocating if the federal government gives the housing money to the Indigenous governments, that we will work with them either on their own or if they want our support.

It is not about competition. This is about getting houses in the North. We need to stop any kind of competition that that means and keep the priority that every person deserves a home.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Does the government have a timeline of when they would like to put together housing plans with each Indigenous government, and is there a desire to do one specifically and independently with each Indigenous government?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Absolutely. The commitment to actually do community housing plans in each community was a commitment actually from the last Assembly. I remember the Housing Minister bringing that forward. During this Assembly, I know that they have just finished one with the community of Whati. As they move forward, the goal is to have community housing plans in every community, because it is inappropriate for a government or any individual to believe that one size fits all. Every community has distinct strengths and distinct challenges. If we are doing services under best practices, we work with communities, not telling communities what to do.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT currently has 2,800 housing units. How does the territorial government plan to ensure that housing is available for every NWT resident as a human right? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Unfortunately, all needs of any social issues, education, housing, legal support, all of them, our needs are greater than our resources. We are not denying that. However, you need to take care of the basic needs. That is Maslow's hierarchy that says food, clothing, and lodging. Take care of those first, and then you look at the higher needs.

This government is committed. We have been going down to Ottawa. I went down when I first was elected. Our Housing Minister just returned from Ottawa talking about housing. We need to keep advocating. I can't guarantee that we will have a house for every person by the end of this Assembly. I would love to make that commitment, but I have a feeling I couldn't fulfill that.

What we need to do is work closer with our federal government, making them understand the needs of the territories are different and more intense than the needs of the south where they have other options, their cost of living is cheaper, their resources are more plentiful.

We need to work with Indigenous governments. That is what we have done in the last Assembly and carrying forward so that we work in partnership, where there is a community housing program that the GNWT puts in either labour or materials and the community government, either Indigenous or community, can put in a portion, as well, either labour or things. Those are ideas we need to keep forward.

We need to work in partnership. We don't have the answers ourselves, but together, all working together with Indigenous governments, community governments, the federal government, and the territorial government, perhaps we can make it a more humane world that we live in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. As the second question was a clarification, I will give the Member for Kam Lake another question, her final supplementary.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I absolutely agree with Madam Premier's comment about how we need to leverage our partnerships, especially with people here in the Northwest Territories, and go to the federal government. How has our government worked with Indigenous governments to make sure that the NWT is getting its fair share of the federal government's very ambitious national housing strategy, which is offering \$40 billion to Canadians for housing? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Again, in the last Assembly, it was more of a little bit of competition, feed the money through us. That didn't work very well for us. I try to learn. We are politicians. I think one of the Members had said we are not God. Absolutely, we are not God. The best thing a politician can be is humble enough to admit when they need help. The worst politician, in my opinion, is somebody who thinks they have all the answers.

What we are committed to doing: we have already been talking with our Indigenous governments. We are talking about having a strategy, not only around housing but all of the issues that impact Indigenous people. We are working on that now. We are working on the strategy. We just put the feelers out.

I have had one meeting with our intergovernmental counsel. I have had three meetings with Indigenous governments since I have been here in the last few

months. Even though some people think I am not doing a lot, I am doing a lot. We brought forward the idea of going to Canada together with a united front. I have talked to them seriously about divide-and-conquer. When we all go individually, it does not work best for us. We have agreed that we will be doing that. Not all the governments have been approached, yet. The ones that have are in agreement that we need to have a strategy and go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 29-19(2):  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL ISSUES

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought you might have forgotten me. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As I said yesterday, and again today, there have been a number of issues related to the new hospital building. Also, last we heard, there was a shortage of nursing staff.

Today, let's start with the nurses. In June, there was a 13-percent vacancy rate, equal to 37 nurses. What is the vacancy rate now, and particularly, what is the net gain of nurses in the last six months when you account for those who have been hired and those who quit? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. It is very hard to forget you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of December 31, 2019, the vacancy rate across the NTSA, which is all the regions, all positions, was 12.3 percent. This represented 178 of 1,450 positions. The vacancy rates for some specific job types across the NTSA include 25 percent nurse practitioners, 15.5 percent registered nurses.

As of December 31, 2019, the vacancy rate across the NTSA, which is all regions, for frontline registered nursing positions was 17.1 percent. This represented 55 of 322 positions.

As of December 31, 2019, the vacancy rate across Stanton for frontline nursing positions was 10.3 percent. This represented 19 of 185 positions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate that answer from the Minister. It is a surprising answer to me because it was my understanding that the Stanton nursing workforce was 280 individuals. The Minister is saying 185 full-time equivalents is, in fact, the total number. There is some mismatch there, which we need to get at, which is: what is the total workforce, and what is the vacancy rate within that? I realize

the Minister may not have that information to hand. Let me move on with whether the number of new hires has allowed nurses to reduce their overtime and to plan for holidays and vacations. Has overtime cost gone down?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Yes, efforts are under way as part of the overall recruitment process to ensure that Stanton hospital has enough nursing staff to cover holiday leave and reduce the demands of overtime. As summertime approaches, that is what the department is looking to now.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that. I know that was a point of unhappiness as last summer holidays came around. There were not enough nurses to allow people to take time off. There was a commitment by the previous health Minister to expedite the recruiting system and to get job offers into the hands of nurses more quickly. Are you able to say whether, in fact, that system has been expedited?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** At this time, I am not aware. I will commit to getting back to the Member on whether or not the efforts are in place.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, I want to talk about the heat regulation in the building. It seems to be a significant problem, and it affects both patients and staff. What actions have been taken to figure out why some of the rooms and hallways are so cold and how to make them warmer?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The Member is correct. During the months of December and January, it was extremely cold here in Yellowknife. The building was not maintaining temperatures, parts of the building. Cold air was being sucked into the building. Metal doors on the exterior of the building were frosting. In order to resolve these issues, Dexterra investigated and resolved air supply issues. Additional investigation is scheduled for spring of 2020. An additional heater was added in the emergency entrance. There was resequencing to the two sets of sliding doors. Those are a number of the issues that were done, and I respect that the staff up at the Stanton hospital had to go through this. I went up there and was able to speak to some of the staff, not all of the staff, but just to reassure them that this is something that the department is looking into. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 30-19(2):  
CO-DRAFTING IN REGULATION DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I just have one question, and it's for the Minister of Justice, if I may. In response to an earlier question, she did commit to consulting with the standing committee in looking at how the public would be engaged in the future around regulation making. That is great, but she did not say anything about co-drafting and whether she would be consulting with standing committee on that. I just want to remind her that, in the last Assembly, the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment developed a whole report around co-drafting, with lots of recommendations, ideas about how to improve that process going forward, including the involvement of standing committee. I would like to know from the Minister of Justice whether she is prepared to work with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment moving forward in looking at how Indigenous governments are going to be involved in co-drafting of regulations. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Justice.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I did not speak specifically to co-drafting in terms of how that would look and what commitments might be made. Quite frankly, the reason is that, if I make a commitment in this House, I am going to take it very seriously, and I understand that co-drafting and the involvement of the Indigenous governments, the involvement of the intergovernmental council, involves EIA, involves Cabinet, involves more than just the Department of Justice, and so I was not prepared to stand up and make that specific commitment here. Nevertheless, I can certainly commit to working with standing committee, making sure that I am personally briefed and aware of what is in that report, and so, to that extent, we will move forward, but that is about as far as I am prepared to go today, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 31-19(2):  
PROGRESS OF GOVERNMENT

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I have questions for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the last five months, basically, we had nothing going on in regard to short-term planning for any kind of jobs that we could create or what's happening with any projects going on because, once you leave Yellowknife and you head into the Delta, we have nothing going on in the Sahtu, nothing going on in my riding. What are her plans on the go-forward to

stimulate the economy and jobs in the short term? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard a number of times from the Member that nothing is going on in this Assembly since we have been elected. I want to remind the Member that this Cabinet has only been elected since November, so it's only a few, it's not six months that I have heard many times. We might have been campaigning six months ago, but the Cabinet has only been around since November. I take offence at saying nothing is going on. We are working on our mandate commitments based on the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, but I need to say that the priorities are only what is extra. Day-to-day business within government programs goes on every day. Whether we are here sitting in this House or whether we are back in our constituencies or whether Ministers are upstairs running their departments, day-to-day government business goes on. There are projects in his riding. I believe there is a bridge going on. I hear there is a health centre being built right now. So there are projects that go on besides the extra things that we have identified as our priorities, besides the extra things that we decide as our mandate. If we did not even have priorities or a mandate, this government would still provide services to the residents of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Those jobs are being given to an Inuvik company. There is nothing in regard to that bridge, which they stopped work on, so I want the Premier to identify which companies are working in my riding. That's the first I heard of a hospital being built. There are no hospitals being built. Give me clarification. All I am asking is what's happening in the short term. All the government jobs are taken in our communities. Nothing is going on. That is why we have such a big income support problem that we have going on, because there is nothing going on.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** It's a good thing we have Ministers all around us talking to things. I believe the Member had mentioned not only his riding but the Sahtu in his statement. The health centre is going into Tulita at this point. Inuvik is having a long-term care facility built at this time. To have a whole list of every project and every contractor, that, I do not have. It probably is something that he should give notice of so that we can compile that information. However, I will commit to getting a list of every major project -- not every small project; that is too cumbersome -- every major infrastructure project going on in the riding and, the list of those contractors, I will supply.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Madam Premier, you brought up a 48-bed facility going up in Inuvik, which takes our elders out of our community. I need help in regard to keeping our elders home, because we want to take care of our own elders. We don't need them just shipped off to Inuvik, where my people, the people who I represent, can't go see their loved ones. The only time they are going to go see them is if they are on medical or somewhere, because cost of travel is too high, and then when they bring them home for a funeral. That is the problem. I need help in regard to getting a long-term facility in Ulukhaktok, so would the Premier commit to that instead of putting 48 beds, which we already have 25 in Inuvik, taking elders out of our community?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I believe it is almost two sets of questions, but I will reply to you on the question. I am not going to stand here and commit that I will have a long-term facility in every single community. I would love to see that, again, just as I would love to have a house for every person. In honesty, I would probably put the house first: Maslow's hierarchy; food, clothing, and shelter. Our seniors are important. Our elders are important. We recognize that. We have a shortage of health professionals; we know that. We need to look at a recruitment program; we know that.

I can't stand here and say that, within this government, I would guarantee that there would be a long-term care facility in every community. What I can say is that this government is committed to looking at whatever policies we can do, that we can change, so that we can make it better for elders to stay in our homes. Because we do know that the most humane thing that we can do for our elders is to keep them close to their families and their friends as long as possible, but there are situations, times, when elders have to be shipped from homes because the care is not there in the communities.

Again, I wish we could do better, but at this point, in this economy, I think that we have to be realistic and honest and say that we don't have the staffing, and we don't have the funding at this time, so we are willing to look at whatever we can do in the meantime.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All I am asking is for the government, I guess, to relook at the 48 beds in Inuvik. They have 25 beds. We have a need in our smaller communities, such as Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok. Ulukhaktok is a priority. I have elders sitting in a long-term care facility who are not seeing family, and it is hard on them. Too much hardship going on, all the time. Everything is fly in, fly out, on the coastal communities.

The people of Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, and Sachs Harbour need to have something to grasp on instead of taking them and pulling our elders out. I'm just urging the Premier and the Cabinet to relook at that Inuvik facility. They have 25 beds. They don't need another 48. That's 200 more jobs they have to try to fill, which is good for Inuvik, but not for my riding of Nunakput. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Unfortunately, I can't commit to saying that I would stop the project in Inuvik. I mean, it would be very inappropriate for a Premier to stand here and make a commitment when there has been no research or assessment on the need, so I will not make a commitment to stop a project without the research done.

Like I said, there is not a Cabinet Member here who wants to take seniors or elders out of our communities. Every single Cabinet Member understands the needs of our community, our seniors, and our elders, but we have limited resources. Resources, not only money, but also capacity of staffing and qualifications. We have to look at all of those as a holistic view before we make decisions on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, report of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Honourable Premier.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 12-19(2):  
2019-2023 MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable Premier. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife North.

TABLED DOCUMENT 13-19(2):  
LETTER FROM BEHDZI AHDA FIRST NATION  
AND AYONI KEH LAND CORPORATION TO  
PREMIER REGARDING GNWT PARTICIPATION  
IN DEHLA GOT'INE (COLVILLE LAKE) SELF  
GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS, DATED  
JANUARY 16, 2020



TABLED DOCUMENT 14-19(2):  
LETTER FROM NIHTAT GWICH'IN COUNCIL TO  
PREMIER REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, DATED JANUARY 17,  
2020

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents: a letter dated January 16, 2020, to the Honourable Premier from Chief Wilbert Kochon of Behdzi Ahda First Nation of Colville Lake, regarding problems in current self-government negotiations; and, in addition, a letter dated January 17, 2020, to the Honourable Premier from the president of Nihtat Gwich'in Council, Jozef Carnogursky, regarding implementation of UNDRIP.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Member for Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 1-19(2):  
SETTING OF SITTING HOURS BY SPEAKER,  
CARRIED

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you. Item 17, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Monday, February 10, 2020, 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
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** This House stands adjourned until Monday, February 10, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

