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The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1531
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1533
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 87-20(1): MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE	1533
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 88-20(1): SESSIONAL STATEMENT	1533
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1536
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 430-20(1): SUPPORT FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESIDENTS	1536
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 431-20(1): STATE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.....	1537
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 432-20(1): REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR THE TOWN OF NORMAN WELLS	1537
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 433-20(1): IMPROVING THE LAND USE PERMITTING PROCESS.....	1538
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 434-20(1): RESPITE CARE AND AT-HOME CARE	1538
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 435-20(1): WELCOME BACK MESSAGE	1539
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 436-20(1): TARIFFS.....	1539
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 437-20(1): STATE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.....	1540
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 438-20(1): HAY RIVER CURLING TEAM SUCCESS.....	1540
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 439-20(1): CELEBRATION OF LIFE OF AVERY JULIANNA BURKE	1541
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1541
ORAL QUESTIONS	1541
QUESTION 424-20(1): CANADA-USA TARIFFS AND TRADE	1541
QUESTION 425-20(1): ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY AND INVESTMENT	1542
QUESTION 426-20(1): PUBLIC LANDS ACT REGULATIONS UPDATE	1543
QUESTION 427-20(1): OUT-OF-TERRITORY CARE, SUPPORTIVE LIVING AND RESPITE CARE	1544
QUESTION 428-20(1): OUT-OF-TERRITORY CARE, SUPPORTIVE LIVING AND RESPITE CARE	1545
QUESTION 429-20(1): GREEN NEW DEAL AND CRITICAL MINERALS.....	1547
QUESTION 430-20(1): QUARRYING AND LAND-USE PERMITS	1547
QUESTION 431-20(1): CHANGES TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY	1548
QUESTION 432-20(1): NAMING OF GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDINGS.....	1550
QUESTION 433-20(1): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EMPLOYMENT SATISFACTION SURVEY AND ACTION PLAN	1551
QUESTION 434-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CARBON TAXATION	1552
QUESTION 435-20(1): ASPEN BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE.....	1553
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1554
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 8-20(1): IMPROVING FERTILITY AND FAMILY PLANNING SUPPORTS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES	1554
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 9-20(1): STAFFING OF DOCTOR AND SPECIALIST POSITIONS WITHIN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY	1555
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 10-20(1): COMPLAINTS IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM	1555
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 11-20(1): GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE.....	1556
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 12-20(1): COST OF LIVING	1557
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 238-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 303-20(1): LOCAL HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 239-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 306-20(1): HOUSING REPAIRS	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 240-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 378-20(1): HOUSING WAITLIST	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 241-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 405-20(1): WINTER ROAD TABLED DOCUMENT 241-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 405-20(1): WINTER ROAD SEASON PLANNING	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 242-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 305-20(1): HEATING OIL.....	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 243-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 323-20(1): DEMPSTER HIGHWAY AND INUVIK-TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY CONDITIONS	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 244-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 325-20(1): PROJECT COST OVERRUNS	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 245-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 343-20(1): IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WINTER AND ICE ROADS	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 246-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 374-20(1): MACKENZIE VALLEY FIBRE LINE BACKUP.....	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 247-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 421-20(1): REGULATIONS FOR E-SCOOTERS	1558

TABLED DOCUMENT 248-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 333-20(1): FISCAL POLICY	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 249-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 334-20(1): HOUSING BUDGET ALLOCATIONS	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 250-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 418-20(1): CELL SERVICE	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 251-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 423-20(1): CARBON TAX	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 252-20(1): ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN QUESTION 11-20(1): GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE	1558
TABLED DOCUMENT 253-20(1): ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN QUESTION 12-20(1): COST OF LIVING	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 254-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 312-20(1): TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS AND SUPPORTS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 255-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 361-20(1): HEALTH CARE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 256-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 413-20(1): ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 257-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 397-20(1): OVERDOSE-RELATED RCMP CALLS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 258-20(1): ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN QUESTION 9-20(1): PHYSICIAN VACANCY RATES	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 259-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 328-20(1): SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST POSITIONS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 260-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 340-20(1): SUPPORTED LIVING REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 342-20(1): PRIMARY CARE REFORM	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 262-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 347-20(1): PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE PLAN ..	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 263-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 348-20(1): HEALTHCARE SERVICES	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 264-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 358-20(1): PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 265-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 364-20(1): TULITA HEALTH CENTRE PROJECT	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 266-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 369-20(1): DENE NATION HEALTHCARE CONCERNS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 267-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 375-20(1): UPDATES TO DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 268-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 376-20(1): ONLINE PHYSICIAN BOOKING SERVICE	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 269-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 382-20(1): APPROVAL OF NON-MEDICAL ESCORTS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 270-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 399-20(1): DIAGNOSTIC RATES FOR AUTISM	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 271-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 419-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY OPERATIONAL CONCERNS	1559
TABLED DOCUMENT 272-20(1): DOCUMENTS COMPILED BY TOWN OF NORMAN WELLS REGARDING THE TOWN'S DECLARATION OF A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS	1560
TABLED DOCUMENT 273-20(1): REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER ON THE COMPLAINT BY MR. DANIEL RICHARDS (DENEZE NAKEHK'O) ABOUT STAFFING APPEALS FROM HIRING DECISIONS BY THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION	1560
TABLED DOCUMENT 274-20(1): REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER DISMISSING THE COMPLAINT BY DENEZE NAKEHK'O ABOUT MINISTER WAWZONEK'S HUSBAND'S OWING SHARES IN CANADIAN UTILITIES LIMITED	1560
NOTICE OF MOTION FOR THE FIRST READING OF BILLS	1560
BILL 17: MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT	1560
BILL 18: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PARTNERSHIP AND BUSINESS NAMES ACT	1560
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1561
COMMITTEE MOTION 54-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – PRAYER (CHAPTER FOUR), CARRIED	1561
COMMITTEE MOTION 55-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – PRAYER – RULE 5.4(2), CARRIED	1561
COMMITTEE MOTION 56-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – RULE 5.8(2), CARRIED	1562

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – CONSOLIDATION OF RULES, CARRIED	1562
COMMITTEE MOTION 58-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – RESTRICTIONS ON WHEN REPLIES TO THE COMMISSIONER’S ADDRESS CAN BE GIVEN, CARRIED	1562
COMMITTEE MOTION 59-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – MOTIONS LOCATION ON DAILY ORDERS, CARRIED	1562
COMMITTEE MOTION 60-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS, CARRIED	1563
COMMITTEE MOTION 61-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – ORAL QUESTIONS, CARRIED	1563
COMMITTEE MOTION 62-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION TO ORAL QUESTIONS – RULE 7.2(6), CARRIED	1563
COMMITTEE MOTION 63-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION TO ORAL QUESTIONS – RULE 7.2(7), CARRIED	1564
COMMITTEE MOTION 64-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – SITTING HOURS – RULE 2.2(1), CARRIED	1564
COMMITTEE MOTION 65-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – SITTING HOURS – RULE 2.2(2), CARRIED	1564
COMMITTEE MOTION 66-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – MINISTERS’ STATEMENTS IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CARRIED	1564
COMMITTEE MOTION 67-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – MINISTERS’ STATEMENTS IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RULE 9.1(16), CARRIED	1569
COMMITTEE MOTION 68-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – SHORT TITLES FOR BILLS, CARRIED	1570
COMMITTEE MOTION 69-20(1): COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – PRAYER, CARRIED	1570
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1571
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1571

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 5, 2025****Members Present**

Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Jay Macdonald, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Ms. Reid, Mr. Rodgers, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Hon R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek.

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (HON. SHANE THOMPSON):

Please be seated. Good afternoon. Colleagues, welcome back to the House. It is great to be back and that was a great way to open our sitting.

I'd like to thank Ryan Gordon for his wonderful bagpiping today. That's not something we get to enjoy every day. I'd also like to thank elder Jonas Lafferty for his opening blessing. Please join me in thanking them for the wonderful start to this sitting.

I'm also pleased to welcome our pages to the chamber. Our youth are our future, and we are fortunate to have them with us. This week we will have pages from Yellowknife and next week we will also be joined by pages from Hay River and Fort Providence. I thank each of them for joining us here and hope they have a great time and the opportunity to learn about our unique form of consensus government.

For the pages who will be joining us during this sitting, and all youth across the territory, I would like to take a moment to remind you about our upcoming Youth Parliament. This program is open to grade nine and grade ten students and is on an application basis. Applications are due on February 14th if you would like to apply, or just want some more information, please visit our website at www.ntassembly.ca.

Colleagues, February is Indigenous Languages Month. I look forward to hearing our languages spoken each day. When we use our language in this House, and when we have our proceedings interpreted, we are helping to promote and revitalize our language. This is one very important way we can and do show our respect for the language and culture of our people.

I am deeply proud of the work we do to use and grow our languages. The hard work and dedication of our interpreters bring our words to life and brings our messages to residents in

their language. We couldn't do it without the interpreters, and we are honoured to work with such a dedicated team.

Colleagues, please remember to speak slowly and clearly for our interpreters and everyone who is watching our proceedings. Please join me in thanking our interpreters and welcoming them back to the Assembly.

---Applause

Before I continue, I am saddened to advise of the passing of two of our interpreters since we last sat in this House. Tom Unka, of Fort Res, passed away in December of 2024. And Ms. Evelyne Parry of Fort McPherson passed away in January of this year.

Mr. Unka was known for his dedication to the interpretation of the Dene Sune and made it possible for constituents near and far to tune in and understand the Assembly's proceedings in their own language. Ms. Parry was a great advocate for her language. Her contribution to preserving the Gwich'in language is celebrated with her strong commitment to providing excellence in her professional interpretation career. Both Mr. Unka and Ms. Parry have been instrumental in the preservation and revitalization of their language. Their passing is one of the great losses to this institution, the people of the Northwest Territories, and to friends and family. Colleagues, in recognition of their service to this Assembly, and to their language culture, please join me in a moment of silence to honour Mr. Unka and Ms. Parry.

Thank you.

Colleagues, I've said this before, but I will repeat myself here:

When I was selected as your Speaker, I called for thoughtful, meaningful, and honest debate. I still expect that from each of you. So do the people we represent in this chamber. We all have different perspectives and have had different experiences to bring us to where we are today. We cannot and will not always see eye-to-eye. And we don't have to; That's not why we are here. It's okay for us to disagree with each other but when we do, we must strive to do so without being disagreeable and

disrespectful. When we do not see eye-to-eye, we must choose our words carefully, to show our dignity, our humility, and our respect for each other, this institution, and our residents. We are fortunate to govern and work in this environment and it is our responsibility, as Members of this Legislative Assembly, to uphold the high standards that are expected by our residents and is both deserved and required by this institution.

Consensus government isn't about agreeing all the time; it is about having your say and your opportunity to shape how we govern and care for our residents. It is about doing our best to represent the people who have elected us, representing ourselves and our personal beliefs and convictions. Consensus government is, I believe, about respect. When you speak in this chamber, you are speaking on behalf of your constituents and you are speaking to me, as your Speaker. I will insist on this. I will insist that you deliver your words and carry yourself with respect and in keeping with our rules. If you are in this chamber and you do not have the floor to speak, I expect you to listen to our colleagues and not to create a distraction for each other who are speaking and listening to each other.

Colleagues, be respectful of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, both with your words and how you use your time. Please avoid lengthy preambles to your statements, questions and answers. Please refrain from making unnecessary noises or disruptions when somebody else is speaking. Even if you are not listening, others are, and they deserve that opportunity.

As your Speaker, our rules provide me with the tools to ensure that our proceedings take place with the level of respect and decorum that is expected of us. I would prefer not to rely on my authority to ensure this is a respectful workplace, which is why I am reminding you today of my expectations, but please understand that I am both able and willing what it is if it's required.

Colleagues, our behaviour in this House is governed by our rules. If we haven't done so recently, I strongly encourage each of you to review them again. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to me or to one of our table officers; we are here to help and to ensure that our proceedings are effective, efficient, and in keeping with our rules.

I have received the following correspondence from the Commissioner of the Northwest

Territories, the Honourable Gerald W. Kisoun. It states:

Dear Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the passage of Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), 2025-2026; Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2024-2025; Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2024-2025, during the February-March sitting of the first session of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Yours Truly, Gerald W. Kisoun.

Before we continue to the orders of the day, I would like to advise Members that I am prepared to provide my ruling on the Point of Privilege that was raised by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on November 1, 2024, the last day we sat together in this chamber.

On November 1, 2024, the Member for Yellowknife Centre rose on a point of privilege. He cited an exchange where the Member for Yellowknife North referred to the Member for Yellowknife Centre's actions as "petty". This occurred outside the chamber.

The Member was correct in raising a point of privilege and not a point of order. The rules of the Legislative Assembly apply to proceedings, whether in the chamber or in the committee. The privilege of the Assembly and of Members apply more broadly. Members must be free from obstruction and intimidation. This privilege safeguards their ability to do their job without fear of undue pressure or influence. The point of privilege raised by the Member from Yellowknife Centre is that the use of the term "petty" to describe his actions was an obstruction or an act of intimidation.

When a point of privilege is raised, two things must be decided. The first is whether the point of privilege was raised at the earliest opportunity. The second is whether on the face of it, there is an issue of privilege to be determined. This is often referred to whether there is a prima facie case of privilege. In this case, the Member from Yellowknife Centre raised the issue within a short enough time period to meet the first part of the test. However, based on my review, as well as past decisions in this House, I am not convinced there is an issue of privilege to be determined. There is no prima facie case of privilege. There is no evidence that the use of the word "petty" obstructed the Member's ability to fulfill his duties. There was no evidence that the comment was part of a broader pattern of intimidation.

In February 2010, the Speaker of the time was faced with a similar point of privilege. The Member from the Mackenzie Delta rose on a point of privilege that when leaving the chamber, he was called a name by the Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes and followed into the bathroom. The Speaker ruled that while name-calling was inappropriate, it did not rise to the level of a breach of privilege. The Speaker noted that a comment may be disrespectful, even inappropriate, but if it does not materially affect a Member's ability to do their job, it is not a matter of privilege. I agree.

In this case, while the use of the word "petty" was inappropriate and should not have been said, it was not a matter of privilege. Members, you are passionate advocates with strong beliefs. You would not be here otherwise. But you must set an example by always being respectful and professional.

Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House I intend to deliver the Budget Address on Thursday, February 6th, 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 87-20(1): MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Kam Lake, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the Arctic 360 conference in Toronto, Ontario. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 88-20(1): SESSIONAL STATEMENT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, a year ago, I delivered the first Sessional Statement of the 20th Legislative Assembly. We had not yet established our collective priorities, but we had begun to establish the relationship essential to the work of consensus government, which continue to shape our efforts today.

When I presented my candidacy for Premier, I spoke to a vision of a thriving and prosperous NWT, 50 years in the future, built through partnership and collaborative governance with Indigenous governments. This is the foundation

of my hope and of the optimism and positivity I strive to bring to the Office of Premier. We are in times of great global uncertainty, but I remain resolute and absolutely certain of the promise, potential, and bright future of our land and our people.

Mr. Speaker, these are uncertain times, nationally and internationally, marked by challenges that not only define our present but also shape our future that we are working to build. Yet, these challenges are also opportunities for Canada and the NWT to build a stronger, more diverse economy centered on the rights and priorities of Indigenous peoples. We in the North are the frontline in asserting Canada's sovereignty through our presence and use of the land. Any plan for the Arctic must be reflective of Northerners' priorities and perspectives. This renewed national focus, reinforced by the release of Canada's Arctic foreign policy and updated defense strategy, demonstrates an appreciation for the nation-building work needed in Canada's Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, the work of government continues despite the challenges before us. It is guided by the mandate of the Government of Northwest Territories, which was developed and tabled early last year based on the priorities of this 20th Legislative Assembly. The mandate sets out the priorities and commitments for the GNWT, and these are reflected in the business plans and the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

One of the priorities we collectively set was addressing the effects of trauma. I believe this to be at the heart of the work we must do. Individual, collective, and intergenerational trauma from colonialism and racism are behind many of the health and social challenges affecting our families and communities. The GNWT is taking steps to support healing through equitable, person-centered, anti-racist and trauma-informed care and services. This includes the Men's Healing Fund, which supports community-led men's healing programming as a preventative approach to address family, intimate partner, and gender-based violence. Seven communities received full proposal-based funding in 2024-2025 to support activities including on-the-land healing, trauma and addictions programming, narrative therapy intervention strategies, and intensive healing programs.

Through flexible bilateral agreements with the Government of Canada, the \$16 million 10-year national action plan to end gender-based violence provided each jurisdiction with the choice to allocate funding for their respective priorities, needs, and challenges. In the NWT, more than 80 percent of this funding flowed

directly to NWT communities. The first annual report was released in the fall of 2024.

Mr. Speaker, homelessness is a complex issue and the GNWT's homelessness strategy takes a holistic, interdepartmental approach to address homelessness. In late fall 2024, the GNWT implemented an on the land camp as a temporary intervention and critical step in the GNWT's broader strategy. The closure of the camp in mid-January marks a shift toward more permanent solutions, including the development of additional transitional and supportive housing options.

The GNWT and its partners continue to address mental wellness and addictions recovery through programming in every community. A milestone over the past year was the completion of all 24 action items in the Addictions Prevention and Recovery Services Work Plan. In the coming months, results from this work will include the launch of two transitional housing programs in Yellowknife and Inuvik made possible through federal funding and local partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, we all want safe communities for Northerners. With the NWT having some of the highest crime and victimization rates in Canada, it is critical that we understand and address the root causes of crime.

The GNWT is committed to improving the safety and well-being of NWT Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and has developed Missing Persons legislation that will address some of the barriers that make it difficult to investigate missing persons cases, and create greater certainty about what information police can request in these situations.

Another tangible initiative in the NWT is the implementation of body-worn cameras for frontline RCMP officers across the territory. Body-worn cameras provide an objective view of police interactions, improve evidence gathering, and enhance resolution to public complaints. These cameras have been a national standard for RCMP frontline policing since 2020 and implementation in the NWT began last year, with full implementation expected in six to eight months.

Mr. Speaker, our government is supporting healthy people and communities. It is essential that we take an integrated approach to health care as we provide culturally respectful, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented services within the health and social services system. The GNWT is focusing on increasing access to health care and addressing systemic inequities and inefficiencies. The health care

system sustainability unit was created to ensure the NWT's health and social services system is fiscally sustainable and efficient. This federally funded unit will focus on understanding which health and social services are essential for the NWT while maintaining quality and access to these services for residents.

Beyond this important foundational work, our government has prioritized the operational oversight and transformation required for the health and social services authorities to deliver services in a way that are sustainable and flexible and adaptable to community needs and outside pressures. The appointment of a public administrator with experience in leading health system transformation is an investment in this future.

Mr. Speaker, healthy people and communities is about much more than just health services. Climate change is a reality in the NWT, and there are many initiatives underway to help prepare, prevent, and mitigate damage and health issues from natural disasters. This includes a network of air quality monitors across 26 communities to help inform public health decisions during wildfire events. With investments in the NWT Energy Strategy, we are on track to meet our 2030 emissions reduction goals. Engagement on the draft Climate Change action plan is complete and will inform and support implementation of the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework, positioning the NWT to better adapt to climate challenges while pursuing clean energy opportunities and green jobs for Northerners.

The GNWT is working with the organizations Sport Law and ALIAS to provide an independent reporting mechanism for instances of maltreatment in sport. This function will collect complaints and concerns from employees and other stakeholders, informing a suite of safe sport policies. Territorial and sports organizations will be required to have Safe Sport policies and plans in place to receive program funding and ensure that each organization is safe, welcoming, inclusive, and free from discrimination and harassment.

Mr. Speaker, strong and stable economies and employment opportunities are important for community wellness and vibrancy. To strengthen the economic foundations of the NWT, the GNWT will support the development of private sector and community capacity, encourage a diversity of economic activity across sectors, and reduce the cost of doing business in the NWT. Partnerships make us all stronger, and the work we do with Indigenous governments is critical to building healthy and

strong economies through projects around the Northwest Territories and new opportunities for Northerners.

Over the past year, we have worked with Indigenous governments to make progress in expanding Indigenous-led conservation through funding agreements that will support northern conservation. I'm proud of the work we've done together to advance negotiations and legislation to establish the NWT Our Land for the Future Agreement, which provides \$375M to support Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship and creates employment opportunities in small communities.

The GNWT is committed to advancing economic reconciliation through improved inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the workforce, supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship, and integrating Indigenous businesses into the procurement processes. One of the ways we are doing this is by preparing a public engagement on a new Indigenous procurement policy, which would include a preference for NWT Indigenous businesses. The results of the engagement will be shared publicly and will ensure fair and transparent processes while respecting treaty obligations and trade agreements.

Mr. Speaker, we're also supporting traditional livelihoods through a range of programs. Hunters and trappers have always been important to NWT communities, and through the Community Harvesters Assistance Program, we continue to provide direct support to help sustain and strengthen traditional practices. The Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program helped NWT trappers sell more than 19,000 pelts worth approximately \$520,000 last season. Additionally, 93 individuals completed their hunter education program, 136 residents across the territory attended trapper training in 2023 and 2024, and 15 trapping mentorship pairs were supported. Investing in these programs supports the traditional knowledge of hunters and trappers, protects natural resources for future generations, and improves the economic prospects for those who dedicate their lives to this vital work.

Mr. Speaker, we have also achieved significant milestones and results in our strategic infrastructure priorities. Last summer, my home community of Hay River celebrated the completion of two major projects that will provide immediate support to the community and long-term investment for the territory. The opening of Hay River's fish processing plant will allow us to support the growth of the commercial fishing industry by processing up to 1.5 million pounds of fish annually and will help to reinvigorate the fishing sector. The Hay River

Harbour was also fully dredged, re-opening a navigable emergency channel and a critical link in the territory's transportation network.

Important milestones were achieved in the development of the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the Inuvik Airport. The Mackenzie Valley Highway is currently undergoing environmental assessment and community engagement. Pending a successful assessment, we will begin regulatory authorizations, obtain project funding, advance procurement, and secure land tenure requirements.

The GNWT also completed lengthening the existing Inuvik Airport runway by 1500 feet and widening of the runway safety area. At a time when the national and global focus is on the North, it is important that the Government of Canada continue to invest in the NWT's infrastructure.

We also signed two significant agreements this year that would create new opportunities for Northerners. The first is a memorandum of understanding for collaboration on the Advancement of Economic Corridors with the Government of Alberta. This MOU will help attract new jobs, drive infrastructure development, and leverage the strengths of both Alberta and the NWT. The second is the Canada Community Building Fund renewal agreement which will provide approximately \$94.5 million for community government capital projects over the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, one consideration as we advance new capital projects and strategic infrastructure is how they can help mitigate and respond to climate-driven events such as floods and fires.

Following the unprecedented 2023 wildfire season, the GNWT has taken important steps to enhance our wildfire management program to best protect NWT residents and communities. An external review of the 2023 response provided 25 recommendations to improve mitigation, preparedness, and response efforts. While full implementation will take time, the GNWT is acting on these recommendations to strengthen wildfire prevention and emergency management across the territory.

We updated the NWT Emergency Plan in 2024 to clarify roles and responsibilities of community governments as the lead for emergency management, including the need for hosting and evacuation plans and clarity around reimbursable expenses. The response to the 2024 wildfires in Fort Liard and Fort Good Hope were a first step in testing the investments made and the collaborative

efforts from communities, Indigenous governments, and local leadership.

Mr. Speaker, to effectively address the territory's housing crisis and improve the suitability, accessibility, and affordability of housing options in the NWT, we must work collaboratively with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, Canada, communities, and partners and stakeholders to deliver more homes for Northerners.

Housing NWT is actively advancing major projects in Yellowknife such as Aspen Apartments, a 36-unit building being modernized through a multi-level government partnership focused on key building components, including a new biomass heat plant, which is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and operating costs.

In the coming months, additional housing units will be ready for move-in across the territory, in the Mackenzie Delta, Monfwi, Nahendeh, Nunakput, Sahtu, and Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh ridings, creating new housing options and more homes for Northerners. Five new seniors' duplexes are under construction in Fort McPherson, Tulita, Fort Simpson, Fort Resolution, and Behchoko, and will include accessible kitchens, washrooms, and entryways, and spaces for traditional food preparation. Initiatives like these enable seniors to age in place in their communities, keeping families together. We have also signed agreements with the Tlicho government, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, Deline Got'ine government and, most recently, the Gwich'in Tribal Council to address housing needs through cooperation and respect.

Homelessness is about more than just housing. The causes are complex, and our approach to addressing it must be multi-faceted. Over the past year, our government has taken steps to tackle homelessness using community-led solutions. In October 2024, the GNWT committed \$445,000 annually to the Metis Local 51 to support the operations of the Hay River homeless shelter. To help strengthen shelter operations, we provided specialized training for staff focusing on safety, mental health support, and case management. While we are making progress in building and expanding the availability of housing, we are keenly aware that the need outweighs our ability to provide, so we continue to leverage our partnerships and possibilities.

Mr. Speaker, this is only a snapshot of the good work currently underway. There are many actions in planning and early implementation and more to come. Our mandate commitments span the full four-year term of this government.

In this first year, we have taken decisive steps to lay the foundations and build relationships with partners and leaders that will help us as we move forward together.

The world is changing rapidly, and the North is not immune to global challenges. But by working together, we can turn these challenges into opportunities and make the NWT a place where people want to live, work, and raise their families for generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 430-20(1): SUPPORT FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESIDENTS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to ask the Premier to give residents hope in a tangible way. In his territorial address yesterday, one thing he said caught my ear: We must be bold when the moment demands it.

While I'm happy that we're standing strong with Team Canada, that Canadians have come together to support each other and are committed to buying local and buying Canadian, I'm still concerned. There's so much at stake. I'm watching a US administration strip away protections, supports, and educational materials needed by gender-diverse Americans, low-income Americans, and tear apart funding for legislated responsibilities that provide international aid.

I am watching a US administration say that they will take over Gaza from the Palestinian people. These actions are creating fear and anxiety for many folks. Specifically, I want to say to the trans and nonbinary people in our community, and in my life, that I love and support you.

Shock and awe is being directed against American citizens so much so that social media is awash with coded ways to resist. Once again, uncertainty is gripping our world. This time it isn't a pandemic but rather oligarchs and fascism. I will not back down from calling it what it is. Any historian can draw parallels and actions between now and 90 years ago. I do not wish to fear monger, but I have to call it what it is.

What is under our influence in this Assembly is how we encourage the Premier to work for residents on behalf of Team Canada. Our territory holds vast resources, not only that of critical minerals but also freshwater. These

resources are attractive to external actors. I expect conversations far behind my pay grade and influence are happening, and if they're not, I urge the Premier to insist conversations for smart and sustainable development and trade with respectful partners happens.

The on again/off again tariffs have a feeling of smoke and mirrors of what is to come. We have an exceptional opportunity to strongly advocate for what the people of the territory need and what we have to offer the world. NWT critical minerals can power a Canadian green new deal creating jobs, prosperity, and clean energy for the NWT and beyond. We can demonstrate northern resolve to reach net zero in the face of climate disasters. We can punch above our weight in so many ways.

It's utterly heartbreaking to watch the news and feel powerless knowing that my friends in America are terrified. Focusing on real and tangible ways to untangle ourself is a way to show real leadership, and it is a positive step. I'll have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Colleagues, before we continue on with Members' statements, I'd like to recognize Mayor Frank Hope of Norman Wells. He's been the mayor since 2018. He's done a great job, and I had the opportunity to talk to him yesterday for a little bit, and I think some of you Members and Cabinet Ministers had the opportunity to talk with him. And continue your advocacy, Mr. Hope.

Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 431-20(1):
STATE OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these days, we are bombarded with news of doom and war and conflict coming from every corner of our country in the world. There are looming trade wars, military wars where civilians are being bombed, wars between political parties, wars on the street between drug lords and gangs. Everywhere life as we know it life is being torn down. In our own territory, everyone is worried that the government is broke, worried that our whole focus is finding programs and services and jobs to cut. It feels like our world is closing in and it's getting smaller and more fragmented. And with that, our hope and our vision for the future gets smaller too. We see other communities, other leaders as competitors, even enemies, and then we start to give up on our own communities and on ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, no one can thrive with that kind of mentality, and it's no way to lead a government. And I firmly believe that we don't have to operate that way, even with our current fiscal limitations. The only path forward, I'm convinced, is to build up. Yes, we need to be way more careful with our spending, and maybe some old buildings and programs do need to be torn down, but we need to be absolutely clear what better things we're replacing them with.

We are not broke. We need to be more careful with our spending, but cuts are not the goal. They're a means to an end. So what is the end? The point is to focus our limited resources on the things that really matter. A health care system where every resident in every community has access to quality primary care, communities where every resident has access to a safe home that they can take pride in, cultivating a skilled workforce and businesses that are really good at what they do.

Mr. Speaker, these are the priorities we've identified, and yet we failed to lay out any kind of plan to achieve any of them, so no wonder the public has totally lost the plot on what we're actually trying to build up.

Mr. Speaker, this work is too important for us to waste energy fighting and tearing each other down. It's going to take all of us staying focused on our positive vision for the future, opportunities to work together, and letting go of the things that don't matter as much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 432-20(1):
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR THE TOWN
OF NORMAN WELLS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The town of Norman Wells issued a state of emergency back in October 2024. At the time, I spoke in this House about the Emergency Management Act and suggested that there could be opportunities for territorial and federal support to help mitigate the high cost of living in Norman Wells. Mr. Speaker, now Imperial Oil Resources is discussing shutting down its operations in the community. Mr. Speaker, it has been reported by Imperial and the media that the Norman Wells oil field, which is more than a century old, has at most another five or ten years' life before closure. This will be shortened without regulatory approval. The transition process, Mr. Speaker, is just beginning and, eventually, 60 employees, as well as visiting contractors, will have to find new opportunities or new work. This closure, Mr.

Speaker, will put further economic strain on the community of Norman Wells. Something must be done now to ensure there is hope for the future for the residents.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT must make good on its mandate to build a strong economic foundation. Mr. Speaker, the residents of Norman Wells are starting to think about the town, what the town will look like post closure. They are looking at ways they can transition from being dependent on Imperial for home heating oil/electricity to become a self-supporting community.

Mr. Speaker, later I intend to table documents at the appropriate time with the anticipation to initiate a joint collaboration framework alternatively a sustainable working group for this challenge. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 433-20(1):
IMPROVING THE LAND USE PERMITTING
PROCESS

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to express concern over potential changes to the quarry permitting process in the Northwest Territories. As it stands, land and water boards established under the land claim agreements already conduct thorough screenings and consultation when reviewing land use permits and project determinations. This system has worked effectively, Mr. Speaker, for years, ensuring proper oversight while allowing projects to proceed in a timely manner.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is considering adding an additional consultation requirement at the quarry permit stage. This unnecessary step duplicates existing processes and creates delays and uncertainty for contractors, particularly when project material needs change or contracts are awarded late in the year.

Mr. Speaker, in the Beaufort Delta, we only have a short summer construction season and any added delay could mean lost work and increased costs for businesses.

There's been no clear explanation as to why this change is needed. If the GNWT believes additional consultation is required, we should be looking at solutions that streamline efforts, not complicate them. A protocol agreement with the land and water boards could ensure consultation obligations are met without causing project delays. Mr. Speaker, no changes should be made to the existing

process until a clear policy is developed with defined timelines and transition period for contractors. We cannot afford to add more red tape when our industries and communities rely on efficient permitting to support economic growth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'll have questions for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 434-20(1):
RESPIRE CARE AND AT-HOME CARE

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last sitting I raised the issue of respite care in the territory and confirmed with the Minister of health that the department is reviewing its delivery of respite care. I've since met with some constituents and received feedback about some things that we could be doing differently.

Mr. Speaker, currently, the territory is spending a significant amount of money on out-of-territory care. Each individual who is sent south costs anywhere from 30 to \$50,000 per, month, or more, which adds up to \$600,000 per year per person. In total, the program is costing us \$50 million per year.

One question that has come up is could we prevent more people from being sent south for both respite or long-term supported living if we were able to better support families to keep their loved ones at home?

This could take several different forms. One idea is an income support program for at home caregivers if they are able to prevent their loved one from being sent south. Another idea raised by a constituent would be funding for families to hire their own at-home caregiver for full time or respite services. The idea would be to empower people to come up with their own solutions and support them to do so. Considering the significant costs associated with out-of-territory care, even if such programs were quite expensive to deliver per person, I think there's a good change it could be less expensive, potentially even significantly so, than what we're paying now.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, it would ensure loved ones are kept at home where they belong with their families. Programs such as income support or subsidies for families could be done alongside existing programming and offer additional options, giving families the agency to decide for themselves what works best.

Looking at the potential for this kind of programming is something I think we need to be focusing on in a time of fiscal restraint. I know that we are in the best position to be expanding our own programming at this time. Establishing funding pots like what I've described is one way we might be able to help people without expanding our own services. To that end, I'll have questions for the Minister of health today and also for the Minister of ECC if there's time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 435-20(1):
WELCOME BACK MESSAGE

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity, on the first day of this sitting, to wish all of my constituents in the Deh Cho a Happy New Year. To all the residents in the communities of Fort Providence, Kakisa, Enterprise, and K'atlodeeche, I wish you all the best in 2025. I want to congratulate the community of Fort Providence for the excellent Christmas parade and First Night New Year celebrations that happened recently in the new year. These events brought people together to celebrate the holiday season and enjoy each other's company.

A special thanks to Andrew Nunez, the hamlet of Fort Providence, Deh Gah Gotie First Nation, and the dedicated team of volunteers that worked tirelessly to make this celebration a success for the community.

To my colleagues here in the House, Happy New Year. To my husband Norman and family, thank you for supporting me always. May 2025 bring you prosperity and happiness. I look forward to the work we will accomplish together for the people of this beautiful territory we call home. There is value in working together, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 436-20(1):
TARIFFS

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, we are in a war, a trade war, and while our efforts have earned a 30-day reprieve, there's still much work to be done towards a resolution. Canadians are still struggling to come to terms with the sudden betrayal of one of our oldest allies that has upended the North American economy. I know Northerners are worried, and by virtue of having

the earliest legislative session this year, we get to demonstrate that leadership for the first opportunity to formally address the illegal tariffs threatened by US President Donald Trump. Today, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding our sovereignty and taking all necessary action to support a Team Canada approach against this threat to our communities. [Translation] Mr. Chair, Canadians are proud to say that our country is the second largest in the world with close to 10 10 million square kilometers but eighty percent of our population resides at less than 250 kilometers from the American border. As individuals living in the remote areas of the Arctic and Subarctic a large part of the Canadians -- or Americans can only know where we live by looking at a map. In fact, these -- that other people who have been living on these -- on this land since immemorial times and all the colonizers who defend the sovereignty of Canada. [Translation Ends].

But, Mr. Speaker, we have always had friends and allies who have helped us in this task of keeping our communities safe and strong. Canadians and Americans have stood shoulder to shoulder for over a century, fighting in two world wars, where the resources of the Northwest Territories played a crucial role in ending those conflicts; and thereafter, to defend against the threat of the Soviet Union by building and operating the DEW Line that stretched from Alaska to Nunavut. My father was a civilian contractor on the DEW Line for NORAD, and our relationship with the US is the reason my family is here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hopes that none of this trade war comes to pass and that the dumbest trade war in history ends without a shot being fired. But if there is a silver lining to an unpredictable US president, it's that his irrational behaviour proves that it is Canada that must invest in the Northwest Territories. We need to eliminate internal trade barriers, reduce regulatory burdens, and expand our military infrastructure with an ambitious strategy to expand, develop, and open up new markets.

To Canadians, thank you for standing up for your country and against those who would do us harm. To Americans, remember we are your friends and neighbours, not your enemies. And to Northerners, your government will see you through this crisis and keep the True North strong and free. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 437-20(1):
STATE OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with 971 days left in this Assembly, time moves along fast. But I say to this government, we need to be relentless and unapologetic for our fight for Northerners for a better tomorrow and certainly much better than yesterday was. Time is ticking away, Mr. Speaker. As our GDP does slip away, we need the government to take a full court press - not the wait and see policy we've lived with over and over and over again. Kind of a Groundhog's Day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we need action, boldness, commitment, Mr. Speaker, without apology.

Mr. Speaker, Premier Doug Ford may not be my personal cup of tea, but no one in this country can argue he takes bold action, he believes in the economy, he believes in Ontario, and as a matter of fact, he's putting those words to fight for Canada, Mr. Speaker. We need that energy. We need a play book just like Mr. Ford, Mr. Speaker. I should say Premier Ford. Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't be ashamed to stand our ground as Northerners but find common ground through experience, talent, kindness, and a collective focus. Mr. Speaker, we need a Premier's state of a union like we heard yesterday but with actual energy and deliverable tangibles.

Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully. There were no unicorns or rainbows in that speech of success. Now, my definition may be different than his, but Mr. Speaker, we're not hearing inspiration; we're hearing the bureaucracy is running the show.

Mr. Speaker, all Members can agree, in one form or another, we may not like all the styles of development and opportunity but let us by on the same page we may all agree we hate poverty, and so we have to reach for and grab any opportunity we can.

With Canada's commitment towards the 2 percent NATO spending, Mr. Speaker, time is ticking on that one, including the opportunities to get on board and to be part of those billions of dollars that are being invested and look towards the future of meeting those commitments. Mr. Speaker, I say seize the day, Mr. Premier, with our national interest. Show them we will be the partner to build that Mackenzie Valley Highway for national interest. We will be the partner that will build the Bathurst port road all the way up to the Arctic, Mr. Speaker. We will be the partner to have airports in the NWT for those F35s that will be here to

protect our national interests, Mr. Speaker. I say to the Premier opportunity is knocking, don't miss the boat.

Mr. Speaker, I finish with this: I implore the Premier to lead, seize the day, or certainly get out of the way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member from Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 438-20(1):
HAY RIVER CURLING TEAM SUCCESS

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome back all my colleagues to the Legislative Assembly, welcome back all the staff, and welcome back all the interpreters to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Hay River hosted the territorial trials for the Montana's Brier which, by the way, is being held February 28th and March 9th in Kelowna, BC. I'd like to think of this as Hay River's unofficial warmup before we send our champions to Kelowna to battle the best curlers out there. I'm proud to announce that the Hay River team will be representing the Northwest Territories at this prestigious event.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the team from Hay River:

- Aaron Bartling;
- The former Speaker of the House's son, D'arcy Delorey;
- Norman Bass of Hay River; and,
- Eric Preston, an RCMP officer.

All in Hay River. They managed to take down Team Koe in a 7 to 6 victory in extra ends. That's like an overtime victory in curling for us hockey fans. I was there; I watched it; it was pretty intense, and it came down to the last rock.

I believe this is the first time in Hay River history that a team has represented the NWT at a men's brier and, for that, it's a pretty big deal.

Also, a huge shout out to the curling club in Hay River and the volunteers that made this event a success. Without them, this achievement would have been a little bit more difficult. Congratulations to Team Delorey/Bartling, and I look forward to watching them on TV. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Hay River South. Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 439-20(1):
CELEBRATION OF LIFE OF AVERY
JULIANNA BURKE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Good afternoon, Colleagues. I am going to advise you this is going to be a very difficult Celebration of Life to do.

Avery Julianna Burke was born on May 4th, 2018, at the BC Women's Hospital to Maureen Deneron and Preston Burke. She was the third youngest of four siblings. She spent her first two years of her life in Fort Nelson, BC, before moving to Samba K'e with her grandmother, Bertha Deneron.

Avery loved being with her grandmother. She was a great help to her grandmother. She loved helping do dishes, folding clothes, all the while singing away to the various songs. Her favorite music was the fiddle, especially when her sister Katrina played the fiddle. She would grab her little brother's hand and they would dance up a storm. Their smiles made the home even brighter.

She was a very outdoor type of person. She loved to put up rabbit snares and cherished when she was successful. Even at a young age, she was able to remove the snares without much trouble thanks to her grandmother teaching. She like to go chicken hunting with her sisters, who was very good shot. Once they got a chicken, she would get right to the task of plucking it. She would be heard saying "we got Grandma's supper" with a big smile.

Avery loved to look for animal track, especially in the winter. She was always curious about the various animals, their tracks, and asked tons of questions about them and their home. Like a true northerner, her favorite food was dry meat, dry fish, bannock, fruit, and moose meat with broth. Her sister Katrina like spending time with her, making endless drawings or letting her be part of whatever her and her other sister were doing. I can tell you she didn't seem to have a bad day. She loved to laugh, dance, sing with her siblings, especially with her cousin Peyton. When it came to school, she had a huge passion for it. She loved her teachers and classmates. She would go to bed Sunday excited because she got to go to school Monday morning. She would get to learn and see her teacher and classmates.

When she had time, she loved spending time with her baby brother. They would enjoy playing together and she would teach him how to do things. As the family said, she was their little ray of sunshine. She was so innocent and intelligent. She was way too precious for this world and had to leave us. I can tell you before

she passed away on January 4th, she told her mother she was going to come back as a big tree and look after her baby brother. She was deeply loved and will be terribly missed by all her family and friends.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. RODGERS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize and, more importantly, thank Sheila Nasogaluak, my constituency assistant from Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Seeing nobody else recognizing visitors. For the others that are here, thank you very much for allowing us to be in your home and welcome to our proceedings. It's great to have visitors here at this time.

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

Oral Questions

QUESTION 424-20(1): CANADA-USA TARIFFS AND TRADE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Premier for being part of the Team Canada response to the US tariff threat. And I'd like to ask today what the status of that approach is. Where are Canada's premiers and the Prime Minister on ensuring that we can overcome this challenge to our economic sovereignty in the next 30 days? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure everyone has heard that the Prime Minister spoke with President Trump yesterday -- or sorry, I believe it was Monday. They had a discussion, and President Trump said that he was going to delay the implementation of the tariffs by 30 days. And so that's where we are right now.

Across Canada, governments -- provincial and territorial governments were going to enact measures, just as ours was; for example, removing American products from the liquor stores, stopping procurement of American goods, and any other tariff measures that we can define to help support these efforts. We've paused those efforts, as I believe most jurisdictions have, but we haven't stopped

preparing. So we're continuing to prepare, continuing to examine what other non-tariff options that we have, and how we can better support Team Canada. I had a call today with the Prime Minister and all of the premiers. We had one on Saturday. We had one last week. And all of the jurisdictions are doing what they can. I can tell you it's a very cohesive group despite any political differences across party lines. It is a united Team Canada approach from coast to coast to coast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier. I mean, I'm jealous I'm not a part of those calls because it would be great to call Donald Trump's bluff and beat him at his own game. So thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, have the Canada's premiers had a discussion about eliminating interprovincial trade barriers, getting, you know -- winning this war is one thing, but we have to build for the future. That's a big part of this. So what progress are we making on eliminating interprovincial trade barriers? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a committee in Canada that is made up of all 13 provinces and territories as well as the federal government. That's the committee on internal trade. Each year a different jurisdiction chairs that committee. Starting in 2025, the NWT is the chair of the committee on internal trade. Last week, Minister Cleveland called an emergency meeting of the committee. They met on Friday, and they brought forward recommendations. They're very high-level recommendations, but they speak to many of the things the Member is talking about. We are looking to reduce internal trade barriers across Canada in a serious way, and we're looking to increase labour mobility. And so work is underway. Both of these are issues that had been long standing in Canada, and there hasn't been the political will to actually get them dealt with. They do take a lot of work. It will take legislative change across every jurisdiction. It will take some jurisdictions giving up a sacred cow that they just don't want to, but if there ever was a political will to make that work happen, now is the time. And if we do that, even if we cut our trade barriers by half, we're going to see an impact on our Canada-wide GDP and so it's a real effort to make real change in Canada, and I'm very hopeful that we're going to see that change soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good news as well. Mr. Speaker, another thing that this crisis has prompted is taking a look at energy security in Canada. We're talking about getting oil and gas to market -- or sorry, to ports and to finding new ports. The Northwest

Territories is one of the largest supplies of oil and gas in the world. Can the Premier tell us if he is pursuing that opportunity and how we are going to unlock this resource to benefit not only Canada's security but northern security as well? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And probably a question more suited for the industry Minister because I know that work has been going on in this area, especially up in the Beaufort Delta region, and there's a lot of hope about what that could bring. The resource that we have right now is that a lot of the world's attention is on is critical minerals. And so I'm having lots of conversations at the first Ministers' meetings that I just mentioned as well as virtually everywhere I go, because we recognize we need secure supply chains in Canada. If there are tariffs from the United States, that disrupts supply chains. We have tariffs with China. We can't necessarily always rely on China to provide what we need. And so now is the time that we as a country need to come together and ensure that we have sustainable supply chains so that we can create prosperity for Canada. We can do mining here. We can do refining here. We can do manufacturing here. And we can have the innovation industry to develop those products that we're manufacturing. We can do it all in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And there's a real push underway right now to make that happen. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier withhold the NWT's critical minerals from American -- from imports or exports to America? Thank you. Tariffs.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a decision of the federal government, and the federal government has said everything's on the table. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 425-20(1):
ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY AND INVESTMENT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be asking questions for the Premier. I'd like to reflect back my questions towards my Member's statement regarding NATO's 2 percent spending requirement. And for the record, I believe, if I'm correct, Canada currently commits 1.37 percent of our GDP towards it so we're -- that's billions of dollars falling short of that commitment. So my question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker, is simply

what is the government doing on the projects and initiatives I had pointed out in my speech with respect to the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Bathurst port, including the expansion of northern airways to suit the F35s, to get northern investment -- or sorry, national investment in our northern economy. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So an update on F35 facilities, the Mackenzie Valley Highway, and the Bathurst port, so that's quite a bit of information. I don't think I can get it all to the Member here. But I've met with the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Northern Affairs, and these are what the topics that we talk about. I have these same conversations with my northern Premier colleagues, and together we push for infrastructure development in the North. And I know that the Prime Minister is listening and has unprompted -- reiterated those comments back. And so I know that is on their mind, and they recognize the importance of this. And so we are always pushing these projects. I'll leave it there. I won't get too far into the details of, you know, where we are with these projects. Timelines and things like that is probably better suited for a different Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, listening is great, but it doesn't put food on the table. It doesn't put gas in the car. It doesn't buy Christmas presents, etcetera, Mr. Speaker. So I'm going to ask the Premier what type of campaign is the territorial government doing through his department of executive to launch and suggest this is the best investment opportunity for the North, but it's also the best investment for them to help meet their 2 percent requirements. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, the eyes of the world are on the North now and the discussions about Arctic security, defence, have taken up an inordinate amount of my time. I can say I did not expect this when I became Premier of the Northwest Territories I'd be having these national discussions and international discussions, but the fact is we are. And so what I can do from my end as a politician is talk to the politicians who are making decisions about what we need for infrastructure. And so we have provided detailed information to the federal government about the types of projects that we want to advance. When it comes to military installations, that's federal government jurisdiction, but I have told the federal

government we need to work with them on those. We need to ensure that any military facilities in the North provides benefits to the North and that the Indigenous governments on whose land those facilities are need to be part of those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Premier what type of proactive aggressive campaign are we selling? When the territorial government went so far as building the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway, it wasn't just cap in hand saying we'll wait until they do this. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Premier is he willing to look at either striking a formal committee to get Members, including Cabinet, to work on an aggressive campaign to sell these types of initiatives. Because if we sit here and do nothing, that's exactly what we'll get, being polite, but we'll be overlooked. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a team to sell these projects to the federal government. It's your Executive Council, it's Cabinet, and we do it every single day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I've heard of this Cabinet team that's been selling this. I've not seen in one year any result to that. Hence I'll ask the question, would the Premier be willing to form a working group with some Regular Members so we can help push this initiative collectively and territorially so we don't miss this billion dollar opportunity. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member wants to put a framework around this amorphous idea of pushing for billion-dollar opportunities, I'd be happy to have a look at that and consider how we can use that, but I'm not going to spearhead the Member's initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Sahtu.

QUESTION 426-20(1):
PUBLIC LANDS ACT REGULATIONS
UPDATE

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. On the Public Lands Act, last spring I brought this forward. Today I'm asking questions on the progress. My first question there, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister share what regulatory drafting progress has been made to date? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Public Lands Act was passed in the 19th Legislative Assembly. Regulations are required to bring the Act into force. This government is committed to working collaboratively with our Indigenous government partners through the Intergovernmental Council on the development of the lands and resource legislation and regulation. The Public Lands Act and regulation is one of the pieces of legislation that is moving through the process right now. There's currently a technical working group under the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat which includes representatives from NWT Indigenous governments and organizations and the GNWT working together collaboratively to develop regulations under the Public Lands Act. There are a few issues that still remain outstanding to the technical working group, and they are being discussed and considered by the group at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that update. My second question on the same subject on the Public Lands Act, can the Minister update the Assembly on the next steps on the process? Mahsi.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Our hope is to reach consensus with the technical working group very soon which will allow us to proceed to the next steps in the process. Once the technical working group has reached consensus, the next step would be to reengage with the technical advisory panel made of interested public stakeholder groups, and the proposed regulations would be discussed at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that information. I'm sure our audience are listening.

My third question is on the timeline for the completion of this; can the Minister share that. Thank you.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we work through this process, like I said at the technical working group level and as we move on to the final stages, our hope is to have this work completed and have the draft final regulations prepared by the late to end of summer of 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 427-20(1):
OUT-OF-TERRITORY CARE, SUPPORTIVE
LIVING AND RESPITE CARE

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, I misspoke earlier. I meant that I would be asking questions of the Minister of ECE at a later time; she's clearly not here today. But my questions for today are for the Minister of health.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of health have information regarding how many people receiving out-of-territory care are due to lack of ability of an in-home caregiver as opposed to complex needs that simply can't be addressed in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we currently don't have that specific data as I don't have that data. But I can tell you that there are 147 NWT residents receiving out-of-territory care. There are also 55 clients within the Northwest Territories receiving supportive living services. To be eligible for out-of-territory supportive living program, there must be evidence that their support needs cannot be met within the Northwest Territories. But I can confirm that the department is undertaking an analysis of the support needs of the out-of-territory clients to inform models and resources needed for in-territory supportive living services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I look forward to seeing the results of that further investigation. Mr. Speaker, how much is the GNWT currently spending on sending clients for short-term or respite-related stays in the south? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the territory currently does not send short-term respite stays. They're not part of the out-of-territory supportive living program; therefore, no funds are being spent on this. There are, however, oftentimes when families have, you know, reached capacity and when they're providing services and sometimes, you know, those needs are so complex that end up -- you know, there's an admission into our health care system, into our hospitals, but there isn't a short-term out-of-territory program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do appreciate that clarification. Mr. Speaker, has the GNWT explored options before for programs such as income supports or grants for families supporting persons with disabilities to organize their own in-home services or respite care? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the model of individualized funding for supportive living has been identified as a recommendation in the supportive living review of 2023. The department has established a working group to examine the resources that would be required to establish these types of options for Northwest Territories' residents, and this work is in progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to see, as part of that work, an analysis of whether the territory could save some of the money that's being spent on out-of-territory service for the reasons I spoke to today. Does the Minister have a timeline for the Assembly as to when she expects to see the conclusion of this investigation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can get back to the Member of an update or a timeline of this review. I would like to, however, say that a lot of the things that were in the review, the supportive living review of 2023, those that have been done have been able to be completed internally and so this review is some of the stuff that's being done internally to analyze those clients that are out of territory, you know, bringing them back if they're -- what that might look like. But, again, many of the things that have -- the recommendations that have been accepted of this report also need funding to go along to implement. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 428-20(1):
OUT-OF-TERRITORY CARE, SUPPORTIVE
LIVING AND RESPITE CARE

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. So one of this Assembly's priorities is improving access to primary care. Just so everyone's clear, primary care is the first place people go for health advice and care,

whether that's a community health centre or a family doctor. So has this government defined anywhere what exactly improving access to primary care means to us and what we're trying to accomplish? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, you know, I've had ongoing conversations with the Member and, you know, every time we have this dialogue, you know, there are more things that come to light. And so having these conversations here in this House but also having this conversation with my counterparts last week in Halifax with all of the federal, provincial, territorial Ministers, you know, and saying health care across Canada is changing, and it's not just changing in Canada and Northwest Territories; it's changing around the world. So people having to access care, you know, we're trying to -- we're moving away from the traditional model of having one family doctor for life is no longer realistic. The demands for family physicians at an all-time high right across Canada so, you know, over the life of this Legislative Assembly, our priority is equitable access to health care particularly, you know, we have a high number of non-Indigenous clients who are on the higher end of chronic disease rates throughout our territory. So we are organizing our system so that every resident has access to the care that they need to reach their full health and wellness potential while the system actively works to remove barriers to this equitable access. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, so that's a good start in terms of our overarching goals. But, for example, the primary care reform carried out in Yellowknife, at least, last year seems to have been done as kind of a trial, something we'll try out and see if it works. But has anyone defined what exactly our primary care reform was trying to accomplish and how will we know if this trial has worked if we don't have indicators or targets about what it was supposed to accomplish? How will we know if our primary care reform is working? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the primary care reform is the overall providing of care to all residents in the Northwest Territories. As the Member has stated, in Yellowknife there has been some changes within the program itself. It went from

primary care teams of ten, which did not include -- all of those teams did not include physicians on every team. Some of them didn't include community health nurses on those teams. Those teams didn't include LPNs. They didn't include the holistic wellness worker. So what happened was is that there was too many teams spread out too thin and so what they've done now is they've amalgamated the four teams in Yellowknife, and they've created it so that every team has a physician, every team has a CHR, every team has an LPN, there's administrative, there's holistic. And every person in the Northwest Territories, in Yellowknife, that needs to access and is assigned to these teams as -- you know, as they access the care, that they will see the person on the team that is -- meets, you know, whatever their need is so the level of care so that every practitioner there is working at the scope of their practice, they're all professionals in their workforce, and it's not one over the other. And so those that are seeing the physicians are those that are needing to see physicians with the chronic diseases and the complex cases that physicians are working with at their scope of practice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MORGAN: So do we have a way of checking in after a year or two years with patients in Yellowknife to see if what the Minister described has actually happened, whether people are able to access the right practitioner at the right scope? So do we have a way of checking in with both patients as to whether it's working well and with the practitioners themselves to see if the theory of how this system is supposed to work is actually working for people at the end of the day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year, I believe, the health authority does quality patient -- they do surveys. So patients coming in, they can take the surveys, they're offered the surveys. There's online. You can call quality risk if there's concerns.

One of the things that we have to take into consideration when we're measuring all of the programs in health, you know, we measure them with our outcomes. And so when we have our statistics, you know, through CIHI, like, we can see whether or not our chronic diseases are increasing or decreasing. The access to physician care, you know, we'll -- we get those updates but to be -- to have the specific detail that the Member is asking for, I can bring that

back to NTHSSA to see what internally that they are doing to audit that, the changes in their system, and I can commit to bringing that back to the Members for their review. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. I'll try this again. Member from Yellowknife North. Final supplementary.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as the Minister alluded to earlier, we need to always remember that primary care is happening in every community, every community health centre across the territory, so how has our primary care reform that's taken place taken into consideration how community health centres operations will be impacted or where the opportunities are for better supports and connections between doctors and practitioners in regional centres and the community health nurses in small communities. How has that been part of the reform process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad that the Member asked this question because this is -- this piece here is near and dear to my heart, and this is what the direction as it was given to the department as part of this is reviewing our staffing models in our health centres and not just, you know, our centres that currently have nurses but all health centres across the territory. We have nine communities that have no -- you know, they have a CHR, and if we're lucky they have a home support worker in those communities. We need to be looking at, you know, the incidents of how much, you know, times these clients are having to travel to access services and what the cost is of bringing those services closer. So this review going on across right now with our nursing leadership is reviewing our model of care in our health centres which will identify, you know, the need because in the past, we are working on a federal model, and many of the nurses were put into these health centres, were given housing, were given, you know -- and this is the model we're currently working on. And over the years, we've tweaked it and we've add in home support workers to support, but we need to take a real look at the needs of our small communities and making sure that they're getting the preventative support services that they're needing so that their emergency services are not -- that's not all that they're dealing with. And so that's what's happening throughout. And you know, some of those communities, having access to nurse practitioners, you know, if we can get more nurse practitioners to be working with all of our communities, you know, and then the needs of physicians when they're needed by the residents, you know, that can limit the amount of travel. We all talk about the travel that we're

spending on our residents in the Northwest Territories. So this is a whole part of what's going on right now with the medical travel, the, you know, modernization in the health centre and the primary care reform. So there's a whole bunch of things that are kind of working right now that are taking place and hopefully that will help to streamline and strengthen our access to care in the Northwest Territories for our residents. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 429-20(1):
GREEN NEW DEAL AND CRITICAL
MINERALS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank my colleagues for speaking to this generally, the topic of tariffs and Team Canada today. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier seize this opportunity to encourage a green new deal for the NWT and critical minerals working in tandem with Team Canada and Indigenous leadership? And I'm specifically asking this of the Premier because he is at those tables, not the Minister of ITI. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to stay away from the term "green new deal." That's politically charged and comes with a lot of baggage. But I am working to drum up investment in critical minerals, explain the importance of critical minerals to the rest of Canada, and let them know what we have here in the Northwest Territories. And I know the message has been heard because I hear it when I travel and meet with other Ministers or premiers, and so we really are pushing that angle. And I'll continue to do so. Thank you.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a real opportunity here to not only be punching above our weight, as I said in my statement, but also to show leadership in the availability of critical minerals in our territory. But as the Premier knows, we don't make a lot of money off of resource royalties right now. Will there be a redesign of royalties coming back into the territory to help us meet both the GNWT's endless infrastructure and social spending deficits and those of our Indigenous partners? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, of course, revenue royalties are under the Minister of ITI so I can't speak to that. My primary concern is getting some investment into the territory and getting some development

and getting people working and, of course, doing it in a sustainable way. That's one thing that we always have to balance in the Northwest Territories. The people of the Northwest Territories, they still live on the land. They still hunt, they still fish, they still trap, and many communities supplement their incomes and their food through those methods. So while we have that consideration, we also have a maturing regulatory regime, and we are constantly working to streamline it and ensure that we're working more closely with proponents so that they know what we want out of our regulatory system; we don't leave them guessing. And I'm advocating always for more support for Indigenous governments to be part of that process. If you have a small Indigenous government with an unsettled land claim, they can't deal with dozens and dozens and dozens of exploration companies who are coming and trying to consult, and that creates a bottleneck. And so we need to support the Indigenous governments as well to get things going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 430-20(1):
QUARRYING AND LAND-USE PERMITS

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change following up on my Member's statement over potential changes to the quarry permitting.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain why the GNWT is considering additional consultation requirements for quarry permits when land and water boards already have consultation as part of the permitting process. Thank you.

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

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, consultation taken under the quarry permits is not additional consultation to that undertaken by the land and water board for the land use permits. Quarry permits and land use permits are two different authorizations under two separate authorities and under two separate pieces of legislation. Quarry permits are issued by the GNWT, where land use permits are issued by the appropriate land and water board across the NWT except for in the ISR.

For a quarry permit -- for quarry operations, both a quarry permit and a land use permit are required. For example, the land use permit grants access to use heavy equipment on the

site while the quarry permit provides the access to the granular material and the authorization to use that material. Any consultation undertaken on a quarry permit is specific to that actual activity, the use of the material itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. So from what I understand from quarry permit holders in my region, they are being asked for additional consultation. I understand what the Minister is saying. So I guess if there is a duplication, has the GNWT considered entering into a protocol agreement with the land and water boards to avoid any duplication of consultation efforts while ensuring that their duty to consult is met? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as mentioned, quarry permits are not issued for the same purpose or under the same authority as the land use permit. The GNWT are unable to delegate consultation obligations for quarry permits, for example the land and water board, or other organizations that may issue land use permits. The department, we're always interested in considering ways to better coordinate processes and other regulatory -- with other regulatory agencies. And I'll ask the department to explore any possibilities in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: So, Mr. Speaker, I guess my question is simple, then. Has the department or is the department looking at any potential changes to the quarry permitting process, or is it the same now as it was last year and will be the same again next year? Thank you.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department continues to use the same processes as it has in the past. We remain committed to working with industry stakeholders navigating the quarry permit application process to better communicate clearly with industry as well as the other people in the territory how this whole process works. And I'll commit today to, you know, work with the Member. I understand that there's a specific issue in his constituency that he would like addressed, so I'll stand here today and commit to following up with the Member to better understand the issue and the details and see what we can do to alleviate that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister. And, yes, I appreciate that.

And the Minister, I will say, has always been willing to work with me in the Beaufort Delta when I do have concerns around this.

Just one follow-up question that may be a yes or no answer, then; I wasn't sure if it was answering the last one, Mr. Speaker. Are there any proposed changes to the quarry permitting process being potentially looked at by the government? Thank you.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, there are no current changes being considered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 431-20(1):

CHANGES TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Northerners continue to be puzzled why this government is stripping away benefits that have existed for many, many years. Yes, I'm talking about the affirmative action policy changes that are leaving people who live -- were born and raised in the Northwest Territories who have lived half their life here, Indigenous, non-Indigenous, why they're being left out in the cold. Can the Minister explain -- Minister responsible for the public service explain why she is so determined to take this benefit away from Northerners. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Range Lake. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're not looking to take away benefits from Northerners. Firstly, the definition under the affirmative action policy isn't always what people think it is. You can be born in the Northwest Territories and move to anywhere else in Canada. You are still going to be benefitting as a P1. So it's not necessarily as simple as all that. And, yet, that reality has been on the books for 35 years. So there's lots of folks who come up to the North, who live in the North who are not P1s. In fact, they have no category or status whatsoever. There's folks who may live across the border from the Northwest Territories, Smith's Landing or in Nunavut, also have no status under our human resources policy whatsoever. There's a lot of problems with what we have, and we want to get to a place where we are using evidence-based approach to our policies that we are trying to figure out what it is that we're

trying to solve, and in this case, looking at evidence, Mr. Speaker, we have a population that we serve that's 50 percent Indigenous, they make up 28 to 30 percent of the public service, they have an unemployment rate of 14 percent. This is a problem that we need to solve. It's high time we solved it, and that's what we're trying to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree the public service should be representative of the people it serves. How is encouraging more southern Indigenous people to work for the public service representative of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's not been a time that I've suggested that what we're trying to do is encouraging the southern -- host of folks from the southern parts of Canada to come to the Northwest Territories. I'd be actually quite interested to see if there was suddenly a line-up at the border of folks wanting to come for the public service here. It might be suggestive of this being a very positive place to come and work. Mr. Speaker, our population's been stagnant for 20 years. Right now over the last four years, the average population growth for the Northwest Territories is at the absolute bottom of Canada and what we have done, and why we tried to make change that we did earlier or initially, opening this to Indigenous persons, there are many Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories who may not be members of groups who are within this boundary who are members of -- for example, of the Council of Leaders, and we were trying to simply reflect that reality here.

Mr. Speaker, I was happy to take this back to Cabinet and suggest that we reexamine that. Obviously, our relationships with Indigenous governments here are very important to us. But at no time, Mr. Speaker, was there an expectation that we suddenly see an influx of folks. This always has been about ensuring that the people who are in the North, and specifically the Indigenous people in the North, would receive some form of priority in our hiring. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So how has the -- has the policy changed, Mr. Speaker? The Minister spoke of bringing it back to the Council of Leaders. Has the policy changed since what Members have been told? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, when this first went out a year ago, or about 2023, rather, for rounds of consultation, the proposal was to do an approach where we would have First

Nations, Inuit, Metis persons or members or descendants from groups within the Northwest Territories' boundaries as a first priority and all Indigenous Canadians second priority. As I said, there are a number of people within the Northwest Territories, Indigenous, who -- part of that process and said, look, this doesn't capture me, please, can it be more inclusive. Again, there's no policy that's going to be perfect here. So we went with the one version. Obviously, these last several weeks have suggested that that was not a version that the majority of residents or MLAs wanted to see. So we have gone back, and I've had Cabinet suggest that we revisit that original definition, go back to the idea of having Indigenous Canadians but with first priority to those with membership or who are descendants of the Northwest Territories. I am saying this as a proposal because, again, I had hoped that rather than making a decision that I'd have an opportunity to take that to MLA colleagues before bringing it back to Cabinet for a final decision. We are looking to maintain our April 1st change date. A lot of work's gone into the change management of this process, and I'm hopeful we'll make it. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then I would suggest bringing it to committee before you bring it to the media. That's just a tip for the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that Indigenous people will be better represented by this change potentially. I think we still need to have conversations. But what about black and brown people, women, people with disabilities, people who were covered by the old policy? Is the Minister taking DEI -- on the anti-DEI train that Donald Trump is on, or are we just leaving these people out in the cold too? The old policy covered this. It was around diversity, around ensuring no one's left behind. The assumption that P2s are all white people of privilege is a false assumption. So what is the Minister doing to ensure that other minority populations in the Northwest Territories are being protected by our hiring policies? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a look at Hansard and decide whether or not a comparison between myself and Mr. Trump warrants some further proceeding -- procedural question. I'm going to leave it alone for the moment and I can, as I said, look back at Hansard and make that consideration in due course.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly did attempt to take this back to committee. I actually was able to arrange an opportunity to meet with committee, but the committee declined to meet with me. And then because of all the things had gone to the media, including confidential letters marked from my office to committee, I had an inundation of requests to speak to the media. I have done my best to try to indicate that this was still something under consideration in those interviews.

And, Mr. Speaker, with respect to other members of the population of the Northwest Territories, again, we want the Northwest Territories public service to be inclusive and diverse. This is one piece of a much bigger puzzle that we're trying to solve here to make this a better workforce. There's a number of different initiatives underway, including, not least of which is the diversity and inclusion framework, which is fairly new. It has rolled out. It is being implemented. And, Mr. Speaker, the idea here is to get at the root of actually understanding when there is bias in a workplace, when there's maybe unconscious bias, ensuring that our workplaces are ones that are welcoming, diverse, acceptable, that persons can go and work there without -- and feel welcome when they are there. And, Mr. Speaker, we are most certainly committed to that as a policy of the Northwest Territories government. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 432-20(1):
NAMING OF GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDINGS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on a question I had asked the Minister of housing some time ago. I had written her an email about naming one of the downtown buildings the Whitford Building. I again brought it up in October asking about that. I talked about the policy, non-policy constraints, other than the fact that she wanted to say there's a process. Frankly, the Minister is in charge of this process, can present to Cabinet with not just one building that's established, but we also have three more -- or sorry, two more buildings coming on stream in the near future. Would the Minister be willing to name one of the three buildings, whether it's the new housing building, whether it's the Whitford Healing Centre for the new shelter, or even the downtown barrier-free building after Mr. Tony Whitford who has honoured this territory for decades. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Housing NT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my discussions with Housing NWT, we are continuing to look at this, examine if naming buildings throughout the Northwest Territories for people that have done great service for the Northwest Territories, like Mr. Whitford, is appropriate. We continue to examine that. Because, again, we work with our leadership across the North, including the Council of Leaders, so things need to be examined carefully before announcements are made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of buildings. I'm not here to go through them all; maybe we didn't name the Legislative Assembly, but we have the Joe Tobie Building, we have the Arthur Laing Building, etcetera, etcetera. We even had the Jan Stirling Building, and she was alive at the time it was named in her honour.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister to show some courage, some fortitude on this one, and just make a decision today and say I will find a way to get this done, that we honour our former Commissioner in that type of method such as naming a building, either new or renewed, in his honour given the important commitment he's made to Northerners. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'll reiterate that this has to be examined, that we have to look at things, we have to be careful in what we do. And understanding the Member's request, we just have to be careful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to chew up too much more time but it just seems like, well, we're going to examine this. I mean, we could be in the -- we could be in the 22nd Assembly from the sounds of the way that the government's moving so quickly on this. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be willing to commit to bring back a decision and direction before the end of this current sitting showing that we're done talking about this idea and be willing to make a decision? That would be grateful to me and an immense amount of Northerners who would appreciate this gesture. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's willing to commit that we'll come back at the end of the Assembly with a response for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the Assembly -- if I said "Assembly", I want to make sure I was clear, I meant the sitting just so we're on the record. If the Minister meant the Assembly in

two and a half years, I think, you know, that's the definition of bureaucracy in the sense of -- Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to bringing back a decision and direction before the end of this sitting? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I meant Assembly and, again, I'll talk to the Member about this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 433-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES EMPLOYMENT
SATISFACTION SURVEY AND ACTION
PLAN

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions now are for the Minister of Finance.

So the 2023 GNWT employee engagement and satisfaction survey identified a number of sources of major dissatisfaction in GNWT workplaces and, in particular, places where dissatisfaction's been growing. So I understand that in July of last year an action plan, an employee satisfaction action plan, was released to try to address the problems. So can the Finance Minister tell us what progress is being made since this action plan was established, first, on growing concerns that GNWT workplaces are not psychologically healthy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the line of questions. This is yet one more of the suite of things that we are trying to address and trying to implement across the human resources processes within the GNWT. We have, as a part of responding to this, now implemented the national standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace across the GNWT. So it creates a very specific target by which staff can understand what their rights are and what the processes are and whereby supervisors and managers can have some toolkits available to them.

With respect to that implementation specifically training associated, Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to get some details on where we're at and what we plan to do. There is much more happening. And, really, one of the sort of critical things is that to actually get a more of an action plan on all of these items. Mr. Speaker, we have a committee formed from -- with across the public service and they are, in fact, meeting. I

believe they are scheduled to meet this month in order to start to roll this out in a more conservative fashion. Every department has been asked to come up with their own individualized approach with some specific actions. And, again, I'd be more than happy to see and to provide each of those to the Member. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another part of the survey that came out, what is the GNWT doing about the widespread concern that information does not flow effectively between senior leadership and staff? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a particular one that I read several of the individual EESSs for individual departments as well as for the GNWT as a whole, and there's often an interesting correlation between when information is not flowing and then what that can do to the overall morale in an individual place. So this is one of some particular interest to me, so -- and, again, on this one, Mr. Speaker, this is where each department, because there are often different processes and different types of hierarchies within them are expected to have those individualized plans. Again, I have certainly seen some of them but as for the individual implementation of each, I don't have that in front of me. I'm more than happy to get it and put it forward. And, frankly, this might be something that given the magnitude and size warrants a full briefing, but also I'll put it to the House here so that it can be tabled, Mr. Speaker. It's important that employees see that there's action being taken on this. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so building on that, many staff reported in the survey that they feel they don't have appropriate access to data and information in order to do their jobs effectively. So what is this government doing to ensure that confidentiality and secrecy is not our default mode, our default operating mode, to maximize the extent that the work that our staff are doing is actually being shared and made public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's quite a range of items under this. So as I mentioned, the sort of action committee that's formed from across departments, one of the very first tasks that they, in fact, have is this particular action item. It's to ensure that there are mechanisms and effective mechanisms so that employees can provide feedback and suggestions and in a way that they feel safe.

Mr. Speaker, we do still have, of course, an MOU that exists for safe disclosure that is, frankly, underutilized and so happy to have this opportunity to remind folks that that is there for staff to use should they feel it appropriate or necessary, or uncertain, then they can certainly look at that.

Mr. Speaker, there's always efforts across government of just being -- of doing a better job of communicating some of the work that departments are doing and that staff are doing, not the least of which would be an example of yesterday or in the Sessional Statement of today. And, of course, Open NWT continues to work towards having more information made available about what's happening within government. So, again, quite a number of items, Mr. Speaker. If there's more to add at this point, I suspect a follow-up is likely to be tabled on this particular answer and will add to it in this regard as well. Thank you.

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

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, finally, there was a large decrease in satisfaction particularly amongst employees of our divisional educational councils. And I've certainly heard myself from the NWT Teachers Association about growing struggles to attract and retain teachers. So how is finance working with ECE to address these concerns from educational council employees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's -- obviously, there's staff across the departments that are involved in this work but, quite specifically, there actually are individuals from the education councils who are involved, as I said, on this committee that's supposed to start moving some of these actions forward and supposed to be monitoring the success of them. The education councils are somewhat separate certainly from what may be happening in ECE, and so it was important to have them included and involved. The problems and challenges they may have could be quite different and different likely across regions. So that first action item that they're tasked with, again, the mechanisms for feedback, suggestions about how to understand what might be coming from a headquarters' vision, that is likely to be one that -- well, at least we expect is having a significant impact on education councils. So, again, they are represented on the next steps of what we're doing, and they -- that will be a big part of what's happening as a first step. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 434-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CARBON
TAXATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Canadians are pretty clear that they're fed up with the consumer carbon tax in this country. No matter who the next Prime Minister's going to be, there isn't going to be a consumer carbon tax. So my question to the Minister responsible for -- the Minister of Finance, is she ready to ditch the consumer carbon tax in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, it's -- I mean, I may have my own personal views as well but let's keep it to the processes here. And, Mr. Speaker, if or when this tax gets cancelled on a federal level, this Assembly can certainly expect to be revisiting that issue as well. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, we're often accused of being slow to move as a government. We have a bill that can be brought forward and axe the tax tomorrow. So is the Minister willing to support that legislation, Bill 3, and get rid of the carbon tax in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, until there's a change in the federal legislation, we are still obligated to comply with some form of carbon taxation and so, again, pending what may or may not be happening on a federal level or when, then we will certainly want to make sure that we're ready, and it's very helpful and handy to have something at the ready when that day comes. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, I find it unlikely that a prorogued parliament and a government paralyzed by a leadership contest is going to be ready to impose the backstop. Let's give Northerners a carbon tax holiday until the feds can sort their business out. Can the Minister commit to giving Northerners a carbon tax holiday until the federal election? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I'm not mistaken, this particular bill actually might be with committee and so not for me to comment further on here. And as far as trying to circumvent whether or not we're supposed to

comply with a federal law, again, Mr. Speaker, the only response I really can give is that we are supposed to comply with the federal law. But, again, the bill is before committee and so certainly happy to see how that process may unfold. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the committee were to be supportive -- well, that's a hypothetical.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister -- the Minister can also zero out the regs. She doesn't need legislation. She could make the regs zero dollars for the tax, zero dollars for the revenue. Is the Minister willing to do that? Again, we have a golden opportunity to give Northerners a break for a couple of months. The Minister, lower our cost of living, give Northerners a break, give them a carbon tax holiday. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have on many an occasion provided this House, both this government and the last, with my own frustrations with this carbon tax and the bit of stink I've raised with the federal Ministers responsible for putting us in the situation we are in.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, again, happy to go and look at it and if there's a way that I can appropriately and responsibly get ourselves out from underneath this tax, that's fine. It's not really a time where I necessarily want to try to stick it to the federal government or make something difficult or suggest that we're not on side with a federal piece of legislation. So, again, Mr. Speaker, it's -- this is not a tax that is well implemented in the North. We've all said that here. We just want to make sure that we are on side with the rules and regulations from the federal government and that we are doing so in a way that is -- especially particularly at this juncture with what's happening internationally that we're doing so in a way that's respectful and responsible as a member of Team Canada. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 435-20(1):
ASPEN BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because I like asking questions to the Minister of housing, I think I'm going to ask another one.

It's been taking a long time, glacial pace, to get the Aspen Building project up and running. My understanding is the doors were just kicked open the other day, and the contractors start -- finally started work on that. Can the Minister start off our discussion today with what's actually happening and when's that project anticipated to be completed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Well, good news. The contract has been awarded, as the Member knows, and we're hoping to have completion fall of 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, we all know housing opportunities don't runneth over. So in other words, there's not an oversupply in housing opportunities certainly here in the capital or even in the regions and small communities. Mr. Speaker, what was the delay specifically as to get this initiative off the ground and into the construction phase? Because the last major report we had on this was through the Premier's office where they were trying to evict the squatting tenants, as they say, so they could start construction. So can we find out what the delay was. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Mr. Speaker, with Housing NWT and our contracting process, we have to run through a number of processes and making sure that we're following policies with Housing NWT, including the delay with the encampment, securing the site, and ensuring the employees on site are safe and secure. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear the Minister's now converting to the Minister of process because it seems to come out on almost every answer that the process will be led by the process once we're convened on the process.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister be more specific because the encampment was removed, in large part, out of the way months ago. Furthermore, I think there with a lone holdout still wouldn't have caused an issue. That said, there must have been a real reason that contract had not started. And I'm asking what's the delay because ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I want to know who is responsible for the delay. Was it the contractor? Was it the GNWT? And will we be taking responsibility? I think the Premier's waving at you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little distracted here as well. But, yes, there's processes. If I'm the Minister of processes, that's fine. But, again, we have to follow process. We are government. We're a public government. So, again, Aspen Apartments, it's gone through a number of things. We have awarded a contract. The work is ongoing. The site is secure. There was an encampment issue. There's a number of things that happened. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Colleagues, our time is up for oral questions. Oral questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 8-20(1): IMPROVING FERTILITY AND FAMILY PLANNING SUPPORTS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question Number 8-20(1) asked by the Member from Great Slave on October 30th, 2024, regarding improving fertility and family planning supports in the Northwest Territories.

The Member for Great Slave asked what additional resources are required to begin tracking prenatal screenings so the GNWT can collect data on individuals struggling with infertility.

Prenatal screenings are undertaken as part of care during pregnancy so this would not be an avenue to collect data on individuals struggling with infertility. The Health and Social Services system does not explicitly track infertility because the metrics to measure infertility are complex in that it's generally accepted that difficulty conceiving becomes infertility only after a full year of actively trying to conceive. Once a person has tried to conceive for at least a year or six months if they are over 35 years of age, there are multiple procedures both partners must go through to determine if there are underlying medical conditions that could be responsible for the inability to conceive. The process of diagnosing an underlying medical condition is covered under the NWT Health Care Plan.

Where the cause of the infertility is not readily known and a resident wishes to request further investigation, the request may be submitted to the Department's Health Services Administration office. Health Services

Administration reviews the specifics of each case. This process, referred to as 'prior approval', is used in situations where the treatment may be outside the Health and Social Services system's usual referral pathway or when circumstances warrant further examination.

If no underlying medical condition is determined, the diagnosis may be infertility. Currently, there is no plan to add additional data tracking specific to infertility to the system. The focus of the Health and Social Services system remains the delivery of quality insured health services.

The Member asked what additional resources or processes are required to allow patients to self-report their usage of IVF supports for the purposes of data collection to better understand territorial demand for IVF.

There is no plan or system capacity to create a mechanism for NT residents to self-report their usage of IVF supports.

The Member asked what additional resources would allow the Department of Health and Social Services to better track the number of IVF referrals to fertility clinics provided to Northwest Territories residents each year.

Once the individual has received a diagnosis of infertility, there are no further insured services available under the NWT Health Care Plan. At this point, individuals may make private inquiries for further consultation. There are no formal referrals to IVF clinics. A primary care physician may make a recommendation, however, because IVF is not an insured service and there is no reciprocal billing or formal referral pathway to access IVF services, there is no tracking. Currently, there is no plan or system capacity to begin tracking informal recommendations to IVF clinics.

The Member asked if the Department could provide a comprehensive list of fertility-related issues which could allow for medical travel supports for residents, in comparison to other jurisdictions.

Fertility-related investigations vary from person to person and there is no comprehensive list of fertility-related issues that could allow for medical travel supports for residents. Rather, medical travel supports are available to access services related to the investigation of underlying medical conditions that may be causing infertility. The investigation of underlying medical conditions may include things like semen analysis, pelvic ultrasound, and other gynecological procedures. Once preliminary investigations are complete and the patient has experienced 12 months of infertility

or, if over 35 years of age, 6 months of infertility, a referral to a specialist may be made for further investigation of underlying medical conditions.

Medical travel supports are in place to assist NWT residents with costs associated with accessing insured health services. If the health service is insured under the NWT Health Care Plan, it is eligible for medical travel supports. In comparison to other jurisdictions, the NWT has one of the most generous medical travel benefits in Canada. For example, the Travel Assistance Program provided by the Government of British Columbia consists of a discount to ferry costs only. The Government of Ontario provides medical travel supports through the Northern Health Travel Grant that reimburses travel costs based on a rate of 41 cents per kilometer with a 100-kilometer deductible of each trip. Also, there is no coverage for any other expenses. This Grant is limited to residents in the northern part of Ontario. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 9-20(1):
STAFFING OF DOCTOR AND SPECIALIST
POSITIONS WITHIN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES AUTHORITY

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 9-20(1) asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on October 31st, 2024, regarding the staffing of doctor and specialist positions within the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document titled Physician Vacancy Information by Position.

The Physician Vacancy information provided in this document outlines all staff physician positions including family physicians and specialists, their location, whether these positions are full-time equivalent or part-time, and the vacancy status of each position type as of September 30, 2024. When positions are vacant, every effort is made to have them filled with locum physicians.

Currently, physician vacancy data does not retain length of vacancy, however, some specialist positions have been vacant for five to 10 years. These positions may be vacant due to a variety of factors which include a mix of practice intensity, pay level, and lack of interest in working in smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 10-20(1):
COMPLAINTS IN THE HEALTH CARE
SYSTEM

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question Number 10-20(1) asked by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh on November 1st, 2024, regarding complaints in the health care system.

The Member asked for the annual number of complaints made over the last five years regarding the conduct of regulated health or social services professionals, specifically nurses, employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Health and Social Services, or the Department, does not receive complaints for registered nurses, as these health professions are regulated by the College and Association of Nurses of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut which is commonly referred to as CANNN.

CANNN has provided a summary of complaints received over the last five years:

- in 2019 they received 15 complaints;
- in 2020 – 30 complaints;
- in 2021 – 43 complaints;
- in 2022 – 17 complaints; and,
- in 2023 – 34 complaints.

It is important to note that prior to 2024, CANNN did not track complaints by territory. Additionally, CANNN has informed us that most complaints received are made by colleagues and employers.

The Professional Licensing Office is the regulatory authority for health and social service professionals that are regulated by the Department of Health and Social

Services in the Northwest Territories. From January 1, 2019, to November 1, 2024, the Professional Licensing Office received 22 complaints.

Complaints received by the Professional Licensing Office are separate from complaints received by the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, who receives complaints through the Office of Client Experience. The Office of Client Experience is accessible to all residents and guests accessing care and services in the Northwest Territories, including through the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the Tlicho Community Services Agency.

The Office of Client Experience offers a single point of contact for clients seeking support in accessing and navigating the Health and Social

Services system or wishing to share their experiences.

Between January 16, 2023, to December 1, 2024, they received 1,564 requests for service; 878 of those were complaints. Approximately 60% of all requests came from residents who identified as either First Nations, Inuit, or Métis.

The Member also asked the number of Human Resource investigations that occurred because of complaints made to either the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority or to CANNN concerning the conduct of regulated health or social services professionals, for each of the last five years.

There have not been any human resource investigations conducted by the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority stemming from complaints, in the last five years. The Department does not have information on investigations conducted by CANNN.

The Member asked about the number of critical incident investigations conducted in our health system each year, over the last five years.

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has had a Quality Assurance Framework in place since 2022. Since that time, there have been a total of 17 critical incident investigations conducted:

- 4 in 2022,
- 8 in 2023, and,
- 5 in 2024.

It is important to note that several of the critical investigations may still be in progress and the type of quality assurance activity may change pending the outcome of the review process.

The Member also asked the number of Indigenous investigators involved in conducting investigations in the health system.

I am unable to provide a specific number because the Department does not collect demographic information, such as the ethnic background, of investigators conducting investigations within the health system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 11-20(1): GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question Number 11-20(1) asked by the Member for Range Lake on November 1st, 2024, regarding ground search and rescue.

The Member requested the Minister confirm how the contract for this work was awarded and what the final cost of the contract was to undertake a review of search and rescue in the NWT.

A public request for proposals was advertised with a closing date of June 30, 2021. There were no bids received; therefore, the Department of Justice proceeded with a sole source contract with MNP. The final cost of the contract was \$95, 000, which was funded by Public Safety Canada through its Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund.

The Member also requested the Department of Justice provide an official response to each recommendation of the report, including comprehensive details on the implementation of each accepted recommendation.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is not prepared to adopt the recommendations in the report at this time given current capacity and financial considerations. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document which provides a recommendation by recommendation summary. The report was a valuable exercise to have undertaken as it has improved understanding of the assets in communities and identified areas for improvement. Search and rescue in the Northwest Territories is a shared responsibility due in part to our vast land size and small remote communities with limited resources.

The GNWT will continue with its current approach for search and rescue in the NWT in partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, community governments and the many search and rescue organizations across the territory.

The Member also asked if the Department of Justice could provide statistics on the frequency of ground search and rescue operations over the last ten years.

Data collection regarding the frequency of ground search and rescue operations over the last ten years has not been consistent. Search and rescue responsibility is a patchwork of government, non-governmental organizations, military, Coast Guard and community-based resources and efforts. There is no central repository for these agencies to feed data into, and no designated organization or policy to follow regarding who collects this data.

The role of the RCMP is to provide incident command support. Search and rescue is not within the mandate of the RCMP; therefore, members do not receive this specific and highly technical training. As such, RCMP data on search and rescue operations is limited and

does not provide a full picture of all operations undertaken in the NWT. RCMP 'G' Division's internal reporting includes both land based and marine based responses as follows for the past eight years: 2017 - 52; 2018 - 48; 2019 - 50; 2020 - 20; 2021 - 27; 2022 - 21; 2023 - 23; and 2024 - 24 as of November.

Lastly, the Member asked if the Department of Justice could provide the expenses required for ground search and rescue incidents over the last ten years.

There has been no cost tracking and there is no analysis available related to overall search and rescue efforts in the Territory over the last ten years. The mandate for search and rescue is heavily reliant on community-based participation and efforts related to this area are largely undertaken on an in-kind and volunteer basis. RCMP reporting on costs they have incurred over the last five years related to ground search and rescues average \$109,372 per year.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs administers contributions under the Community-Organized Searches Policy, which may provide a contribution of up to \$10,000 to a community government. This is specific to a search for missing person or persons organized and conducted by a community government prior to, or following, a public search. Community organized searches may include recovery operations. On average, MACA receives one request per year for this funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 12-20(1): COST OF LIVING

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question Number 12-20(1) asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on November 1st, 2024, regarding the cost of living.

It is recognized that the Northwest Territories is a high-cost jurisdiction - the territory's remoteness, climate and small population mean that baseline costs for goods and services are high, compared to other jurisdictions. With this, the Government of the Northwest Territories pursues programs and measures to help alleviate cost-of-living pressures faced by Northerners where, as a public government, we are able to do so in a fiscally responsible and sustainable way.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has, over the years, implemented targeted cost of-living relief measures to support residents. Such initiatives include increasing income support benefits, enhancements to the Senior Home Heating Subsidy in 2024, as well as

maintaining the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief Program. Additionally, work has been done to enhance food security through building local agriculture and commercial fishery sectors, as well as the development of territorial meat inspection regulations to promote the availability of locally harvested and affordable food.

The GNWT also expanded the regional Cost of Living Offset, introducing geographic zones to ensure residents in areas with higher heating costs, such as the Beaufort Delta, receive greater support. This is in addition to support for emergency situations, such as regional support offered most recently in Norman Wells for home heating fuel subsidies. Other measures the Government of the Northwest Territories has taken to support Norman Wells, as well as the Sahtu and Beaufort Delta regions, include providing emergency funding to help businesses, Indigenous governments and community governments offset transportation costs for essential goods, and providing a subsidy to the NTPC to shield all residents from electricity rate increase due to higher diesel costs.

To address rising costs, the government has also indexed the minimum wage to inflation and wage changes, ensuring that residents' incomes better align with increasing expenses.

Given the inflationary pressures, including increasing costs related to food and fuel, that are beyond the government's control, it is important that the government focus on sustainable solutions rather than implementing measures like price controls or fuel tax cuts, which could harm the economy or reduce revenues needed for essential programs.

Continued advocacy and progress on strategic infrastructure projects such as enhancing communication and transportation networks, improving redundancy through initiatives like the Mackenzie Valley Highway and Taltson Hydro Expansion, and the recent completion of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk fibre line extension, remain key priorities of this government. These efforts, alongside increasing housing availability, aim to address structural factors contributing to high living costs and provide meaningful support to residents across the territory. The GNWT has been working alongside Indigenous governments to strengthen the impact of our advocacy and explore all possible investment opportunities for the North.

I will table later today additional details regarding programs and measures to support residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 238-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 303-20(1): LOCAL HOUSING
ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 239-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 306-20(1): HOUSING REPAIRS

TABLED DOCUMENT 240-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 378-20(1): HOUSING WAITLIST

TABLED DOCUMENT 241-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 405-20(1): WINTER ROAD
TABLED DOCUMENT 241-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 405-20(1): WINTER ROAD
SEASON PLANNING

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 303-20(1): Local Housing Organizations Support; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 306-20(1): Housing Repairs; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 378-20(1): Housing Waitlist; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 405-20(1): Winter Road Season Planning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: For Housing NWT. Tabling of documents. Minister of Infrastructure.

TABLED DOCUMENT 242-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 305-20(1): HEATING OIL

TABLED DOCUMENT 243-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 323-20(1): DEMPSTER
HIGHWAY AND INUVIK-TUKTOYAKTUK
HIGHWAY CONDITIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 244-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 325-20(1): PROJECT COST
OVERRUNS

TABLED DOCUMENT 245-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 343-20(1): IMPACTS OF
CLIMATE CHANGE ON WINTER AND ICE
ROADS

TABLED DOCUMENT 246-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 374-20(1): MACKENZIE VALLEY
FIBRE LINE BACKUP

TABLED DOCUMENT 247-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 421-20(1): REGULATIONS FOR
E-SCOOTERS

TABLED DOCUMENT 248-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 333-20(1): FISCAL POLICY

TABLED DOCUMENT 249-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 334-20(1): HOUSING BUDGET
ALLOCATIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 250-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 418-20(1): CELL SERVICE

TABLED DOCUMENT 251-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 423-20(1): CARBON TAX

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following ten documents: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 305-20(1): Heating Oil (Infrastructure); Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 323-20(1): Dempster Highway and Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway Conditions; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 325-20(1): Project Cost Overruns; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 343-20(1): Impacts of Climate Change on Winter and Ice Roads; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 374-20(1): Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line Backup; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 421-20(1): Regulations for E-Scooters; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 333-20(1): Fiscal Policy; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 334-20(1): Housing Budget Allocations; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 418-20(1): Cell Service; and Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 423-20(1): Carbon tax. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for Infrastructure. Tabling of documents. Mr. Premier.

TABLED DOCUMENT 252-20(1):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN
QUESTION 11-20(1): GROUND SEARCH
AND RESCUE

TABLED DOCUMENT 253-20(1):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN
QUESTION 12-20(1): COST OF LIVING

TABLED DOCUMENT 254-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 312-20(1): TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING OPTIONS AND SUPPORTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 255-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 361-20(1): HEALTH CARE
SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

TABLED DOCUMENT 256-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 413-20(1): ECONOMIC
VIABILITY OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 257-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 397-20(1): OVERDOSE-
RELATED RCMP CALLS

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following six documents: Additional Information for Written Question 11-20(1): Ground Search and Rescue; Additional Information for Written Question 12-20(1): Cost of Living; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 312-20(1): Transitional Housing Options and Supports; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 361-20(1): Health Care Sustainability Initiative; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 413-20(1): Economic Viability of Northwest Territories; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 397-20(1): Overdose-Related RCMP Calls. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 258-20(1):
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN
QUESTION 9-20(1): PHYSICIAN VACANCY
RATES

TABLED DOCUMENT 259-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 328-20(1): SPEECH LANGUAGE
PATHOLOGIST POSITIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 260-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 340-20(1): SUPPORTED LIVING
REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 261-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 342-20(1): PRIMARY CARE
REFORM

TABLED DOCUMENT 262-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 347-20(1): PHYSICIAN
WORKFORCE PLAN

TABLED DOCUMENT 263-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 348-20(1): HEALTHCARE
SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 264-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 358-20(1): PRIMARY CARE
PHYSICIANS

TABLED DOCUMENT 265-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 364-20(1): TULITA HEALTH
CENTRE PROJECT

TABLED DOCUMENT 266-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 369-20(1): DENE NATION
HEALTHCARE CONCERNS

TABLED DOCUMENT 267-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 375-20(1): UPDATES TO
DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING MEDICAL
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

TABLED DOCUMENT 268-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 376-20(1): ONLINE PHYSICIAN
BOOKING SERVICE

TABLED DOCUMENT 269-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 382-20(1): APPROVAL OF NON-
MEDICAL ESCORTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 270-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 399-20(1): DIAGNOSTIC RATES
FOR AUTISM

TABLED DOCUMENT 271-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 419-20(1): NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES AUTHORITY OPERATIONAL
CONCERNS

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following 14 documents: Additional Information for Written Question 9-20(1): Physician Vacancy Rates; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 328-20(1): Speech-language Pathologist Positions; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 340-20(1): Supported Living Review and Recommendations; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 342-20(1): Primary Care Reform;

Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 347-20(1): Physician Workforce Plan; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 348-20(1): Health Care Services; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 358-20(1): Primary Care Physicians; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 364-20(1): Tulita Health Centre Project; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 369-20(1): Dene Nation Health Care Concerns; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 375-20(1): Updates to Diagnostic Imaging Medical Communications System; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 376-20(1): Online Physician Booking Service; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 382-20(1): Approval of Non-Medical Escorts; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 399-20(1): Diagnostic Rates for Autism; and, Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 419-20(1): Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority Operational Concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services. Tabling of documents. Member from the Sahtu.

TABLED DOCUMENT 272-20(1):
DOCUMENTS COMPILED BY TOWN OF
NORMAN WELLS REGARDING THE
TOWN'S DECLARATION OF A LOCAL
STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR
HUMANITARIAN REASONS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a package of Documents Compiled by Town of Norman Wells regarding the Town's Declaration of a Local State of Emergency for Humanitarian Reasons. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 273-20(1):
REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER
ON THE COMPLAINT BY MR. DANIEL
RICHARDS (DENEZE NAKEHK'O) ABOUT
STAFFING APPEALS FROM HIRING
DECISIONS BY THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 274-20(1):
REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER
DISMISSING THE COMPLAINT BY DENEZE
NAKEHK'O ABOUT MINISTER
WAWZONEK'S HUSBAND'S OWING
SHARES IN CANADIAN UTILITIES LIMITED

Colleagues, pursuant to section 106(4) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner on the

Complaint by Daniel Richards (Deneze Nakehk'o) about Staffing Appeals from Hiring Decisions by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

As well, pursuant to section 106(4) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner Dismissing the Complaint by Deneze Nakehk'o about Minister Wawzonek's Husband's Owing Shares in Canadian Utilities Limited.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**Notice of Motion for the First Reading
of Bills**

BILL 17:
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

HON. VINCE McKAY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 7th, 2025, I will present Bill 17, Municipal and Community Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills.

Just have a quick break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: First reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 18:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PARTNERSHIP
AND BUSINESS NAMES ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 7th, 2025, I will be present Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Partnership and Business Names Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. 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: Committee Report 17-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, with the Member from the Sahtu in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee would like to consider Committee Report 17-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member. Does committee agree? Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Welcome back, Members. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Committee Report 17-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 17-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. I will go to the chair of the Standing Committee on procedure and privileges for any opening comments. Member for Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In May and July of 2024, the committee received correspondence from Speaker Thompson requesting a review of many of the rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. The committee has considered the matters referred by the Speaker and delivered its report to the House on October 29th, 2024. Individual Members may have additional comments on the motions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member from Great Slave. I will now open the floor to general comments on Committee Report 17-20(1).

Okay, seeing no further comments, the Member for Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 54-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – PRAYER (CHAPTER FOUR), CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that chapter 4 be amended by adding the words "or reflection" after each instance of the word "prayer." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member for Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 55-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – PRAYER – RULE 5.4(2), CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 5.4(2) be amended by adding the words "or reflection" after the word "prayer." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member for Great Slave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member for Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 56-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS –
RULE 5.8(2),
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 5.8(2) be amended by deleting the words "one hour" and inserting the words "24 hours." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member Great Slave. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to the Member Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – CONSOLIDATION OF RULES,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the clerk be granted authority to produce consolidations of the rules to correct spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors alongside noncontroversial changes within the rules without requiring those changes to be made by way of motion in the House. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): The motion's in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to the Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 58-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – RESTRICTIONS ON WHEN
REPLIES TO THE COMMISSIONER'S
ADDRESS CAN BE GIVEN,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 5.2(2) be amended by inserting the words "or the final sitting day prior to the dissolution of a Legislative Assembly" after the word "prorogation." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): All in favour? All opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to Member from Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 59-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – MOTIONS LOCATION ON
DAILY ORDERS,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the following rule be added to chapter 4: 4.1(5), the daily orders of business in the Assembly on Thursdays shall be:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' statements
3. Members' statements
4. Motions
5. Returns to oral questions
6. Recognition of visitors in the gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral questions
9. Written questions
10. Returns to written questions

11. Replies to Commissioner's address
 12. Petitions
 13. Reports of committees on the review of bills
 14. Reports of standing and special committees
 15. Tabling of documents
 16. Notices of motion
 17. Notices of motion for first reading of bills
 18. First reading of bills
 19. Second reading of bills
 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters
 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
 22. Third reading of bills
 23. Orders of the day
- Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member of Great Slave. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All in favour? All opposed? Any abstentions?

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to the Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 60-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – RETURNS TO ORAL
QUESTIONS,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 7.2(2)(b) be amended by adding the words "within 21 calendar days or on the first day of the next sitting if 21 calendar days lapse between sittings" after the words "return to oral questions." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member from Great Slave. The motion's in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions?

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to the Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 61-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – ORAL QUESTIONS,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 7.2(4) be amended by replacing the words "three" with "two." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion's carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to the Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 62-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION
TO ORAL QUESTIONS – RULE 7.2(6),
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 7.2(6) be amended by deleting the words "table that information in the Assembly" and replacing them with the words "file that information with the clerk." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. Motion's in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 63-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION
TO ORAL QUESTIONS – RULE 7.2(7),
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 7.2(7) be added. Under the term "oral questions", the clerk shall inform the Assembly of the follow-ups to oral questions received, deliver copies to the Members who ask the questions and have the returns printed in Hansard. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. Motion's in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All knows in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 64-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – SITTING HOURS – RULE
2.2(1),
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 2.2(1) be deleted and be replaced with the following: 2.2(1) unless otherwise ordered, the sitting hours of the Assembly shall be as follows: A, Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; B, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; C, Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those

opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 65-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – SITTING HOURS – RULE
2.2(2),
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that rule 2.2(2) be amended by replacing the words "at 6:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and at 2:00 p.m. on Fridays" with "at the designated adjournment time of a sitting day." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 66-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – MINISTERS' STATEMENTS IN
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends the following rule be added to chapter 9: 9.1(15) when Committee of the Whole is considering a Minister's statement, questions relating to the content of the statement shall only be directed to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): The motion is in order. To the motion. Minister Semmler.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I've spent a lot of time thinking about this committee recommendation. I've reflected on my experience both as a Regular Member

and as the past chair of Committee of the Whole in the 19th Assembly. I've also considered where discussions like this usually take place in the Legislative Assembly and where there are several areas where this happens.

Mr. Chair, question period: Members have the opportunity to ask any question they like during question period. Members may use this time during question period to question Ministers about the statements they have made as this happens in an appropriate setting for those discussions. Recently, there has been a change to question period reducing -- well, we just talked about it -- reducing the number of questions. Adjusting this will allow for a broader range of topics and questions to be added during question period. With this change, Members will have more opportunities to ask questions, including those related to Minister statements.

Minister statements: It's important to note that Minister statements are often related to information that's already public or information that Members have already received. This may include data that is readily accessible online and, in many cases, Members can find this information themselves without needing to discuss it during Committee of the Whole time.

Standing committee technical briefings: Standing committee are allowed to request technical briefings at any time. These briefings offer a more in-depth opportunity to ask detailed questions about a topic and debt detailed responses from technical experts. Standing committees may also request ministerial briefings in which they can discuss the political implications of discussion or a decision or a program, service, or policy issue. These briefings can be public, ensuring Members have the chance to engage thoroughly and gain deeper insight into the issue and ensuring NWT residents have the opportunity to tune in on a particular issue of interest to them.

Efficiency of Committee of the Whole time: Committee of the Whole time is limited and a valuable time resource. It is essential that we use this time efficiently. If we make this rule change, we might end up spending excessive time discussing government programs, services, policies, issues that could be better suited for other forums and settings. Logistical challenges for department officials if Ministers are required technical support from department officials under these new rules may face logistical challenges. Requests for officials to appear may be made at the last minute. Department officials are busy and already have prior commitments. Asking them to rearrange

their schedules at such short notice is unfair to staff and can disrupt their work.

Requests for guidelines and unanimous consent: If this rule change is approved, I propose that we work with rules and procedures -- or sorry, the new ADM of that committee. That's the last 19th Assembly's committee name -- to put clear guidelines in place. These guidelines would set a parameter of how these discussions can occur during Committee of the Whole ensuring that we respect the time of Members, Ministers, and staff. I would also request that an unanimous consent be considered by this committee as a requirement that we are to refer a Minister's statement into Committee of the Whole. This would ensure that all Members are on board and that the process is handled fairly. I also believe that, you know, if we were to do this, you know, this is -- this could be an opportunity, but it would be something that we would be prepared to be able to, you know, further have technical information on if we were going to bring it into Committee of the Whole. So those are just my questions and my -- to put those forward. I will be not in favour of this change. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Semmler. To the motion. Minister McKay.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be voting "no" against these two recommendations, so I thought it was important that I say a few words as I am a Member of this committee, and I felt it was only fair for me to explain myself.

As a Member and a new Member to the Legislative Assembly, we go sometimes into these meetings, and there's a lot of information, a lot of dialogue going on with all this stuff, and sometimes you don't realize the outcome of these recommendations until you've talked to experienced Members, past Members, and realizing the outcome of a recommendation like this. I believe that Members' times, employees' times are very important, and some of this work, when questioning a Minister's statement, having staff sitting around waiting for the resources to back up a Minister for witnesses and the information that goes with it, having them in the sidelines waiting for that questioning or when the Minister's statement's brought to committee, I don't think is well use of the time. So I do respect the process, and I do understand this, but as I -- again, as a new Member, as a new elected MLA, and understanding what the outcome would be now, I have a difference of opinion on the recommendation. So that's my explanation, and I just thought it would be fair to explain that to

the Members as a new Member for voting against these two recommendations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister McKay. To the Member of Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. While I appreciate that we are, you know, have differences of opinion on these -- on anything and right now on this particular proposal to change the rules, the Standing Committee on procedures and privilege -- sorry, other way around. I know, many privileges, one procedure. But carefully considered this referral, and the impetus behind it is there's a rule currently, it is 5.3(3), and it -- under Ministers' statements, and it's any Member may, without notice, move a Minister's statement into Committee of the Whole for discussion immediately following the conclusion of Ministers' statements on the day the statement was delivered in the Assembly. So what that means in plain language is if a Minister makes a statement of, well, whatever they happen to do, but let's say it's a statement of policy that Members may immediately move that statement into Committee of the Whole, which is what we're doing right now, to discuss it at length. Now, the problem with this is there's no requirement for the Minister or witnesses to engage with this, and in practice, what has happened is the statement will come down to Committee of the Whole, Members want to have, you know, a robust discussion around its contents, and it would be one side of the House talking to itself essentially. And the desire of -- the intention of this rule is to allow scrutiny around statements of public policy that are coming forward. It's an ancient rule. You know, it -- and there's -- as the Minister pointed out, my honourable colleagues across the way, as they pointed out, like, there are other ways we get at that now, through standing committee, hearings and things like that. That being said, the idea that, like, this will be a kind of defacto thing, that as soon as a Member says, hey, I want the Minister's statement moved into Committee of the Whole, then it automatically comes here, that witnesses have to be called, that it grinds government to a halt, and wastes all this staff time, like, I think those are overblown because, quite frankly, if Members started to abuse this rule, there's a vote. This thing's not automatic. So, you know, if Cabinet feels or any Members of the House feels that this rule's being abused and it's a waste of -- or an unnecessary use of House time and resources, then vote against it. That's the safeguard. So we're not changing the rules in such a way that they can be abused because there's always a check on them. And, you know, quite frankly, in Committee of the Whole,

we can -- I mean, I could move a motion right now and call a witness to come and sit here from the public service if it carries, right, but we'd still have to vote on it, and Cabinet could rightfully say, well, there's no -- you didn't give us any time or head's up so we're not going to -- we don't think that's a good idea, and we're going to vote it down.

So the problem we're trying to fix is this is kind of a vestigial -- this is the appendix. It's a vestigial part of the rules that doesn't have any practical application. So the committee's effort was to give it practical application in a way that would allow for robust debate around areas of public policy. And in this consensus government, the whole point is we talk a lot, and we talk a lot about the issues that are important to our constituents. We have more time as Members in this institution than any other parliamentarian in Canada. Maybe Nunavut is close to ours. But let's say for southern Canada, certainly we have more time than those assemblies and in parliaments. So that's the point here is we're here to talk about the issues, we're here to debate the issues. We're not here to just do government business. You know, there's two sides of this House, and at the end of the day, it's the people we serve, and our constituents want to see us have these debates. They want to see us raise issues on their behalf. They don't want us to just go through, call votes line by line on estimates documents. That's something we're going to do anyway. So I don't see what -- I don't understand the concern because, again, there's a safeguard built in here which is the up or down vote, and if this is ever used as a procedural tactic to filibuster or delay progress in this Assembly, there is a safeguard already built into it. So the effort here is to take, again, a vestigial rule that doesn't have much purpose and give it some new life and allow for more robust and engaging debate about public policy issues. And just because we hear it at standing committee, most of that work's in-camera. We can have public hearings, and people may tune in, but they also -- when we're sitting, the public's attention is on us. The media's attention is on us as well. And sometimes there is a statement of public policy that people want to talk about. And I think that we should leave that option available to the Members to decide how to use it rather than keeping it on the books as it is.

And I might add, even if we don't make this rule change today, there's nothing stopping Members from doing this, you know. And if we need to work -- if Members have this -- the desire for witnesses to be brought in, we can make those motions as well. I just think this would be a better way to do it where it follows

fidelity with our process for reviewing estimates and bills rather than having it right now where we have Ministers who make these statements and say basically, you guys can talk about it, I'm just going to sit back, maybe I'll chime in. That's not the intention here. So I really think that we're raising alarms over nothing because, again, if it's -- if there's not a desire to use the rule, then it can be voted down. But the way it stands right now, we should get rid of it or make it useful, and the committee's goal -- the committee decided to try to make it more useful, and I do support that direction. I know that my honourable friend across the way from Hay River South was on that committee as well, and he's heard these submissions as well, so I appreciate what he is saying today, but I do fundamentally disagree. I think we should always err on the side of more debate in this chamber, not less, and we should not be giving way to the voices of our constituents for the business of -- or for the machinery of government. The people should come first, not the process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member of Range Lake. To the motion. Recognizing the Member of Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess fundamentally the MLA from Range Lake has spoken quite well with respect to the issue. I mean, often we worry about convenience in the sense of, well, we could just move it along without proper to and fro of good, valuable, discussion. And I think, really, the public's being denied this opportunity by this simple change. As he mentioned, we could do it through other forces by forcing it through through an actual vote, or we can make it part of the normal business given the fact that even if we don't do it, it's still there.

The -- I honestly see that currently now it's set up as a one-sided dialogue, and I think the public is truly being ultimately denied the dynamic conversation that's important. I won't go at length or even won't repeat what he said about the nature of our politics but just having this discussion even for the consideration of it is very important.

We always have other opportunities, and if Cabinet still feels it's being threatened in the sense of time or etcetera etcetera in the process wise, they could always write to the Speaker to say we feel the spirit and the intent of what this has been -- has never lived up to why the Members asked for it or why committee supported this, and we could clearly change it back. Because the whole idea from my view is making these dynamic conversations. And it's frustrating hearing that people only say one

thing -- say something once, and then they don't hear an answer later, and then they don't know why -- you know, people get mad at us and say, well, why didn't they answer that question? Well, they already spoke. Oh, well, that doesn't make any sense.

The last thing -- and this one's going to be a little bit -- what's the word -- prickly. I think that statement about wasting resources was about the most rich insult this side of the House has heard. And it's not directed at the Member because we heard the other person say it yesterday. I mean, yesterday alone in the gallery -- or sorry, in the Great Hall, we had the Premier flanked by six Ministers -- or five Ministers, and frankly, the frustration is money's being spent in different types of processes, and we have no way of -- you're saying this is a waste of money having a witness available? The fact that tomorrow in the budget speech is we're going to see loads of deputy ministers, hundreds of thousands of dollars of brain trusts sitting there just listening to the finance Minister's speech, and all we're asking for is better witness engagement for a conversation. So I don't think the fairness of the dialogue is that we're intending to waste money. No one's criticizing you're wasting money. We're just trying to make these dynamic, fruitful conversations that we can share properly so that the public can see the value. And I'm sorry that may be sensitive, but having deputy ministers sit in the gallery for an hour, stand around for an hour, and all we're asking for is potentially one or two witnesses, even if we call upon them, is a bargain considering the value of the money that's being spent.

So, Mr. Chairman, I don't think that that's a fair statement by saying it's a waste of resources in any way. I mean, at that point, we might as well just only do Ministers' statements, and even those, I don't even know if we need to do them in here. We could shut down the whole process probably if it was all about the money. But it's not. It's -- it should be about the dialogue, the narrative of how we get there. So, Mr. Chairman, that's -- I think it's a missed opportunity for those who want this to be shut out, and it's those who decide that they don't like the process, which, you know, can extend question period, don't like this, don't like it. This is us trying to engage people in the process. So there you go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member of Yellowknife Centre. I want to remind -- the motion was mentioned -- Members, please stay focused on the motion at hand.

Moving on to the motion. The Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I certainly don't have as nearly as passionate opinion on this one as my previous colleagues but I would just say that, you know, as a Member of the committee, committee had a discussion about this, made the recommendation that we did and, you know, I was in favour of it there, and so I'll support it here and would just note that I think my experience of referrals of matters -- sorry, of Members' statements to Committee of the Whole so far is that a bunch of them have been referred. We've yet to actually debate one. It does seem like something that is not a big issue right now. And, certainly, as a Member of the committee, I would be happy to see a referral of this back if need be because the rule is being abused in some way or it's not providing the opportunity for the fulsome debate that my colleagues are speaking about. Certainly, this is something that can easily be referred back to the committee. It's definitely not the busiest committee in the Assembly, and we have the time to review such things. So I'd be happy to review it again. But I would just say, you know, committee made the recommendation. I'm in favour of following the committee's recommendation. I don't think that this one is going to cause as much trouble as some of the Ministers feel it might. And, you know, if there's any indication to me that that's starting to become the case, I'll happily be a part of reviewing it again and taking a second look at it.

But as the Member pointed out, the Member for Range Lake, I mean the rule exists already that Ministers' statements can be referred to Committee of the Whole so this is just putting some parameters around that and the debate itself that might ensue could potentially be more useful to the Assembly. I think it stands to be seen whether or not it's going to be used very much at all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Frame Lake. To the motion. Recognizing Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I was a Member of this committee as well. I will be supporting the motion. Again, I'm not going to reiterate what all my colleagues have already said. I'm shocked that we're spending this much time on it given the, you know, the other fish that we have to fry in this building. Again, the opportunity to do it has already been there as my colleagues have said. I support the motion, and I'm hoping that we can move forward and have a vote. And, again, as Member from

Frame Lake said if it gets deferred back, we'll take it back to committee (audio).

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member Inuvik Boot Lake. To the motion. Recognizing the Member Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make clear that Cabinet doesn't have a position on this. All the Cabinet Ministers may vote the same way but there is no Cabinet position; this is a -- these are motions about how this House functions, and Members are allowed to vote as they please. We all have different experiences, and it's all very procedural.

My issue with this motion is that, you know, I've -- like one of the previous speakers, I've been a Regular Member, I've been a chair of Committee of the Whole, I've been a Minister, and so I have some perspective on things. And my concern about resourcing, it's not so much external resources; it's our resources here, it's our time. We often spend late nights in this House and often we're up against the wall rushing through very important things that we actually should be discussing, that could only be discussed here in this House. Things like the budget. Things like bills when we're at second and third reading. And what this is proposing here -- and you know, we don't know what's going to happen. Maybe it's never used. But we are talking about potentially adding more into Committee of the Whole when Committee of the Whole is time that can only be used for certain things. We have a number of standing committees. I think I see five chairs in front of me right now of five different standing committees. And so there's plenty of opportunities to have these discussions in public. Ministers are happy to get in front of standing committee. You know, there's always options to get in front of standing committee. Always happy to have the public briefings on different topics. And there's no concern about us having to -- Cabinet having to answer questions in the House related to statements. That's what we do in the House. That's pretty much the whole job of being a Minister in the House, is answering questions, whether it's about bills and budgets or during question period. So I actually agree with the Member for Range Lake. Let's get rid of the rule. We're trying to do something with it. Well, we can get rid of it. I think that's probably more utility than tacking this additional rule on here and basically taking something that can be done in standing committee and transporting it -- transplanting it back into this House. So I think that's about all the notes I have here. And I will agree with the -- I'll just leave it at that. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Hay River North. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. I'm going to back up here, committee, and allow Member from Yellowknife South. Yes, please, go ahead.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the work of committee. I was relatively agnostic towards most of the recommendations and quite happy to just accept them and to -- yes, again, I'm not on the committee. It's a lot of work to go through these things. I'm glad they've done it, and I appreciate the recommendations. This one, obviously, has come up now, and there's been a lot of discussion. I have had a lot of opportunity over the last five years to sit in the witness chair during Committee of the Whole between different departments, particularly the Finance. It is actually a great opportunity for me to talk all about government because I get asked quite a range of conversations and quite a range of topics. I don't necessarily mind that, Mr. Chair, and so with respect to the idea that the rule as it exists would be one-sided. Mr. Chair, I'd probably find it pretty hard to sit on my hands if I had a room of Members making comments about a statement I had made, so I -- you know, I'm happy to try to see if the rule could work as it is, but outside of that I have to say I am swayed that this is not about deputy ministers' times. This is literally their job to come and do this stuff, and it's sometimes their job to come to this House and be in this House. I'm not worried about that. I am sometimes, though, worried that we do wind up -- and I've seen it happen repeatedly that right at the end of session -- we are rushing through things because it's taken so long to get through the items that are in COW. Not that the things that we're talking about aren't important but just that there's other places that we could have those conversations, not the least of which is question period, but also all the committee work that can happen throughout the entire year. And wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if the public had opportunities throughout the year through those processes to have a bit of meat on what is happening in this Assembly and in the government. And so I think I am swayed by that and will be voting accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member. To the question -- to the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All in favour? All opposed? Any

abstentions? The motion is carried. 7 in favour, 6 opposed.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 67-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – MINISTERS' STATEMENTS IN
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RULE
9.1(16),
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the following rule be added to chapter 9: 9.1(16) when Committee of the Whole is considering a Minister's statement, the Minister may have witnesses appear to supply information as required. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. The motion is in order. To the motion. Before I move on, Member for Hay River -- I keep getting them confused -- north, please go ahead.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: You can be forgiven, Mr. Speaker. We've only worked together five years, come on.

Or Mr. Chair, I apologize. I'm just joking, of course. That's what happens. I get a little cheeky, and I get my comeuppance.

I just have a question, actually, and I know that it's not question period, we can't refer to questions here. But "as acquired" are the last two words here, and I was wondering what that means, "supply information as required." Is it referring to the Minister -- that witnesses may be there as required or that information may be supplied as required? I'd just like some clarity on this. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Okay, thank you. I will take that comment and provide an answer to -- similar to the other processes we have with the Committee of the Whole where Ministers can bring in witnesses and witnesses are able to appear and supply information as required.

Okay, I shall go back to the motion. Okay, Member of Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for using your discretion, giving me another chance. I guess I was just -- it just, it seems

redundant, and so I was wondering if there was something that I was missing. But maybe the chair wants to address that in closing comments on this item. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Hay River North. Member of Great Slave, to the motion.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I certainly am happy to try and clarify, but I believe, Mr. Chair, what you said is accurate. It's simply to say that if witnesses appear, they can supply information at the witnesses' table. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member of Great Slave. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All in favour? Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion has been carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Back to the Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 68-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – SHORT TITLES FOR BILLS,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories bring forward legislation that includes provisions for bills to have both a technical title and a short title. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. The motion's in order. To the motion. The Member of Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And Cabinet does have a position on this one because this is a recommendation for government and so when there's a recommendation for government, we do abstain. We want to ensure that we can actually look into these issues before we put a vote to it. So we'll be abstaining. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member of Hay River North. To the Member of Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, respectfully to the Premier, I hear what he is saying clearly about a

recommendation of the government, but I would also semi disagree in saying this is a rule of the Assembly that all bills come with a name, so it's more of an Assembly process. Even though, yes, you are the stewards of the normal bills and normal process, and if we pass -- well, at the rate this Assembly is going, what, half a dozen bills in four years? I don't know. Or less. The principle being it's true 99 percent will come from the government, but I don't view this is a government direction. I see this as an administrative direction to the Assembly that all bills come forward in that manner. So I'm only disagreeing in the sense that I think it's a broader view. You know, I don't hesitate to disagree if I feel necessary or don't feel necessary, one or the other. But the truth be told is I don't view it that way. I see it strictly as a procedure matter. I would encourage a free vote from Cabinet. Unshackle the bonds. That's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you to the Member of Yellowknife Centre. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All in favour? All opposed? All abstained? Okay, motion's been carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Member of Great Slave.

COMMITTEE MOTION 69-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 17-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND
PRIVILEGES INTERIM REPORT ON THE
REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY – PRAYER,
CARRIED

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, committee, for your patience. This is the last one. I move that this committee recommends that rule 4.3(1) be amended by replacing the words "Member or the clerk" with "person." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Member of Great Slave. To the motion -- or the motion's in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Question's been called. All in favour? All opposed? Any abstentions? The motion's carried.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 17-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Committee, we have concluded consideration of the Committee Report 17-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. What is the will of committee?

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. Mahsi. We're done. Opposed? Abstentions? Motion's carried, and committee is concluded.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): I will now rise and report progress. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole. Member for the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 17-20(1) and would like to report progress with 16 motions carried, that Committee Report 17-20(1) are concluded. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. To the motion. Do I have a seconder? Moved by Deh Cho, second by the Deh Cho. All those in favour? All those -- you said nay? Let's try this again, boys and girls.

All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. ---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, February 6th, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Motions
6. Returns to Oral Questions
7. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
8. Replies to the Budget Address (Day 1 of 7)
9. Acknowledgements
10. Oral Questions
11. Written Questions
12. Returns to Written Questions
13. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
14. Petitions
15. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
16. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
17. Tabling of Documents
18. Notices of Motion
19. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
20. First Reading of Bills
21. Second Reading of Bills
22. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
23. Report of Committee of the Whole
24. Third Reading of Bills
25. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 6th, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

