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**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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

**HANSARD**

**Thursday, February 29, 2024**

Pages 385 - 416

**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)

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Employment*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and  
Investment*

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(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Robert Hawkins**

(Yellowknife Centre)

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*Minister responsible for the Status of  
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*Minister of Health and Social Services*

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(Range Lake)

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*Minister responsible for the NWT Power  
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(Monfwi)

**Mrs. Sheryl Yakeleya**

(Dehcho)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, February 29, 2024****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson):** Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to thank our elder that has come back, Member from the 18th and 19th Assembly. As we have done with our traditional, our opening, you know, guiding words, the blessings, I'd like to thank Mr. O'Reilly for actually being here today. You know, being an elder, he left us, but we still appreciate all his work that he's done for us in the 18th and 19th Assembly. So thank you very much, Kevin.

Ministers' statements. Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 30-20(1):  
2022 AND 2023 OUTSTANDING  
VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by congratulating everyone who was nominated for the 2022 and 2023 NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards. This program was introduced in 1991 to recognize the exceptional volunteers and highlight the importance of volunteerism in the Northwest Territories. I am proud to say that over 1,000 individuals and groups have been nominated for these awards since that time.

Mr. Speaker, this year volunteers are being recognized for 2022 and 2023. Every nomination is noteworthy on their own, and I want to thank everyone who took the time to submit one.

The 2022 Award Program received a total of nine nominations from five communities. Of these, two were in the elder category, four were in the group category, and three were in the individual category. I am pleased to announce that the recipients of the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards for 2022 are:

- Diane Hache in the category of outstanding elder;
- Nicole Spencer in the category of outstanding individual, and,
- The Yellowknife Ultimate Club Board in the category of outstanding group.

The 2023 Award Program received a total of 29 nominations from 11 communities. Of those, ten were in the elder category, four were in the group category, 14 were in the individual category, and one was in the youth category. I am pleased to announce that the recipients of the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards for 2023 are:

- Louie Beaulieu in the category of outstanding elder;
- Katelinne Ruben in the category of outstanding youth;
- Tania Hercun in the category of outstanding individual; and,
- The Slide Zone Shredders in the category of outstanding group.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to recognize all of these individuals and groups in the Legislative Assembly earlier today. Volunteers help build and support our communities, and I am excited to acknowledge their efforts. The Northwest Territories is more vibrant and resilient with the important contributions from volunteers.

To our 2022 and 2023 outstanding volunteers, thank you for your contribution to your neighbours, your communities, and the Northwest Territories. I hope that your stories inspire other NWT residents to consider volunteerism and give back to their communities like you have. Your tireless efforts to make life better for those around you help make the Northwest Territories such a great place to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Ministers' statements. Minister for ITI.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 31-20(1):  
ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT TO BOLSTER  
DIGITAL ADOPTION BY BUSINESSES

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the 20th Legislative Assembly affirmed its commitment to building a strong economic foundation. We live in a digital world where so much economic potential exists in digital economies because, for starters, that is where consumers are. Today, consumers purchase more goods and services online, looking for more convenience through e-commerce and expecting more personalized offerings. Today, there is a much greater need for businesses to have a strong online presence and tap into market spaces into living rooms down the street, beyond our territory, to other areas of Canada, and even internationally.

Prosper NWT, formerly the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation, plays a lead role in helping NWT businesses pursue these opportunities and adopt new and emerging digital technologies to increase their competitiveness. Prosper NWT has partnered with the Government of Canada to deliver the Canada Digital Adoption Program and revamped its contribution program to offer matching funds with the Accelerate Digital Adoption Projects for Tomorrow Fund, aptly known as ADAPT. Through these two initiatives, NWT businesses can apply for up to \$5,000 in grants and contributions for their digital projects and have access to digital advisors who provide expertise, guidance, and support along the way. These programs have already helped over 50 NWT businesses expand their digital footprint.

Mr. Speaker, today I am thrilled to announce that Prosper NWT has secured an additional \$534,000 over three years from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency to bolster digital adoption. This additional investment will continue to help businesses with their digital transformation as they can now apply for up to \$12,500 for their digital projects. This additional funding is not just an investment in technology; it is an investment that strengthens our economic foundation, supports NWT northern business to evolve to consumer expectations, and makes it easier for NWT businesses to access global markets. We are supporting businesses to lay down the infrastructure needed for a more connected, innovative, and competitive economic presence. Let us continue to support local, encourage NWT businesses to build their web presence, and celebrate them as they work to thrive. I look forward to working together to help

build a stronger, more prosperous Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Range Lake.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 143-20(1):  
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASES

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, land is life. There's nothing quite like living out on the land, especially up here in the North's pristine, rugged environment. It should be no surprise that the demand for recreational land leases in the Northwest Territories is relentless. Some Northerners build cabins so they can pursue their traditional lifestyles of hunting and trapping. Others come to the North to build a vacation spot where they can experience a land that's much different from the cities and suburbs they call home. I know in my riding, there are plenty of folks who look to obtain these leases so they can provide a weekend getaway from their busy lives for their friend and family. I've spoken to many of those cabin-seeking constituents during my campaign last fall, and they are all dealing with the same frustrating circumstances. They follow the rules and applied for a recreational land lease, and then heard nothing. Months would turn into years without hearing back anything from the department regarding the status of their leases. Eager to build a cabin of their own and optimistic in the green light they had initially received, they bought essential construction supplies that now sit rotting and warping in their backyards. Meanwhile, cabins have sprung up in the lots next to them as those leases for those neighboring plots of land sailed through the department's processes.

Mr. Speaker, we know there are complex circumstances behind recreational land leasing in the Northwest Territories. There are still land claims to be signed and impacts from development to be studied; however, the politics are for us to debate and the policies are for the government to work out. Regular folks just want a cabin to call their own. They should not have to go through a political process when applying for a recreational land lease. They should not need the advocacy of their MLA to get updates on the leases they applied for. The GNWT needs to get its House in order when it comes to the leasing process so there's a set of rules to play by and a transparent reasonable process that follows. Let's get the work done here so our constituents can get out there and enjoy the land we call home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 144-20(1):  
GAZA

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I brought forward a petition from 645 NWT residents calling upon this Assembly to direct the Premier to ask the Canadian government for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Mr. Speaker, I will also be calling a motion for the Assembly to direct the Premier to do just that later today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for his last commitment on this topic to me in this House. We did, indeed, meet with a member of the Palestinian here in Yellowknife, a resident who has family and ties to Gaza in Palestine.

Mr. Speaker, although I can't speak for the Premier, in that meeting I heard him say that he had heard things that he hadn't before, and I believe that he was deeply moved by those conversations.

Mr. Speaker, I'm uncertain that this petition or motion will be met in the full spectrum of what is being requested, such as the nature of politics and the levers we have at our disposal as Regular Members. But, Mr. Speaker, you don't have to be an expert to know that what's happening in Gaza is wrong. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 145-20(1):  
NACHALECHO PROJECT

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, decision-making is a critical and fundamental principle in business and leadership capacity. In some communities and regions of the Northwest Territories, decision-making is mandatory and immediate to meet seasonal resupply and public and, private project scheduling. Mr. Speaker, these actions are sound, prudent, and necessary to support logistics, client planning, satisfaction, and security.

Mr. Speaker, the Leap Year tradition arrives on our calendar every four years. Information through research and informed decision-making will allow us to progress during this 20th Assembly. Since the November 2023 elections, the newly-elected MLAs focus on decisions. This process is working to fill our

government's vacancies to boost our concerning economy. The potential is both real and imminent, Mr. Speaker.

The discovery and production of the NWT's Nechalacho project is a game changer. This is a clear example of our potential in becoming a raw material supplier. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, should we tackle our own and ultimate reward to a green energy participation?

Mr. Speaker, let us not overlook this thoughtful process but take an ambitious aggressive position to continue the momentum. The next approaching Leap Year is four years away. Hint, hint. We need decision-making to meet targets, priorities, departmental objectives during the term of this Assembly, and I look forward to moving the envelope for a more prosperous one. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 146-20(1):  
RECOGNITION OF 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAYS OF  
MR. NEYANDO AND MS. ROSE POTTS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today it is very important that we look after our elders, more importantly that we recognize their accomplishments. When we lose an elder, we lose a wealth of knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to bring your attention to two Gwich'in elders who have reached a milestone in their lives. First, Mr. Andrew Neyando who lives in Fort McPherson. On December 5th of 2023, he celebrated his 100th birthday.

---Applause.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Neyando was very active out on the land. He spent most of his life living a traditional lifestyle. Only up until a few months ago, you can see him walking up to the local store with his cane, walking at a fast pace, or going to the local radio station to pick up his lucky bingo cards. In 1966, Mr. Neyando participated in a canoe race across Canada which ended in New York and back across Canada again, participated with his friends from Fort McPherson who were William Teya and Philip Blake, and Team NWT was captained by Tommy Ross of Aklavik. Mr. Neyando was a big Edmonton Oilers fan. You could see him sporting his Edmonton Oiler jersey.

Mr. Speaker, the second Gwich'in elder that I would like to recognize is Rose Potts who lives in Pincher Creek, Alberta. Ms. Potts was born on the Peel River on March 4th, 1923. Rose is the daughter of William and Gary Firth; her

grandparents were John and Margaret Firth. Rose moved away from Fort McPherson at a young age and soon thereafter married. She gave her life to service the people. She was a nurse, life skills coach, and served on many councils and boards across Canada. Mrs. Potts' greatest quote is you have to care about people to work with people. Ms. Potts is fluent in the Gwich'in language.

Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to join me in wishing these two beautiful Gwich'in elders a very happy 100th birthday and that the good Lord continue to bless them both with continued good health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 147-20(1):  
REGIONAL STUDY OF SLAVE  
GEOLOGICAL

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we refer to as the Slave Geological Province is a large area that's mostly within traditional Tlicho territory. On June 7th, 2021, the Tlicho government wrote to the federal government requesting a regional study, and I'll quote from that letter to explain because they said it best.

The health of barren-ground caribou and the ecological integrity of this region are critical for Tlicho well-being. We recognize that the region has great value for cultural well-being, way of life and caribou, and the region has great value and potential for economic development. The Tlicho government's view is that in order to reconcile these values, we need an independent assessment of options, impacts, and benefits before permanent infrastructure is built. Permanent infrastructure, such as the Slave Geological Province Road proposed by GNWT, would irreversibly change the region. Starting to build a road or major infrastructure without working together to develop a common vision, and without the information needed to inform wise decisions, means long delays, lost time and money, severe impacts on wildlife and the environment and missed economic opportunities. There is only one chance to get it right. End of quote.

So it took nearly two years, but the federal Minister finally responded in February of 2023 agreeing to set up the regional studies. Since then there have been discussions about a governance structure but no work on the study has yet started. Meanwhile, the GNWT has been going ahead with planning work for the Slave Geological Province Road. Last

December, the Department of Infrastructure got a land use permit for geotechnical work to help determine routing. The previous Infrastructure Minister from the 19th Assembly indicated that the GNWT intended to push forward with the SGP Road Project even if it meant triggering a separate environmental assessment to be conducted at the same time as the regional environmental assessment is underway.

Mr. Speaker, like the phrase death by a thousand cuts, the integrity of our land and our caribou is weakened by one little cut at a time, and we don't see the overall cost when we look at each cut in isolation. There's tremendous value in looking at the region more holistically and waiting for the recommendations from the regional study before we irreversibly change such an important region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 148-20(1):  
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to quote my friend from Yellowknife Centre, in the 84 days I have been in office, Mr. Speaker, it's clear to me that there's much work to be done.

We are dealing with addictions in every region of our territory. Mr. Speaker, our health system is strained. A shortage of nurses, doctors, and a medical travel department that has become increasingly overburdened, a housing crisis that continues to plague each region with long waitlists for public housing and lack of available market rental units. We have an economy that is stagnant and an industry across all sectors that needs our support.

Mr. Speaker, I'm fortunate to work with an amazing group of passionate MLAs who are willing to take on all the issues that we are facing. We have a Cabinet that has a mix of experience and new creative energy that see collaborative approach to solve all the issues that we face. Mr. Speaker, we must look to our Indigenous governments to partner and to find a way to collaborate and work together.

Mr. Speaker, in my region alone, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation are building homes, they're purchasing land, they're building homes on the land they own, they're hiring their own dental hygienists and coordinators for dental care, Mr. Speaker. They're developing a major gas project for the region as we speak, Mr. Speaker. Just recently, they have piloted a program where they will provide medical



escorts for beneficiaries who have been denied by medical travel for that service to ensure that patients have the important cultural support when making these trips.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council in Inuvik are developing renewable energy projects in the region. They recently hired a director of infrastructure and are also in the process of building homes on GTC owned land as well as looking to purchase other lots to develop homes, Mr. Speaker. The Indigenous governments are leading the way.

During my campaign, I spoke of a whole-of-community approach to deal with the important issues we face. We need to look at a whole-of-government approach, Mr. Speaker, to work together with NGOs, Indigenous governments, municipal governments, to find a way to effectively face these challenges as a whole, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 149-20(1):  
TAXING TREATY PEOPLE

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission strongly recommends that the full and meaningful implementation of the United Nation Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People in order to achieve reconciliation. Last year the previous Assembly passed a bill to implement UNDRIP and ensure all future laws were consist with those principles. UNDRIP complements the rights of Indigenous people as set out in section 35 of the Canadian Constitution which upholds treaty rights. Under both UNDRIP and section 35, Canada, and by extension the GNWT, now have federal and international laws that demand their compliance with these treaty rights. During negotiations over a hundred years ago, my people were assured that the treaty would not lead to any forced interference with their mode of life and that it did not open the way to the imposition of any tax and that there were no fear and forced military services. Since then, especially since the creation of the GNWT, many taxes have been forced upon my people that are not in compliance with Treaty 8, the rights of which are upheld by section 35 and UNDRIP.

Some of these taxes are very obvious, like the payroll tax or the carbon tax, but there are also many other hidden taxes and fees. Today we have a new government that promises a future of collaboration and cooperation, strong close

relationships between them and Indigenous governments. This is a government that now must only abide by section 35 of the Constitution but is also obligated by United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This is why today I'm calling upon the new government to bring itself in compliance with Treaty 8 and cease in committing new taxes on my people. I look forward to hearing from the Premier today on his plans to bring the GNWT in compliance with my people's rights. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 150-20(1):  
POLICE BRUTALITY OF INDIGENOUS  
WOMEN

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for my statement today I want to be a voice for Indigenous women. This is nothing new. I am hearing from women in my -- from women about their experiences with the police and want to raise it publicly.

Mr. Speaker, we know Indigenous women are far more likely to be violently victimized. According to a 2018 Statistics Canada survey, about 63 percent of Indigenous women have experienced physical or sexual assault in their lifetime compared to about 33 percent of non-Indigenous women. Indigenous women face sexism, racism, and discrimination. Many live in violent situations at home and face acts of violence in society.

Mr. Speaker, according to the 2019 general social survey, Indigenous women were twice as likely to report having very little or no confidence in the police compared to non-Indigenous women. In fact, it's common knowledge that much of the crime experienced by Indigenous women goes unreported because Indigenous women are either scared of or don't trust the police or they don't believe the police will help them.

Mr. Speaker, this violence is rooted in Canada's history of colonialism and residential schools. Many Indigenous women are intergenerational survivors of residential school.

Mr. Speaker, Indigenous women are overpoliced and underprotected. Whatever the reason the Indigenous women find themselves involved with the police does not matter. What matters is that they are treated with respect and that police officers recognize the trauma Indigenous women have lived through and to not perpetuate this. Mr. Speaker, the general

public lacks any data on RCMP misconduct. There is a long history of a culture within police of them covering up for each other in the face of any wrongdoings. This need to change.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I hear of women having their hair pulled, hair wrists fractured by excessive of force of the police. These kinds of physical acts can trigger Indigenous women. Many women are fighting for their own survival in life, and they shouldn't have to do that with the police. This use of force is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure that the police in the NWT build trust with Indigenous women and protect them. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Members' statements. Member from Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 151-20(1):  
RESPECTING OUR ELDERS

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about the importance of elders and seniors within our community, families, culture, and our overall society.

Mr. Speaker, the generations of today stand on the shoulders of those that came before us. In Dene culture, Mr. Speaker, and in many other cultures, elders have historically been our knowledge-holders, our knowledge-keepers, and they provide guidance on the cultural ways and protocols.

Those who respect the elderly pave their own road to success. That is an African proverb. An elderly person at home is like a living golden treasure. That is a Chinese proverb. A youth that does not cultivate friendship with the elderly is like a tree without roots. That is a Central African proverb. We all can't walk on one path but we can all work together as our people for our children and for the future. That is a Dene proverb from a Dene elder in Lutselk'e.

It's like the old adage goes, Mr. Speaker, that if we do not want to repeat the same mistakes of our history, then we must learn from our past, and who better to learn from regarding our history than our elders of today who have lived, breathed, and experienced so much in their life times, especially for Indigenous people who traditionally use oral history to transmit knowledge, culture, customs to their successive generations.

Mr. Speaker, it was with utmost importance that we take care of and engage with our elders in a good way and that we protect them from being forgotten or undermined of their inherent value

because they hold a vast, diverse, and invaluable knowledge that has contributed to the North that we call home. Without the elders who came before us, we would not be here today. At least I know that, for me, without my elders I myself might not be standing in this House as an elected official today. And for that I owe them a debt of gratitude and respect for helping pave the way before us. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 152-20(1):  
ODE TO PREMIER SIMPSON'S  
GOVERNMENT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, my loving wife is extremely clear on this next point. I cannot carry a tune, and for that I may even end up calling a Point of Order on myself, Mr. Speaker, so I in advance apologize unreservedly of what may come next. Mr. Speaker, I shall begin.

Mr. Speaker, first I was afraid. I was petrified. I kept thinking I could never live without the Members on my side. I spent so many sleepless nights thinking about the Simpson government and how it could go so wrong, but that's just wrong, Mr. Speaker, because we're all here to get along. Mr. Speaker, we're back in this great place, and we're here to do the people's business on their behalf. And so when I look to the finance Minister and as she comes along, we worry who's cutting and going to get short on their budgets oh so -- so wrong. Did she cut? Did she slash? Is she stealing the meager pittance from my neighbourhood's ridings? Oh no, that's a slash. Oh, Mr. Speaker, is there furry, is it kindness? We don't know. But we're nervous but our communities, they will survive. Mr. Speaker, so many of us as we worked hard to support our communities, they know they can trust as we all agreed all our communities, they must be strong and free. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm shutting it down because we must survive even from my statement.

Mr. Speaker, I try to bring a little levity even though I cannot sing, and I assure you by doubling down, my wife is right as most cases she is, I've never carried a tune but I love her deeply, but I think that our Assembly from time to time, as you can poorly see, needs a little smile just to get along and with that, in our kindest of ways trying to work together, we need each other to get through these long days, and it is the last day, and I think even the Members inside in the Cabinet that I do -- I may be tough on them from time to time, but I do respect their work and the fact that they have to

say no a lot to us. I wish it would be a lot less than they do but that said, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Assembly for their indulgence. Oh look at that, my wife's calling on me.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 153-20(1):  
EULOGY FOR GREG PRATT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am both proud and deeply saddened to rise today to speak to the memory of my dear friend Greg Pratt whose recent passing deeply impacted many residents of our community, his hometown of Victoria, and the various lives he touched in between. Greg was the kind of person you remember when you meet them. He struck an imposing figure at well over 6 feet tall, was extensively tattooed, had a boisterous laugh, and approached everything he did with notable confidence, dedication, and skill. Frankly, he was one of those people who was frustratingly good at everything he did. I've never felt as inferior as I did try to play crib against him and being decisively humiliated at it or attempting to help out with a simple home renovation project and quickly demonstrating I was totally useless alongside his journeyman skill set.

But Greg was also unflinchingly kind and patient and relentlessly funny. He was quick to tease and kid around but never made you feel excluded, and he was incredibly generous with his time and knowledge.

In his time in Yellowknife, Greg became best known for his work as a firefighter and paramedic, his chosen dream jobs, which he excelled at and quickly became both a mentor and close friend among his tight-knit group of colleagues.

Greg was married to Crissie Carrigan, his partner of ten years, and their two dogs, Buster and Fonzie, completed their family. Together, they were constant hosts to large groups of friends at their home on Taylor Road, and I have been incredibly privileged to count myself as one of them.

Greg was diagnosed with terminal cancer two years ago, devastating news which hit his family and those of us close to him incredibly hard. What stood out to me in the years that followed, however, and what I'll remember most, was not sadness but the incredible courage and positivity he and Crissie showed in the face of the impossible. I also watched the community rally around them, eager to help in

any way they could, as Yellowknife tends to do in such times.

During those years, I also somehow found myself in constant deficit to the favours they would do for me. Despite everything they were going through, Crissie and Greg made a point of going out of their way to celebrate a friend's birthday, continued to host parties and games nights with friends, or went completely out of their way to do a favour without expecting anything in return.

One of my favorite memories of Greg is when my partner Rhiana's parents were visiting last summer, and he made a point of taking us out to the East Arm in his boat so her dad could experience our legendary fishing. We had an incredible time with him and his brother on the water, and you could tell he was so happy to be out there with us. That generosity and kindness is something I will always cherish and look up to, and it also helps sum up what Greg meant to me as a person.

Put simply, Greg showed me what being a good person looks like in the simplest but most fundamental ways possible. He was a dedicated, supportive, and loving partner. He was a generous, kind, and hilarious friend. He is deeply missed by the many friends and loved ones he has left behind, including me, and he lived a full and meaningful life. Greg's passing has left a big hole in our community but all of us whose lives he touched are better for having known him. We love you, and we'll always miss you, Greg. Thank you for being a part of our lives.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Our condolences go out to the family and friends.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 154-20(1):  
EULOGY FOR ISADORE SIMON

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Today is going to be very hard for me, as I do a celebration of life for Isadore Simon. I was very fortunate to call him and Lucy, mom and dad. He was born on November 7, 1945, in Rocher River, NWT to Charlotte Simon and David King. Isadore was raised in Rocher River by Joseph Jerome and Charlotte. Isadore had TB at a young age and when he was released from the hospital, he lived with the Dumels who took care of him. Isadore lived there until he was forced to relocate to Fort Resolution after the school burnt down.

Isadore was taught his tradition skills of hunting and trapping by his stepdad Joseph Jerome. Isadore was a traditional and humbled man who

loved being on the land. He was at his best being close to Mother Nature. He was proud of his lineage.

As a young man, he enlisted in the navy and was away for a few years. Isadore always worked hard and had many jobs over the years. His last job was with the power corp in Jean Marie River as a plant supervisor/operator. Even after he retired in 2004, Isadore continued doing odd jobs to make ends meet.

Like some people, he had an addiction problem with alcohol, but he decided to address his addictions head on. He attended a treatment centre in Bonnyville, Alberta. After completing the program, he spent his remaining days sober. During his sobriety, Isadore would often go to the bar to visit with his friends that he always kept close, and it never bothered him. As a strong resilient man, Isadore won his battle with addictions.

Isadore had two children, Christina and Milly, from a previous relationship. Several years later, he met the love of his life Lucy Sanguiez. At this time, Lucy had three children, Ralph, Boris and Stephanie. In Isadore fashion, he took them all in as his own and raised them as such. To date, they all consider Isadore as their dad. In 1979, Isadore and Lucy got married by the Justice of the Peace. They had two more children, Paul and James. In 2007 Isadore decided that he had remarry Lucy and have it done by a priest.

When his granddaughter Brittany Sanguiez was born, Isadore fell in love her and called her his queen, and they had a strong bond. Britt considered Isadore as her dad. He had many grandchildren whom he loved dearly. He was a family man who never turned away from his family. He taught his children and his grandchildren to be responsible and respectful on the land. Later in life, his boys would always ensure that their parents had traditional food in their freezer. Isadore had many long-term friends throughout his life span. It did not matter where Isadore went, he always ran into friends and would like to take time to converse with them in his Dene language. He was proud of his knowledge of Chipewyan and Slavey language.

In the end, Isadore battle with throat cancer and his treatment took a toll on him. In the end, he caught pneumonia which ended his life at 9:30 a.m. on November 25th, 2023, in the community of Jean Marie in the loving arms of his beloved wife Lucy. Dad was the backbone of the family, and he will always be deeply missed by all of us that knew him.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Colleagues, I'd like to recognize former Member of the 18th and 19th Assembly, and somebody I consider a really good friend, Kevin O'Reilly. Welcome.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Thebacha.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my constituents Jason Lepine, the general manager from the Fort Smith Metis Council, and Cameron Walterhouse, the youth representative for the Fort Smith Metis Council. Welcome to the Assembly.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize folks who are joining us today for the proceedings from the YK Group for Ceasefire. They are the reason for the petition that you saw earlier this week and the motion you will see later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my most vocal constituent, Mr. Kevin O'Reilly. And, also, I note his son Rene O'Reilly is in the audience. And if there's anyone else from Frame Lake up there I missed, I do apologize; I just can't see you here. But thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Kevin O'Reilly. I had the privilege of working with him together here during the 18th Assembly. Welcome back to the House there, Kevin. Mahsi.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Shirley Elias. She's a constituent of mine. She's also one of our interpreters. And I'd also like to thank all the interpreters for this first sitting of the 20th Assembly, and I'm sorry if I spoke too

fast, and I'll try to remember to slow down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll join the chorus of my colleagues recognizing former MLA, good friend, Kevin O'Reilly. You think retirement would keep him away but once it gets in the blood, politics will never leave. So thank you for being here, Kevin. Appreciate your interest.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, I too want to recognize former MLA Kevin O'Reilly. I still remember the days we used to play hockey; I'm still faster. But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize Marc Casaway, Mary Sundberg, Jonas Lafferty, all the translators out of here. I want to say mahsi; you guys are doing a great job. And all the ledge staff and my CA in Fort Resolution Delorme and Taylor. Thank you.

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

I too would like to thank all our translators, especially Mary Jane Cazon from Fort Simpson, for being here and all the pages as well. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your Chamber. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to see people in the gallery. Thank you.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Member from Range Lake.

### Acknowledgements

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 1-20(1): HAZENBERG 55TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge my constituents John Hazenberg and Gerda Hazenberg on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary.

When a couple reaches such an extraordinary milestone, it is worth celebrating with utmost joy and gratitude. After all, 55 years together is an incredible achievement of love and togetherness.

Today I'm honored to recognize John and Gerda and wish them many more years of enduring commitment in a relationship that has withstood the test of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 142-20(1): GAZA

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Premier's position is generally to stay out of international affairs, and that is his prerogative. However, as the territory grows, especially with newcomers from many diasporas abroad, what actions is the Premier comfortable in taking to make them feel welcomed and supported in times of hardship and if he feels that that is the responsibility of the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So while I have made clear that I do stay out of international politics, of course we have residents in the Northwest Territories who are from abroad, and they are now Northerners and we want to make Northerners feel welcomed. So the things that we can do are things that the Member is doing herself, acknowledging when people are experiencing hardship, recognizing their concerns, providing support to them, when it's necessary condemning anti-Palestinian racism, anti-Semitism, listening. Mr. Speaker, the Member noted that I did have a meeting with her and her constituent and, you know, I heard stories that were moving. She was right I was moved, and I thought about that meeting every single day since then. So we need to be kind to each other. We need to recognize that somebody might be going through something that we don't understand.

In terms of official supports, the federal government does provide funding for settlement services for those who are immigrating to the Northwest Territories, but to make someone feel welcomed and to help them through hardship, I think that's up to each and every one of us as residents of the Northwest Territories. During my time in this Assembly, I've seen a number of -- a number of tragedies, a number of hard times, and what I've seen is people coming together and people supporting each other, and I think that's what is needed, and I'm willing to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier for that. In what ways can the Premier commit to acting on upholding human rights in Gaza on behalf of the residents of the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, I have no policy mechanisms to impact what is happening in Gaza. But that being said, the Northwest Territories does work with the federal government when it comes to immigration, and so I know the federal government has implemented some changes to their processes and the Northwest Territories Nominee Program, which is our side of that immigration process, is doing what it can to expedite -- or help expedite applications for those who are coming from impacted regions. Thank you.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier for that. Just a comment really; I will follow up with the Minister of ECE on that program.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Colleagues, remember comments -- if you don't have a second set of questions, third question, please allow your colleagues to move on.

Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 143-20(1):  
COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS  
GOVERNMENTS

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's committed to strengthening the relationship between this government and Indigenous governments and organizations. The Premier recently met with the Council of Leaders. What concerns have they brought forward from that meeting, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Inuvik Boot Lake. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Council of Leaders, Members of the Council of Leaders did come together, and that was in response to a visit from two federal Ministers. And so it was a -- it wasn't a general Council of Leaders meeting. It was focused on health care and we were actually all, as Members of that table, conveying our concerns and issues to the federal government. And so I think that the issues that were raised there are familiar to all of us in this House - issues of medical travel, issues of access to services, and things like that. Thank you.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, how will use the Premier -- how does the Premier plan to use the Council of Leaders and Intergovernmental Council to build stronger ties with Indigenous governments?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I plan to continue the good work that has been

happening. I've seen the Council of Leaders from its inception and how it's progressed over four years. One of the biggest benefits of the Council of Leaders is relationship building. I know, you know, all the leaders around that table now. I've made personal phone calls to virtually all of them, if not all of them, over the past few weeks. And so just that relationship side is a big part of that. Under the Council of Leaders, there is other work that can be done in other areas. So there's a housing forum that was developed under that. There's discussion about the territorial legislation and how we can work together on that. And so there's a number of different areas. I think that we are just scratching the surface of what that group can accomplish. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Premier. And I know the Premier is passionate and serious about working closely with Indigenous governments, and I certainly appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier mentioned legislation, currently co-drafting legislation that's currently limited to lands and resource, but the Premier's indicated a willingness to expand legislative co-drafting. Can the Premier share with us or let us know his plans on the co-drafting of other legislations, Mr. Premier?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And land and resource legislation is -- the development of that is governed under the devolution agreement, and we work with the Intergovernmental Council to advance that legislation. I've also committed in my previous role as the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to co-develop the Education Act, which is one of the biggest undertakings -- legislative undertakings that we can do. And there's a desire to do more as well. And so I'm happy to have those conversations.

As I've said before, we are moving towards a future where Indigenous governments -- self-governments of the future are going to be taking on and administering the programs and legislation that we -- that currently exist. And so as we develop them, we need to ensure that Indigenous voices are part of those pieces of legislation and that they are -- they're developed in a way that Indigenous governments will want to take them over and will be successful when that happens. And, of course, we cannot forget about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That has put new obligations on the government. And, again, I'm happy to -- or I'm excited and honoured to carry

forward that work from the last government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Sahtu.

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QUESTION 144-20(1):  
HOUSING SUPPLY

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of NWT Housing, or Housing NWT. As we mentioned on numerous occasions, the Northwest Territories is facing a housing crisis. In the Sahtu, there are 61 people on the waiting list, Mr. Speaker. My first question to the Minister is how many public housing units does Housing NWT have in the Sahtu region? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Sahtu. Minister for housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member from the Sahtu for the question. Currently, Housing NWT has 252 public housing units in the Sahtu:

- 4 in Colville Lake,
- 35 in Norman Wells,
- 50 in Fort Good Hope,
- 74 in Tulita,
- 89 in Deline.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that inventory. My next question is how many new housing -- NWT public housing units will be delivered this year to the Sahtu region? Thank you

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to report that Housing NWT will deliver a large capital plan involving 20 new public housing units to the communities in the Sahtu region. Housing recently completed four of these new public housing units in Norman Wells. Four-plexes are now under construction in Deline, Tulita, and Fort Good Hope. And duplexes are under construction in Colville Lake and Tulita. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems to be more good news here. Hopefully it's not like Leap Year, and we get these numbers here next four years. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, my third question to the Minister is what is Housing NWT doing to plan for the transportation difficulties like last year's low water on the Mackenzie River or poor road conditions, particularly in the low water season.

We've had a number -- I think there's been a number of examples of possible low water this season. So can the Minister answer that there, please. Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So contractors are delivering on capital projects for Housing NWT. They were affected by low water and barge delays and cancellations over the summer of 2023. Housing made alternative plans to deliver remaining construction materials during the current winter road season. It is recognized that planning will increasingly need to consider the unique logistical challenges immobilizing equipment, construction material, and modular units within the Sahtu with appropriate contingency plans in place for alternative methods of delivery. Housing NWT will continue to work with communities and Indigenous governments to find solutions to these issues caused by climate change, including low water levels and a shortened ice road season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that information. My last question for the last day of this month here, what work is Housing NWT doing with the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated in the only government in Northwest Territories, the Deline Got'ine government, to increase housing in the Sahtu? Mahsi.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Housing NWT is active in working with Indigenous government partners in the Sahtu region. Both the Sahtu Secretariat and the Deline Got'ine government are participants in the NWT Housing Forum, which is currently co-chaired by Housing NWT and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Housing NWT has an intergovernmental agreement from housing with both the Sahtu Secretariat and the Deline Got'ine government on housing. These arrangements address matters, including how we work together, share information, and maximize our joint efforts on housing. Under the SSI memorandum of agreement, we can put together housing working groups with each Sahtu community. The working group with Fort Good Hope, through the K'asho Got'ine Housing Society, is particularly active and has resulted in collaboration on home repairs and in other areas.

Under a separate MOU with the Deline Got'ine government, Housing NWT has been able to work with the Deline Got'ine government to contribute to the renovation of housing units

associated with the community health centre to share building plans and discuss opportunities around market housing and to make surplus property available to the Deline Got'ine government for housing purposes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 145-20(1):  
REGIONAL STUDY OF SLAVE  
GEOLOGICAL PROJECT

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first set of questions is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

So I understand that currently underway there's collaboration with Indigenous governments, the GNWT, and the federal government in the design and development of the regional study for the Slave Geological Province. Will there be opportunities for public participation in the design of the regional study, such as the development of terms of reference? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question. On February of 2023, the federal Minister of northern affairs accepted the Tlicho government's request to conduct a regional strategic environmental assessment in the South Slave Geological Province. This study is being led by the Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada under part 5.2 of the federal Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. A regional strategic environmental assessment is anticipated to offer opportunities for meaningful Indigenous and public engagement with participant funding provided by the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to push a bit more on that one because the Minister mentioned that there will be participant funding once the study gets underway, but my question is will there be any public participation in designing the terms of reference of the study? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the study and the whole process is led by the federal government so that's not a question I can answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister can explain the value that his department sees in doing cumulative impact assessments, so in this case a regional strategic environmental assessment, before individual applications are considered by a piecemeal environmental assessment, so the value in doing cumulative impact assessment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's value in sharing information collected or gathered by the coordinated project -- corridor project and/or regional study for these two initiatives as they advance. We're in the early stages of developing the terms of reference for the regional study, and the timeline for the study has not yet been finalized. The advantage specifically here is for the participants to, you know, work together in ensuring that all of the information is shared with everyone that needs to know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder what the Minister can commit to do in having his department work with the Department of Infrastructure to understand the value of the regional strategic environmental assessment as preparations are made for the SGP Road Project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we are sharing the information that comes out of these studies as we move forward collectively, gathering information is certainly important. I think it's a big part of ensuring that the projects are moving together collaboratively. And in the early stages of developing the terms of reference, we want to ensure that the timelines for the study are accurate. And to specifically questions related to the criteria and the timeline for the regional study, we -- oh, sorry, the GNWT is not -- my apologies, Mr. Speaker, could I ask the Member to repeat the question, please.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Yellowknife North, please rephrase your question.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this is a question of cumulative impact assessment that looks at the whole region in a holistic way, and then we have a road project that this government is leading that, if it pushes ahead, will have to have a specific environmental assessment done for it but there's value in seeing a holistic regional



assessment to understand the broader impacts before going ahead with the road project. So what I was getting at was given that the Department of Environment and Climate Change includes many staff working on cumulative impact assessment, what can the department do to work with the Department of Infrastructure to understand the value of that work as they plan the road project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I think the key to success here is that the departments all work together and look at it from a whole-of-government approach in how we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 146-20(1):  
TREATY RIGHTS

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that Canada and the GNWT's bound legally by section 35 in UNDRIP to bring themselves in compliance with Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 rights, the question is how is this new government working to implement section 35 UNDRIP with existing treaties in partnership with Indigenous governments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Could you tell me who you're asking?

**MR. EDJERICON:** Premier. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So with the passage of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act, we are now obliged through that legislation to develop an action plan for implementation of UNDRIP, and that is going to be -- and it's legislated to be co-developed with Indigenous governments, and so that is the avenue to address a lot of these issues. And if there is things such as taxation that the government would like addressed, the time to bring it up is right at the beginning so that work can happen during the development of that action plan. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the oath of office for all the MLAs, again, it just talks about that we'll continue to honour and respect the treaties signed with Indigenous governments, so help me God. So I am happy to hear that from the Premier. Thank you for that.

How do we ensure future laws do not impose taxes on First Nations in breaching trust -- sorry, breach of their treaty rights on Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 territory? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we are going through that process right now, and that is the land claim and self-government negotiations. I think that is what we need to conclude to ensure that there is a well-defined relationship between the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada, and the governments in Treaty 8 territory. And so in terms of the Akaitcho treaty that we hope to finalize in the not too distant future, that would be the place to identify those relationships, and that is why it is important that we get that AIP concluded, to reference the Member's questions from the other day. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. Mr. Speaker, as you know that the territorial council -- or the Territorial Council Act was created in 1967. That's 67 years ago. So my question to the primary is will the Premier consider developing some taxation to Indigenous governments as to how they're going to deal with taxation on treaties? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, that's the work that is happening as we negotiate the Akaitcho treaty, and so I look forward to that progressing. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final oral supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you. And I understand the negotiation process. I was part of that process as well. Going back to 1967 to date, so it'd be nice if this government could start looking as to how we're going to be dealing with taxation through that process so that -- sorry? To the question. The question is basically through negotiations that the taxation compensation to Akaitcho Treaty 8 be looked at from 1967 going forward? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, again, it is that treaty process, so I look forward to -- or the negotiations, so I look forward to including this and being able to in future Assemblies say yes, those issues have been settled. The issues that the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh raised back in the 20th, we've dealt with those, we now have this -- the Akaitcho treaty and, you know, the Akaitcho people are exercising their inherent right to self-determination and self-government. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 147-20(1):  
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week we've been seeing in the news news about funding to the Spruce Bough lapsing. I wish I had time for two Member's statements but I know you like to run a tight ship so I'll get to the question.

How does the Premier envision non-profit programs like the Spruce Bough, who deliver critical services on behalf of the GNWT, fitting into the mandate stemming from the Assembly's priority of increasing access to health care? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member, can you tell me -- oh, the Premier? Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I don't want to preempt any mandate discussions that we need to have as a Cabinet, as a Caucus, but non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, are going to be essential -- and they are essential right now, but to the future operation of the territory they will be essential. They have significant expertise, significant ability, and flexibility to do a lot of the work that we need to get done, and so as we develop that mandate they will be at the forefront of my mind. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 147-20(1):  
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier for the answers. Certainly myself and a number of Members have been pressuring him about the importance of long term funding for our NGOs, and I do appreciate his attention to the matter.

What are the government's plans to ensure sustainable and sufficient funding for the Spruce Bough program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, of course the Government of the Northwest Territories was providing funding for the operations of the Spruce Bough, and that was federal money that we were using and, of course, we always knew that that funding was going to run out and so, unfortunately, there wasn't a way to extend that funding. And so we're not at the point where that funding is going to expire. We have found some funding

to allow the operation to extend for a few more months to buy us a bit more time. I believe that there are meetings happening maybe today or tomorrow with the most senior government officials and representatives from the Spruce Bough. So there are ways for us to work together. And that is actually the way to go forward. There are opportunities to unlock other pots of funding, find other funding from the federal government, maybe other sources, but we need to work together. We need to share information. And we need to have that same goal in mind and go in the same direction. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I've said, and I think many members have said before, that what we need our NGOs to be focusing on is doing the work and not necessarily looking for funding, and we do hope to see the GNWT supporting them in that.

Mr. Speaker, just to the point of buying time, I question the Premier, we constantly seem to be caught off guard by these funding pots lapsing that we've known years in advance are going to lapse. So why is the GNWT failing to plan ahead and ensure long term and sustainable funding for these critical programs in such a way that we don't have to buy time at the last minute to ensure that they continue? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Government of the Northwest Territories certainly wasn't caught off guard. It was well known that this funding was time limited, but this is not a Government of the Northwest Territories program. And so what this does is it highlights the need for closer collaboration with the NGOs and, you know, to my earlier point, for information sharing between the government and NGOs so that these types of situations don't sneak up on anybody. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 148-20(1):  
HEALTHCARE IN SMALL NWT  
COMMUNITIES

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, in 19th Assembly on June 1st, 2022, Motion 54-19(2) called on the government to improve health care in the small communities. I want to ask the new Minister of Health and Social Services what has been done

since that time to improve health care in the small community? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for that question. Mr. Speaker, you know, we've heard in this House many times from many members, especially the representatives from the small communities, on health care in the small communities and, you know, we were -- we're going -- not just the Northwest Territories but Canada has been struggling with health care service providers, getting -- hiring permanent nursing, permanent doctors, so I think that there has been some work done. And I've mentioned this, you know, working with the paramedics in the small communities when needed to make sure that there's access to care. There's been the launch of the 8-1-1 service across the territory 24/7 over the phone to a registered nurse to provide residents with immediate health care assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since that motion was brought forward, can the Minister assure this House that the health care provided in small communities has seen some improvements? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I can't understate the challenge that we face in the Northwest Territories. You know, I assure this House that we are actively working to improve health care. I've had many discussions with my staff. I've had discussions, you know, from what I've heard from other Members. And one of the discussions that I have been having is, you know, ensuring that we're looking at the communities and the model that we're providing in the communities, and that is something that I will be focusing on during my time as the Minister of health, is how, you know, the -- how do we support smaller communities and the residents in those small communities so that they're not having to leave the community as much as they have to, you know, so that they're getting preventative care in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister for social services. Supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you for that. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there have been dozens of stories, stories over the years of health centres prescribing Tylenol to very sick or even dying individuals seeking medical attention only to be dismissed or minimized and

unheard. Does the Minister agree that Tylenol is being overprescribed to residents in our smaller communities? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for raising this. In the small communities, we -- you know, we tend to get a lot of concerns -- we gotten a lot of concerns in this House when I was a Member, and we continue to hear stories but what I can say is we -- like, I cannot comment on individual cases in this House, but every report that every time there's a complaint, every report that's given to -- you know, that is put forward is looked into.

The other thing that I wanted to say is, you know, the Office of Client Experience is a new department. It had its one-year anniversary. This is something that the 19th Members, you know, we all together worked hard to get Indigenous advocates. We -- you know, we -- and from that the Office of Client Experience has also been created so that people in the Northwest Territories can go directly to them when they're having concerns or if they have a complaint, and they can be helped through that. They don't need to go through the MLA to get a consent form. They can do verbal consent through that office. And so I encourage the Member to -- you know, and all Members, to ensure that their residents know about the Office of Client Experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister share with us how many permanent long-term health workers that are living in -- currently living in small communities across the NWT? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that specific detail I don't have here, but I'm willing to work with the Member and all Members in that hence to get that information and provide it back to the Member on the permanent -- how many permanent health care nurses that we do have. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Social services. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 149-20(1):  
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, I have constituents who have been waiting years

for any kind of clarity on recreational land leasing. So I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change, can the Minister commit to a consistent and transparent land leasing process? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, the existing land lease processes are consistent and transparent. The department has and continues to work on improving the service and the processes that it uses to deliver these programs to the public. For any application, the department works with the applicant to outline the steps and processes that are required for tenure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Thank you to the Minister for explaining that. But, you know, I do think that a few of my constituents would disagree. So I'll make it more precise. Can the Minister commit to a 90-day service standard for land lease applications? Thank you.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process for land leases requires consultation with the Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations and, Mr. Speaker, I respect that consultation process so I will not stand up here and commit to changing the process without proper consultation with the Indigenous organizations and governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly that's not my intent. I think the Minister needs to work with treaty partners to ensure there's realistic and clear policy. So what I am saying is when an applicant applies, can they get a response, whatever that response happens to be, within 90 days? Thank you.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will commit that we will ensure that we improve our communications with the applicants and provide a level of response within 90 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Well, I know who my new favorite Minister is, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're on a roll. Will the Minister commit to convert all outstanding equity leases to title -- fee simple title? Thank you.

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, leases that qualify for fee simple title under the legislation, the limitations of land sales policy may be eligible for title to their parcel subject to consultation and survey requirements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 150-20(1):  
DIABETES SUPPORT SERVICES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I won't be singing my questions by the way.

So, Mr. Speaker, diabetes in the Northwest Territories are certainly, you know, well above the national average. As a matter of fact, groups like the Metis have some of the highest diabetes affected in the context of ethnicity. NWT Indigenous women are certainly well above the Canadian average. And, Mr. Speaker, our regional centres suffer enormously with the high levels of diabetes and the lack of care.

My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is how is she planning to change this narrative by extending diabetic supports and care outside of the headquarters region of Yellowknife? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure I understand if the question is the direction from the headquarters or -- because in all of the regions, we have regional diabetes educators. We have community health representative workers that work with -- you know, with health promotion and health in that area so if the -- you know, if there's a specific question, I would try to get the answer for the Member. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Well, it's a two-pronged question, Mr. Speaker. The same question by the way. But, you know, it's the sense of the accessibility to diabetic supports, and without revisiting the earlier questions, it's about wait time getting a doctor to supply the information in the context of diagnosis and treatment of those supports. So, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is Yellowknife's the only area you can get dialysis and other types of supports for diabetic care. And I'd like to ask the Minister, again, is how is she going to expand this type of support services to those communities and

regions to ensure they have that type of support? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I think Yellowknife has the dialysis for people that are in kidney failure, and I believe that the last -- last term, the Member from Hay River South advocated very hard for Hay River to have a dialysis and that is currently running there. But as for diabetes and services, you know, outside of Yellowknife, the, you know, access to diabetes information, there -- the hospitals in Inuvik and Hay River, the health centre in Fort Smith, the -- you know, the community health centres. And, again, like I said, home care works with a lot of our diabetes patients and the diabetes educators in Yellowknife. You know, there's a lot of the health promotion stuff in Yellowknife. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to investigate and report back on how many people have to come to Yellowknife from our regions and smaller communities for these types of support services specific to diabetes? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Yes. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, upon that analysis, would the Minister be willing to take it to FMB to expand services and support programs to the communities and regions based on that type of information; will she become the new advocate? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, I guess I'm confused. With diabetes, people see access outside of Yellowknife. They access the physician. They are able to get their prescriptions for their -- you know, the medication that they're on. They're able to get the -- you know, the necessary tools that they need to check their blood sugar. There's many -- this is available outside of Yellowknife. So I can look into further what patients, if they are travelling to Yellowknife for diabetes services but I -- you know, I'll just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 151-20(1):  
REGIONAL STUDY OF SLAVE  
GEOLOGICAL PROJECT

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my questions this time are for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Does this government plan to move ahead with applications around the Slave Geological Province Road that could trigger an environmental assessment even while a regional study is underway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost we are working very closely with Indigenous governments on any routing decisions that might someday be made in the future, including the Tlicho government who did trigger the request for the regional strategic environmental assessment. At this point, we're at a stage going out this summer to do some field work analysis, some early field work analysis but, again, Mr. Speaker, I do want to emphasize no final decisions on routing are going to be made without Indigenous consultation, and the GNWT does continue to participate in the regional strategic environmental assessment. We had certainly hoped that had that moved a little faster that they'd be in a position to actually take that information and contribute. Don't have a lot of control over how fast the federal government can get that going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So does the Minister have a sense, then, on how fast this government plans to move on the Slave Geological Province Road?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do, as of December, have a type A land use permit that was issued to us, and with -- that's just going as far as -- going up to Lockhart Lake. Now with that, it is hoped that we could spend this summer beginning some field work assessments, and again ultimately had been hoping that more would be happening with the regional strategic environmental assessment. I can say, Mr. Speaker, we have funding right now, federal funding, that goes until 2028. So that puts a bit of a time crunch on us to advance what has been often spoke of as one of the critical infrastructure projects for the Northwest Territories and one about which the Tlicho government has been very vocal to me in asking how fast and when we can get this moving. So ideally, Mr. Speaker, we are finding

a path forward by which the work on -- in the Slave Geologic Region can contribute to or be contributed to by what's happening with the strategic environmental assessment but the timing of that is somewhat out of our hands. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister of Infrastructure understand that triggering a separate environmental assessment could cause a lot of duplications with what would already be underway with the regional study? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly again -- it's certainly, I think, our hope, my hope, you know shared hope on this end, that that's not going to be the case. As I indicated, we had been initially hoping that the strategic -- the regional strategic environmental assessment would get moving a little faster than it has. Had that been the case, the timing of that work would well -- would have contributed well to the timing that we were expecting in advance of the 2028 end of funding for us. So, again, it's been a couple of years. We've had a lot of progress over on the RSEA front despite interests. So if that is the case, we may be in a situation where the work we do contributes to the strategic environmental assessment as opposed to the other way around. There's no lack of understanding that there will certainly be areas of overlap in terms of what needs to get studied and what should be studied. And so knowing that it would hopefully mean that the two contribute one to the other. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Infrastructure. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister indicate any levers that we have to influence or control the timing of the regional environmental assessment to ensure that it proceeds at an appropriate pace? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories does participate. We are a participant in the process. I happen to have been in -- obviously in the past government, and so saw as that work was getting underway and was present at bilateral discussions with the Tlicho government when the two projects were discussed and where the desire to move forward with both was discussed. So as a partner, we can certainly engage with the others involved and see if there's a way to ensure as partners, as one participant, but just to ensure that everyone knows that there's these two parts going on. I

believe that that's true. I will follow up certainly with my department, with my colleagues, to make sure that that remains true on our side and that other parties are alive to the different timelines as they go forward. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 152-20(1):  
PUBLIC SAFETY

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a concerning amount of crime on our streets here in the capital. I was at a friend of mine who owns a shop just a couple days ago. And the door was locked. He doesn't trust the people that come in. This is an increasingly poor problem. And I know our Premier has stood on a public safety agenda. That was his pitch as Premier, and he -- and we made that a priority of this government. So how is the Premier addressing the elevated rates of crime that have been increasing since the COVID-19 pandemic? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the main things that I've been doing during this Assembly is lobbying my fellow MLAs to also make crime prevention and law enforcement a priority. We wound up with that in our priorities of this Assembly. Well, public safety, and so I'm happy to see that. And that will allow us to now move forward hopefully with some other initiatives. I meet regularly with the commanding officer of the RCMP. We discuss some of the challenges they're facing, potential solutions, and I'm always trying to find ways to provide additional support to the RCMP. We've added new RCMP members around the territory, including here in Yellowknife, every year since I have been the Minister of Justice. And, again, next year we will hope to be adding more officers. So I have been working. There's also legislation that I've been looking at to tackle some of the other issues we're facing of the drugs, the drug houses. The reason that we have this crime here is, in large part, because of the drug problem and so I want to be able to address the root of that. At its core of course, the drug problem is a health issue. It's a trauma issue. So we need to get at those reasons as well. So I am looking forward to the mandate development so that I can put into motion some of these issues -- or some of these potential solutions that I've been looking at over the past few years. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Thank you to the Premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I agree

with the Premier. We need to have a combination of root -- of things that address the root causes and things that keep our streets safe. The Premier mentioned legislative -- new legislation tools that could be provided to the RCMP. What are those? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I've spoken extensively about some of these tools. One of the main ones is the Civil Forfeiture Act. So right now if someone is suspected of committing a crime and they have some money on their person that is seized but they are not convicted of a crime, that money goes back to them even though, you know, everyone and his dog knows that it came from selling drugs. The Civil Forfeiture Act would allow the government to make an application to the court to retain those funds, and it would be done on a balance of probabilities as opposed to beyond a reasonable doubt. So there's one example of the types of legislation that can actually impact crime in the territory and organized crime and, frankly, the type of people who are selling the drugs and leading to a lot of the other issues. Scam legislation is the other one that I've spoken extensively about, and that is a way to help root out the drug houses. And a Trespass Act is another one that's probably of interest to the Members from Yellowknife. Many times the RCMP get a call, there's someone who's causing a disturbance in an apartment, but they have no authority to remove that person because we don't have a Trespass Act here. So those are the three primary pieces of legislation. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier. I look forward to seeing those pieces of legislation.

As this -- as public safety is a priority of this Assembly, the Premier -- will the Premier arrange a briefing for the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight with the RCMP commander of the Northwest Territories so we can speak -- so that all Members of this House can receive the same level of information and detail and express our concerns? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got to say I'm a little surprised that the committee hasn't done that themselves. They have the full authority to make that offer or reach out to the RCMP, and I know that the commanding officer would be happy to appear and have those discussions. So I can pass along the message but what I recommend is that the committee actually write a letter and ask for that meeting. That way you start building a relationship between the committee and the commanding officer. If I act as a go-between, I'm just kind of passing notes back and forth. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And fair enough. Will the Premier commit to hosting a town -- or joining me in hosting a town hall meeting where we can discuss public safety concerns with business owners in Yellowknife, with people who live in my riding, so he can hear their safety concerns firsthand? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That sounds like an invitation to the Member's constituency meeting, and so I'm happy to accept. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Premier. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 153-20(1):  
DIALYSIS ACCESS IN INUVIK

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on the questions from my honourable colleague from Yellowknife Centre, during my campaign it was brought to my attention from people struggling with diabetes that Inuvik, indeed, does not have a dialysis machine. I believe there are two in Yellowknife and one in Hay River. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to having that equipment in Inuvik as well?

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, having the dialysis equipment in Inuvik, you know, we have a lot of people that might need -- that have kidney disease but not all of them, and then I think in the territories we have 568 residents living with some degree of kidney disease, and then 87 clients with stage 4/5 renal disease, and those are the people that are potentially, if not already, on dialysis. Yellowknife has the capacity for a certain amount. Hay River, I think, is -- they are at capacity now. And, you know, what I'm willing to do for the Member is to review how many clients, you know, in Inuvik or in the Beaufort Delta that would require dialysis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister. Mr. Speaker, if there's one person that requires dialysis, I think that warrants enough having a machine up there. My understanding is the cost of the machine is not the issue; it's not super expensive. But I also understand that if you are diabetic and you live in Inuvik, you have to move if you require dialysis. It's as simple as that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that one of the issues is that we use agency nurses and local nurses and you can't always be guaranteed that the nurses coming in are qualified to actually use that equipment, and that is one of the issues that we are facing. Can the Minister, given her background of course, confirm if that is indeed the case or if that's something that others can be trained to do? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear. Diabetes is a disease on its own. Kidney disease is a separate disease. It affects the kidneys and it's not -- you know, it's not the same. So although we have -- you know, on one hand we have lots of people with diabetes and, yes, we do need -- and we have those supports in all the communities, like the testing, the medication. But for dialysis, you know, there's other options as well. Like, there's peritoneal dialysis, which we do have I think three patients in the territory. They don't have to move to Yellowknife because of the level that they can do that at home and they're supported by -- to do that. So that's why I said I would commit to -- you know, to try to figure out how many people in the Beaufort Delta have kidney disease and if they are -- you know, how many are stage 4/5 that may require dialysis.

In the near future if we have a whole bunch of people that are, you know, coming towards needing dialysis in the future, then that would be something that we can look at. It's not just a machine. It is staffing, and it would have to require staffing and a facility. And the Member knows our facility in Inuvik is -- there's not any space in that facility. So, you know, we'd have to figure that out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, thank you to the health Minister; she's certainly more well versed in this than I am. But, Mr. Speaker, the person that I did speak with, a constituent during my campaign, had kidney issues and was getting to a point that would likely -- there was a good chance would require dialysis and therefore would have to move. My question still remains. That person was then told that one of the main issues is not the cost of the machine but actually having the staff to run the machine, and the main reason for that is the fact that we use -- our nurses, you're not guaranteed when they're coming in if they're trained to do that work. Can the Minister confirm that?

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yes -- and I'm glad that the Member -- you know, we work closely with Alberta Health Services' dialysis service to provide this service using their policies and stuff, and they do take training to be dialysis

nurses. So it's the same as we have an endoscopy unit, we have to have trained staff to run that endoscopy unit. Like, those -- it's more than just hiring a nurse. And I've said it, and I'll say it again, a nurse is not a nurse is not a nurse. Everybody has a specialty, and that's why we struggle in our health care providing the right service for the right people, especially in this time where there's a shortage of nurses across Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Okay, Members, time is up. Oral questions. Written questions. Member from Range Lake.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Range Lake is asking unanimous consent to go back to item number 5. Any nays? Seeing no nays, Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent Mr. Rami Kassem. And he is my friend, but there are two other -- my friend's up there as well, Mr. Fadil Memedi and Mr. Nasi Mowa. Thank you very much for being here today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Kam Lake.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member bringing us back to this section because I wasn't able to do this earlier. It's hard to see when people are sitting above us. But I wanted to recognize Heather Nakehk'o who is a constituent who was here with us earlier. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too wish to recognize both Rami and Fadil of Javaroma. They are great community partners. Their heart and soul is into the city of Yellowknife as well as its people, and I've seen them on so many occasions be so generous both with their time and money. They're wonderful people, and we're a richer community because we have the two of them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.



Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Written questions. Return to written questions. Replies to Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of the committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Housing NWT.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 57-20(1):  
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 58-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 17-20(1): ELDERS HOUSING  
AND ORAL QUESTION 20-20(1): ARREARS  
COLLECTION FOR ELDERS

TABLED DOCUMENT 59-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 25-20(1): HOUSING  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BOARD  
POLICY

TABLED DOCUMENT 60-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 34-20(1): CONSTRUCTION AND  
RETROFITTING OF HOUSING NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES UNITS

TABLED DOCUMENT 61-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 49-20(1): YELLOWKNIFE ASPEN  
APARTMENTS

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following five documents: Housing Northwest Territories 2022-2023 Annual Report; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 17-20(1): Elders Housing and Oral Question 20-20(1): Arrears Collection for Elders; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 25-20(1): Housing Northwest Territories Board Policy; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 34-20(1): Construction and Retrofitting of Housing Northwest Territories Units, and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 49-20(1): Yellowknife Aspen Apartments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Housing NWT. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 62-20(1):  
NWT CARBON TAX REPORT 2022-2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 63-20(1):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL  
QUESTION 45-20(1): EXPANSION OF  
SNARE HYDRO SYSTEM TO TLICHO  
COMMUNITIES

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Northwest Territories Carbon Tax Report 2022-2023; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 45-20(1): Expansion of Snare Hydro System to Tlicho Communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

TABLED DOCUMENT 64-20(1):  
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY  
PROGRAM 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**HON. JAY Macdonald:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Waste Reduction and Recovery Program 2022-2023 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

TABLED DOCUMENT 65-20(1):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR  
THE PERIOD DECEMBER 8, 2023 AND  
FEBRUARY 5, 2024

TABLED DOCUMENT 66-20(1):  
STATUTORY DECLARATIONS OF  
PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE – MEMBERS OF  
THE 20TH NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Colleagues, pursuant to section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowances and Expenses Regulations of Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the following summary of Members' Absence for the period December 8th, 2023, to February 5th, 2024.

As well, pursuant to section 14.3 of the Indemnities, Allowances, and Expenditures Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Statutory Declarations of Principal Residence of the Members of the 20th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion.

Colleagues, we will take a brief break before we move on to motions. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 22-20(1):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE TO MAY 23, 2024,  
CARRIED

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when the House adjourns on Thursday, February 29th, 2024, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May 23rd, 2024;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to May 23, 2024, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Motions. Member from Great Slave.

MOTION 23-20(1):  
CALL TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
GAZA,  
CARRIED

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Northwest Territories is made up of many residents with family members and other ties to Palestine, Israel, and the broader Middle East, and attacks on civilians, human rights violations, anti-semitic violence, and violent dehumanization towards all Israelis and Palestinians have lasting consequences that reverberate around the world, including in Northwest Territories communities;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories has committed itself to upholding international human rights as declared by the United Nations;

AND WHEREAS the International Court of Justice has ruled that Israel's actions in Gaza

'could plausibly amount to genocide' and for Israel to 'take all measures in its power' to prevent all acts that could be against the Genocide Convention;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife North, that this Legislative Assembly condemn all acts of anti-semitism and anti-Palestinian racism in our territory;

AND FURTHER, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Premier to write a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly, and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Bob Rae, that will call upon the Canadian Government to:

- call for an immediate and effective ceasefire and halt to violence by both Israel and Hamas;
- advocate for the immediate release of all hostages;
- advocate for and provide funds for unhindered access for humanitarian aid for all those in need in Gaza; and,
- take all actions necessary to fully uphold its obligations under the Genocide Convention;

AND FURTHERMORE, that Northwest Territories Member of Parliament, Michael McLeod, receive a copy of this letter;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta to amend Motion 23-20 --

**MR. SPEAKER:** Made a mistake. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all a little bit tired now. It's been a long session. Gets longer next year.

Mr. Speaker, this motion provides further action to Petition 1-20(1) that I brought forward this past Tuesday on behalf of the Yellowknife Citizens for Ceasefire. As I've mentioned previously, the petition includes 645 signatures from residents of the Northwest Territories. Residents who signed are from the following communities:

- Yellowknife
- Whati
- Wekweeti
- ” - Lutselk’e
- Inuvik
- Hay River
- Ulukhaktok
- Behchoko
- Tulita
- Tsiigehtchic
- Fort Smith
- Fort Simpson, and
- Fort McPherson.

This is a territorial issue, and territorial residents are asking for us to all take action, and some of them are here today. I will reserve further comments for later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MOTION TO AMEND MOTION 23-20(1):  
CALL TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
GAZA,  
CARRIED

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta to amend Motion 23-20(1), Call to Uphold Human Rights in Gaza, by inserting the words, and I quote, "in an accountable method that demonstrates transparency which ensures Canadian aid, given by the Canadian Government, goes directly to support the humanitarian need" to the third bullet point in the second clause, after the word "Gaza", as the bullet reads now: Advocates for and provide funds for unhindered access for humanitarian aid for all those in need in Gaza, in an accountable method that demonstrates transparency which ensures Canadian aid given by the Canadian government goes direct to support humanitarian need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Members. To the motion as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? To the amendment. The motion as amended. Opposed? Abstentions? Motion has carried.

---Carried

To the motion as amended. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MOTION TO AMEND MOTION 23-20(1):  
CALL TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
GAZA,  
CARRIED

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, second by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, to amend Motion 23-20(1), Call to Uphold Human Rights in Gaza, by inserting the following clause after the second whereas clause:

AND WHEREAS this Assembly recognizes through the Government of Canada's designation that Canada has listed Hamas as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code since November 2022.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the question. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I appreciate my colleagues having feedback on this motion. Previously, it was nearly direct -- directly mirroring the language that you can find in the petition. As I've said earlier, I respect the Members for -- or sorry, as I've said earlier to my colleagues, I respect that Members taking a stand on this motion aligns with what they need to do personally. Several Members have made suggestions on changing the motion to being something that could also stand for and support and so several changes were made.

Mr. Speaker, to my mind this particular amendment veers from the scope of the original motion. I do not want to debate whether or not Hamas is a terrorist organization. They are. I do not want to debate the decades' old conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. I simply want for the people of Gaza to be safe and not starving, Mr. Speaker. I think this amendment muddies those waters, but I also recognize that the Member moving the amendment sees it differently.

I have spoken with the ceasefire group, and they wish to see an opportunity for this motion to pass. So I will support this amendment to support their wishes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Member's proposed amendment is a fact, so I won't vote against it. But I do want to mention something about language that I believe is important because it impacts Palestinians everywhere, including members of our own community.

What I want to point out is that I think it's troubling that even when people condemn violence on both sides and call for the release of hostages and condemn all attacks against civilian populations, that if you focus your concern on the civilian population of Gaza, it still could be assumed that you would be supporting terrorism or Hamas unless you state otherwise.

To step back for a second. So particularly since 9-11, many North Americans have expected people who were Muslim or Arab to begin any political statement by renouncing terrorism because if they don't, we might assume they would naturally support terrorism. So that pattern has been called out in the past as Islamophobic assuming Muslims would support terrorism unless they specifically state otherwise. So I just don't want us to get into a similar pattern where any Palestinian or any person who expresses sympathy with the Palestinian people might be assumed to support Hamas and to support terrorism unless they specifically state otherwise. All I'm saying is that instead of approaching people with suspicion based on who they are or which group of people they are advocating to protect and support, I hope that we would listen to the stories and experiences and concerns of our fellow community members with compassion and open minds and open hearts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion as amended. Member from Yellowknife Centre -- the motion as amended. Yes.

**MR. HAWKINS:** You're doing perfect, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm just only rising to thank the mover and the seconder for their considerations, and I wish to acknowledge that, and I wish to publicly note that I shall follow through on my pledge to vote for the broader motion once this amendment passes. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yellowknife Centre. To the motion as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

To the motion as amended. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our world is increasingly becoming volatile as geopolitical tensions and nationalistic ambitions shatter the once stable international order that has prevailed since the end of the last world war. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza are evidence that those nations who love peace cannot be complacent in the face of these conflicts. They must act to preserve the fragile order that many have taken for granted for too long.

Mr. Speaker, we must act as well, for as leaders of this Assembly our citizens look to us to uphold peace and justice in our land. As far moved as the North can feel from wars raging across oceans on continents far away, we are all connected by a global community that watches in horror as humanitarian abuses and unrestricted violence are broadcast from our radios, screens, and social media accounts. We cannot and must not bury our head in the sand when so many people in our community are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, this motion concerns itself with the war in Gaza and the many well-documented violations of international and humanitarian law that have occurred since this conflict began. I unequivocally condemn the attacks on Israel carried out by Hamas on October 7th that killed 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, and where terrorist militants seized around 250 hostages. It is believed still that over 134 hostages remain held, including two children. More than 30,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 70,000 wounded since the war began five months ago according to officials from the Gaza health ministry. The UN says that 2.3 million Palestinians face starvations with 80 percent having displaced -- being displaced from their homes. Violence has surged across the region both in and out of the war zone. It is nothing short of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Mr. Speaker, this motion also speaks to South Africa's genocide case against Israel in the International Court of Justice. The court said, and I quote, Israel must take all possible measures to prevent acts as outlined in Article 2 of the 1948 genocide convention. This entails not killing Members of a particular group (in this case Palestinians), not causing physical or psychological harm to Members of that group, not inflicting living conditions which are

calculated to bring about the end of the existence of people, and not carrying out actions designed to prevent births within that group of people, end quote.

While the International Court of Justice confirmed that it does not have jurisdiction to hear the case against Israel that is in contravention of the Genocide Convention, the court did issue Israel with six emergency orders effectively putting Israel on notice over the war and its brutal bombing campaign. The court's orders are:

- Israel must ensure its military does not carry out any of the above actions;
- Israel must prevent and punish the, quote, "direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip";
- Israel must ensure the delivery of basic services and essential humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza;
- Israel must prevent the destruction of evidence of war crimes in Gaza and allow factfinding missions access;
- Israel must submit a report on all steps it has taken to abide by the measures imposed by the court;
- Within one month of the judgment, South Africa will have the chance to respond to this report.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has always respected international law. This ruling on the International Court of Justice is significant and a dire warning of the potential dangers ahead if these orders are not heeded.

Mr. Speaker, this motion also calls on the Prime Minister of Canada to act. This House should be already aware that the Prime Minister has not been silent on this matter of grave importance, publicly condemning the violence in Gaza and calling for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire. In his joint statement with the Prime Ministers of Australia and New Zealand on December 12th last year, the Prime Minister mourned every Israeli and Palestinian innocent life which has been lost in this conflict and said, quote,

We remain deeply concerned by the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ongoing risks to all Palestinian civilians. Safe and unimpeded humanitarian access must be increased and sustained. We recommit ourselves to working with partners towards a just and enduring peace in the form of a two-

state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely within internationally recognized borders. We condemn rising anti-semitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Arab sentiment in our countries and around the world and remain firmly committed to combatting prejudice, hatred, and violent extremism.

I commend the Prime Minister for his words then and his action now to comfort Jewish, Palestinian, and Arab Canadians, that Canada is a place for peace and tolerance between all peoples.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT is a diverse community, small and scattered across vast distances, but it is our compassion and empathy for one another that brings us together as one. My heart breaks for those members of our Jewish and Arab community who have been affected by this violence. I mourn the loss of all innocent life that has been lost in Gaza. And I join in all those calling for peace and an end to hatred, violence, and injustice in our world. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge at the beginning this is a very difficult motion for some people out there. I feel very strongly in support of the current motion as now amended, and I too wish to lend my supports and the voice -- my voice to hopefully carry to a new phase.

Mr. Speaker, I deeply believe that one day, I wish it would be sooner than later, that we had a fully safe Palestine recognized by the world all around so the people can deserve and -- who have well long waited and earned their right to live happy, safe, and free.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict itself, I'm no expert in that particular thing but I can tell you this, it's got to be terrible. Whether it be recent attacks are not for me to explain but I can tell you as somebody who has watched and followed a little bit, it's difficult to imagine people living through that experience and calling this, you know, balanced, measured, and whatnot. It's just horrific after horrific that people are suffering under these types of things. I wish and I suspect my -- you know, people on all sides, really if you get to the core of it, you know, you ask important questions such as, you know, what is our hope? Well, we hope all people can prosper under their dreams. They're hoping their families can have prosperous futures. You want people to be able to pursue their religion and individual beliefs in a way that they can be healthy and happy. And, you know, under the

current circumstances, I just can't imagine how difficult it is to live there and hence I do feel deeply sorry for the folks there, the many families. And I acknowledge the people in the gallery today. Some are friends up there. Some I know, and some I don't know, but I appreciate the enthusiasm and the stance that everyone up in the gallery has taken to ensure that this message can come through. I mean, ultimately people deserve a life, you know, and a sense of living in some type of consistent harmony, and certainly this situation is not speaking to that. I join my Member in Range Lake in the context of condemning all of these attacks and all of this violence and this -- you know, again whether it's anti-Palestinian, whether it's anti-Israeli, whether it's anti-Muslim, this is all terrible, terrible stuff, Mr. Speaker.

I won't speak much further on this particular thing, but what I will reemphasize is I too dream of a day that, you know, we look behind ourselves and ask us what took so long, what were the hurdles to finally settle a two-state solution where we can talk about joint futures and joint prosperities in the region that everyone can work somewhat in cohesive manner and share in the excitement and prosperity among all nations.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, I'll be voting in favour of the amended motion, and I thank the mover and seconder for their assistance in allowing me to carry some of my concerns for it. Thank you very much.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to focus today on the impacts of the violence in Israel and Palestine on the people of this territory. I know it feels far away to some of us and irrelevant to be discussing in this House to some of us. Certainly it's hard to see how our statements or our motions could affect anything that goes in the region. But it does affect people in this territory. We have immigrants who have made their home here in the NWT from many parts of the world, including Israel, Palestine, and surrounding countries. We have children born here and being raised here whose identity is also Palestinian or Israeli or Jewish or Lebanese or Syrian, and they want to be proud of their nationalities and cultures, and they want their family members over in the Middle East to be safe and their human rights to be recognized and protected.

Every day in the news, we see horrific violence. We see children being killed, civilians attacked, schools and hospitals being bombed, and our

fellow community members with family and ties to the region may wonder why no one seems to be standing up for those peoples' human rights. Then they may wonder if anyone would stand up for their human rights since they share an identity with those people over there who are being dehumanized and killed.

And yet we in Canada are often so afraid to talk about this conflict and this region in particular. It is a minefield. We fear being accused of saying the wrong thing. There's a constant demand for balance that if we call for one side to do something, we must call for the other side to do the exact same thing; that if we condemn one side for something, we must condemn the other side for the exact same thing regardless of whether they're actually doing the same thing and regardless of the fact that the two sides are anything but balanced. Only one side, Israel, is an internationally recognized state with recognized citizens and a legitimised military force. Palestine has none of those things.

Anything that strays from this rigid idea of balance is seen as taking a side. Any criticism of Israel might spark accusations of anti-semitism. Lately, even calls for a ceasefire might be seen as questioning Israel's right to exist. We are being told by the extremists and the hardliners on each side that if you defend one group's right to exist, that means wiping the other group -- the other group off the map. And that is a truly terrifying situation. So there's tremendous pressure for us in Canada to say nothing at all, to try to ignore the conflict, to throw up our hands and say it's way too complicated, it's too far away, the conflict has been going on for millennia, nothing can be done, nothing can even be said about it. But when we are silent, the extremists on both sides win. When we are silent, the children in our community who see themselves in the faces of those civilians and children being killed on the news, it leaves these children feeling invisible, vulnerable, worthless, and alone. When we are silent, it leaves us feeling helpless and angry and more likely to lash out and blame and scapegoat and eventually that's how we breed more extremism, both around the world and in our own communities, by letting frustration fester in silence. And yet hundreds and hundreds of people here in the NWT over the past several months have had the courage to speak up, to raise their voices in public demonstrations calling for a ceasefire, to show real support and solidarity for those amongst us who have felt invisible and vulnerable.

We can counter the extremists by speaking the language of human rights, by reminding everyone of the importance of international humanitarian laws, by reminding everyone about our obligations under the Genocide

Convention as Canadians. We have a groundswell of NWT residents asking us as leaders to raise our voices too in support of human rights and international humanitarian law. It may just be words, but the simple act of speaking up when there is so much pressure to be silent can be a profound act of solidarity with our neighbours, our community members, even if the warmongering leaders never hear us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion as amended. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Thank you to the mover and seconder. Mr. Speaker, I've struggled with this motion. I've had some long conversations with my colleagues. I was at one point supportive, at point not supportive, at one point thinking I would abstain to the motion, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, and I'll kind of explain why and where I am now on this motion, Mr. Speaker.

As leaders, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, and as representatives of the people in our communities, it is incumbent upon us, Mr. Speaker, to ensure the actions that we take are principled and bring about resolution of conflict. As MLAs, we are responsible for the well-being of our residents, including the families and children who call the NWT home. The conflict in Gaza has brought horrors upon families, children, and countless innocent people. This violence cannot continue. In Canada, we have our own histories of violence and oppression. We have committed to reconciliation as a government, and it is in that spirit I state firmly that violence, especially violence against children and families, is entirely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

The longstanding nature of the Gaza conflict is, in part, the consequence of polarized and inflamed viewpoints on all sides. As leaders, we must seek to reduce polarization. We must take actions that bring people together rather than divide them further. Reconciliation, Mr. Speaker, is not just a word. Mr. Speaker, I believe the language in this motion, in my mind, does not accomplish this purpose. The language tries to simplify an incredibly complicated global reality. The language as crafted cannot be seen as a real way to bring about peace but may instead further inflame violence. Rather than reduce polarization, this motion may exacerbate it.

I understand that we all have different experiences and different views, and I respect the MLAs in this Legislative Assembly. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote against a

motion of peace. I also choose, Mr. Speaker, not to abstain even though I do feel that the motion, the way it's worded, can in some ways be counterproductive to what we're trying to accomplish here, I will support the mover and the seconder of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. To the motion as amended. Member from Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this has been quite an emotional motion right from the time conversations about it started, the conversations around the petition. We have residents in our territory who are directly impacted by the ongoing conflict. And, frankly, I can't comprehend what they must be going through and hopefully no one in this room ever has to -- will ever know what that is like. From everything I've seen, it looks like people are in a living hell right now. And so I appreciate that the Members have brought this forward to bring this conversation to the forefront. It is through the people speaking up that change is made in the world, and I think that Members who brought this forward, and others around Canada, have made change.

The motion calls on me as Premier to write a letter to the Prime Minister asking -- calling upon the Canadian government to call for an immediate ceasefire. That has happened. The Government of Canada in December of last year voted for a UN resolution that called for an immediate ceasefire. Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister again issued a release calling for an immediate ceasefire.

The motion calls upon me to write a letter calling upon the Canadian government to advocate for the immediate release of all hostages. And that has been the position of the Government of Canada since October as well.

The motion calls upon the Canadian government to advocate for and provide funds for unhindered access for humanitarian aid for all of those in need in Gaza. Canadian continues to do that. It continues to advocate for sustained and unimpeded access of essential relief to Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West Bank. And just yesterday, the government announced that they are working to airdrop humanitarian aid in Gaza as soon as possible so those efforts are underway as well.

All of that said, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that gives little comfort to those who are still reeling from what is going on, who still can't contact their family, and who are hurting, who go to bed every night thinking about their families. And so I do want them to know that I'm thinking about

them. All of us here in this room have thought about this, have put our minds to it. I don't think anyone is -- anyone wants people to feel like that. We don't want our friends and neighbours to feel like that. And so we all need to be supportive, all the people in Northwest Territories need to show that support, need to show that we actually care about what people are going through.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, this is a motion that calls on the government to do something, to provide a response within 120 days, and it is the process here in this House that when there is that request that the government takes its time, crafts a motion, puts thought into it, puts research into it, and then provides that response. And so we will be responding within 120 days, and we will be abstaining on this motion so that we can craft that response.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** From Hay River North. To the motion as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Does the mover wish to close debate? Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion is, as folks before me have said, highly emotional, and I also believe it's a highly personal choice, and I respect every single Member in this House to take what decision they take to heart and I respect whatever choice that may be and what that looks like for them. I'm here in my role as a Member to represent my riding and also my own conscience.

I want to speak a little bit about why this motion is important to me and why I feel it's the right thing to do.

When I first met with a Palestinian member of our community in Yellowknife late last year, he asked me why I was willing to take action up to and including those that I have taken today. I told him, first, because I'm a human being. What I think I was trying to say to him was that I can't watch innocent people be harmed and not try to do something even if it's just donations to humanitarian aid or signing petitions, like folks in the gallery have done, or whatever I think may be in small -- some small part helpful. That is who I am. Now that I am an elected official, I will continue to be the person I have always been, which is someone who wants to help when people are in pain, struggling, or suffering.

I also told him that I grew up with key people in any life teaching me of the Jewish faith. I considered my godmother my auntie growing up, and she was someone I looked to for moral and ethical guidance. I say looked to because she passed in 2002, and may her memory be a blessing.

Like all major world religions, Judaism is rooted in the love for your neighbour, as yourself. Later in life, I was drawn to practicing Zen Buddhism. Without going into a lot of detail, it has informed my way of looking at the world insofar as I believe all human beings on this planet are deeply connected and perhaps in ways we cannot fully verbalize or understand. And so I'm passionate about the interconnectedness of our world, our common threads of humanity. So when I see what is happening in Gaza, I am heartbroken on that level.

On a very personal note, I want to say publicly that by taking these actions I expected that I might be, and all likelihood will be, shunned by my late godmother's family. This also breaks my heart. But this motion and this issue is something I feel I must stand up for and do what is in my power to help and, too, much like the Members who have spoken before, you know, I think it is the best work we can do is to do work where we live, work, and play in the Northwest Territories, and that's why I'm in this House. But it's also why I'm standing up for my community members who are in pain every day not knowing if their friends and family are still alive and watching a genocide unfold before them on their televisions and cell phones. I must follow my conscience and stand for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Question has been called and the Member has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Joelene Saturnino):** The Member from Great Slave. The Member from Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. And the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. For all those abstaining, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Joelene Saturnino):** The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South.



The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho. And the Member for Monfwi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The results are 8 in favour, zero opposed, 10 for abstaining. The motion has passed.

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Minister's Statement 17-20(1), Minister's Statement 24-20(1), with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Calling committee to order. I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? I'm going to go to Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Rodgers.

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Mahsi.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Do I have a seconder for the report of the Committee of the Whole? Member from the Deh Cho. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion has been carried, and the report of Committee of the Whole has been concurred with.

---Carried

Third reading of bills.

Madam Clerk, can you please see if the Honourable Margaret Thom, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is ready to enter Chambers to ascend to the bills.

---SHORT RECESS

### Assent to Bills

#### THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Margaret M. Thom):

[Translation] I am very happy that I'm here today. So I'd like to thank you with all my heart and that all of you are here today. I'm very happy to see each one of you, that I'd like to be very thankful for. And just prior to Christmas, that was when I was present here, and from then on I haven't seen each one of you and so I'm hoping that everybody will be okay and that's including our family, our friends, and whoever you are here to represent throughout the region. And I'm hoping that everybody will have a very good holiday.

And the new MLAs here, I'd like to thank each one of you. And it is very important that here that we're able to use our language that I'm very thankful for. Mahsi. [Translation ends]

And most importantly to see you all again. Last time I was here was before the holidays, so I hope you all have an enjoyable time with family, friends, and your constituents.

Our government must be applauded for gifting us to speak our Indigenous languages in this great House. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. It is always a pleasure to be in this House with you who serve the people of the Northwest Territories. I want to recognize all your hard work on behalf of the residents of the NWT. I would also like to congratulate you on establishing the priorities for the 20th Legislative Assembly. These priorities are a good basis for moving the Northwest Territories forward and addressing our many needs and opportunities.

February has been a very busy and productive month not only for this Legislative Assembly but

also for many others. Along with February being hard month, Black History Month, February is also Indigenous Language Month. As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am proud to speak my language in this House.

Maintaining and revitalizing Indigenous languages is central to the identity of Indigenous people, the preservation of our cultures, world view, and expression of self-determination. I believe that if you do not speak your Indigenous language, there are ways to showcase your Indigenous pride through traditional dress, footwear, and participating in cultural events and ceremonies.

Unfortunately, in late January there was a tragic plane crash near Fort Smith. It is with profound sense of grief that I offer my condolences to all those affected by the tragic loss of lives. I will continue to pray for all of you in the days, weeks, and months to come. I would also like to express my heartfelt and sincere best wishes for the ongoing recovery and healing of the crash survivor.

As Northerners, there is little we cannot achieve when we come together. Although I am deeply saddened, I am proud of the people of Fort Smith and all Northerners who are sharing in their grief and providing support in many ways. My prayers and blessings are with you all.

This will be my last address to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. I am deeply grateful for this government and the past government to have welcomed me in this role as Commissioner. It has been a great honour to serve and support you in your very, very important roles.

---Applause

So as my final act in this legislature as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to ascend to the following bills:

- Bill 1: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act;
- Bill 4: Interim Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2024-2025;
- Bill 5: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2023-2024; and,
- Bill 6: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2023-2024.

Mahsi cho. I wish you all well. I wish you all the best. Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Mahsi cho. Quyananni. Kwana.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I'd like to thank Commissioner Thom for her last official duties here in the Legislative Assembly.

Orders of the day. Madam Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Jolene Saturnino):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, May 23rd, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Oral Question 62-20(1): Consultation with Members of the Legislative Assembly on Policies and Strategies
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
  - Minister's Statement 4-20(1): 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season

- Minister's Statement 5-20(1):  
Emergency Management  
Preparation
- ” - Minister's Statement 17-20(1):  
Reaching Average \$10 a day  
Child Care in the NWT
- Minister's Statement 24-20(1):  
Health Human Resources  
Recruitment and Retention

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, as one of our colleagues said, we're going to be gone for 82 days. Please enjoy your time back home. Continue to do your hard work for your constituents and for the people of the Northwest Territories. So thank you very much for your time for the last three weeks, and enjoy.

This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 23, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:41 p.m.

