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The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, February 9, 2024****Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson): Thank you very much, Annie Goose.

Before we start, I'd just like to recognize a few people in the gallery, Chief Ernest Betsina and Chief Fred Sangris. Thank you very much for attending. As well, you heard little voices here. That would happen to be my grandkids. Avy, or Orilia. Esrah. And then Roy or Rhett. And then my daughter Jacklyn and my son-in-law Brendan Whelle. So thank you and welcome.

Ministers' statements. Minister for Infrastructure.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 8-20(1):
2023-2024 WINTER ROAD CONSTRUCTION
CHALLENGES**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, destructive events like flooding and wildfire are top of mind when considering how climate change has challenged the Northwest Territories in recent years. There is, however, another climate-related challenge affecting many of the territory's residents: delayed winter and ice road construction.

Mr. Speaker, our winter road system connects nine Northwest Territories communities that are not accessible by all-season roads, with highway crews building and maintaining approximately 1,400 kilometers of winter roads, ice roads, and ice crossings every year. To put this in perspective, that is roughly the same distance as Yellowknife to Edmonton.

This road system has many benefits, including reducing the cost of living in affected communities and connecting residents to opportunities. Recognizing that delayed construction can have far-reaching consequences, the Government of the Northwest Territories is working hard to adapt

to unpredictable conditions. We remain committed to building, operating, and maintaining accessible winter roads for all residents.

The Marine Transportation Services resupply of fuel and cargo to northern communities last year brought a new set of challenges, Mr. Speaker. With the last barge of the season to Norman Wells unable to sail due to wildfire delays, much needed fuel and cargo had to get to its destination in other ways. Last year, the total volume of petroleum products delivered by winter roads to six Northwest Territories communities totaled close to 5.2 million litres. This year, we are adding approximately 2 million more litres of jet fuel, as well as extra cargo, doubling the number of trucks on the road to 400. Mr. Speaker, knowing there would be a surge in traffic this year, the Department of Infrastructure has put several measures in place to ensure the safety of travelers as well as the integrity of the highway system.

The Mackenzie Valley Winter Road opened to heavy traffic on January 22nd and is the lifeline to the communities by transport truck. The highway itself has been widened where possible and additional signage has been placed along the route, including kilometre markers and electronic signs reminding drivers of safe driving requirements. Maintenance, patrols, and checkpoints have been increased and we are working with local bylaw and RCMP officers to join in those efforts where possible. We have expanded our maintenance activities, including additional flooding, and having more equipment available on all zones of the road to address maintenance issues in a timely manner. Our highway maintenance vehicles have also been retrofitted with mobile Starlink satellite dishes to improve communication and incident response, and we have staged equipment at critical winter road locations to assist as required.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to encourage road users across the territory to check out the Department of Infrastructure's website which has helpful tips and resources for safe winter driving. Materials targeted at commercial drivers are also being handed out at weigh stations and check stops and have been

provided to industry to share with commercial drivers. The safety of winter travelers is our number 1 priority, and we want to equip road users with the information to make safe choices.

Finally, I need to stress that driving on a closed highway can be extremely dangerous and is an offence under the Public Highways Act and can also constitute an offence under the Criminal Code. Road closures and barricades are put in place to prevent access to a potentially hazardous route and are used to keep road users safe and to reduce the risk faced by maintenance crews. I recognize that closures can be frustrating and inconvenient, but they are not put in place if not required or urgent.

Mr. Speaker, the climate-related impacts we have seen over the past year have shortened our resupply season and challenged winter road construction, further highlighting the need for all-season roads. Crews are working diligently to overcome these challenges, and I want to thank them for their continued dedication. I also want to thank our partners in industry, community governments, and law enforcement for supporting all of these efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 54-20(1): SUPREME COURT OF CANADA RULING REGARDING THE INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE ACT

MR. RODGERS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Supreme Court of Canada released its long-awaited decision on Indigenous child welfare. As many in this Chamber know, the previous GNWT governments saw fit to challenge in court the rights of Indigenous governments to take care of their own children.

Mr. Speaker, despite being encouraged by lawyers in the region to withdraw their challenge, the previous government persisted, continuing that fight at the Supreme Court. Today, the GNWT lost that fight, and rightly so. Today, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the right of Indigenous governments to care for their own children.

Mr. Speaker, I campaigned on the importance of this decision and the need to ensure GNWT worked with Indigenous governments and not against them. With this direction of the Supreme Court today, I want to thank all those

who worked so hard to make this possible, including lawyers in my own riding. I also want to commit to ensuring that we, as a responsible government, as a government committed to self-determination and the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples in this territory, do everything possible to enable and support Indigenous governments and Indigenous children as we move together towards meaningful reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, this Court has spoken. The previous government has lost and a brighter future for Indigenous children in Inuvik and the NWT and across all Canada is now something we must work towards. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 55-20(1): MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, housing is a huge concern in all NWT communities. Stable and secure homes is the staple of healthy families.

Mr. Speaker, we have recognized a national housing crisis, this followed by a national housing strategy, and most importantly, federal resources made available directly to Indigenous governments to address this crisis. Mr. Speaker, this collaboration is genuine and truly a model to jointly address the core need for homes on the ground, a first and foremost totally true objective.

Mr. Speaker, in our efforts in providing NWT home security brings a variety of essential planning. Some communities have a one-seasonal window approach, which adds to more emphasis on planning. Mr. Speaker, when I reflect in previous Assembly housing assessments and now homes on the ground, addressing the NWT crisis is a both government to government collaboration; one, truly a motivation for this government to move forward. Mr. Speaker, at a later date, I will have questions for the Housing NWT minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 56-20(1): CHILD AND YOUTH COUNSELLOR INITIATIVE

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Department of Education, Culture and Employment released an evaluation report done by an independent

third party on the child and youth counsellor initiative, containing 42 recommendations along with the government's response to those recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, mental health supports for our children and youth are perhaps one of the best possible investments this government can make in our future. Mental health is absolutely fundamental to physical health, prevention of addictions, educational success, development of a healthy workforce and strengthening of self-government. We simply cannot afford to mess this up.

What was transformational about the child and youth counsellor initiative, which began to be rolled out in 2018, was the integration of clinical counsellors into the school environment. So instead of having to get the family to make an appointment and take the kid out of school, the child or youth would have direct access to the counsellor right in the school making preventative and ongoing interventions much more possible.

To quote the evaluation report, having CYC services available in the schools has not only improved access but has also increased the identification of mental health disorders that previously would have gone unnoticed and untreated in children and youth. And I believe this kind of integrated model we should be eventually be extending into lots of areas, bringing counsellors and nurses into the schools, into workplaces, into outreach vans assisting people on the street. But that kind of integration requires some tricky collaboration between several departments and agencies, including HSS, the education authorities, schools. And there were challenges to the extent that the very first recommendation in the evaluation was to hire an external facilitator to help sort out the disagreements between HSS and ECC.

Before the evaluation was even finished, the government moved ahead with a major overhaul last fall. My main concern is that the departments of ECE and HSS seem to have made changes to this program that have resulted in a loss of service to children and youth before anyone was ready to fill that gap. I am also concerned that the department seemed to have made changes based primarily on adult feedback before they got feedback from children and youth. And from reading the report, it appears that students and parents were almost unanimous in their praise of the CYC program and their counsellors. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I understand that there were problems with vacancies and if counsellors rotating through small communities were not able to visit frequently enough, it would make sense to replace these with support people who can be hired locally and the evaluation does in fact provide recommendations on how that can be structured. My concern is that we let go of counsellors who were doing valuable work and instead started spending money on classroom tools, awareness materials, posters, or worse that funding is sitting idle because plans were not yet in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 57-20(1):
NEED FOR A SENIORS' SECRETARIAT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the tabled report called GNWT Seniors Strategic Framework sets out a lot of information provided by the department and the government on how to help seniors age in place.

Mr. Speaker, seniors are very important to me, as they are to everyone on this side of the House. I can't speak to that side of the House because they deleted the role for a Minister responsible for seniors but hopefully one day they'll realize their mistake. And it's not too late to change it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors will tell me different things, and they certainly tell me the same things they tell my community colleagues. So whether you live in Gameti or Wekweeti, they'll tell you about their housing challenges and they'll talk about the lack of community supports to allow them to live there. This is a problem no different here in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, if you were in Deline or Tulita, you have transportation problems as a senior and elder, and those things need to be faced. Mr. Speaker, whether you live in Aklavik, McFoo, or even Tsiigehtchic, you have cultural issues there where we need to keep our seniors alive and connected into our community, Mr. Speaker. Let alone health care and support services that we need to get, whether you live in Inuvik or any other place throughout our great territory, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, knowing Wrigley very well as I do, and certainly as you do, I mean I can appreciate the fact that, you know, accessibility and communication and feeling part of the community is just as integral as anything else is good services. Mr. Speaker, the importance

that I'm raising here is we cannot ignore the needs of our seniors in any way.

What's important about this report on one of the last statements on the last page, it points out that seniors need focused integrated. Interdepartmental intercoordination. They need a coordinator for their initiatives, Mr. Speaker. So, again, whether you live -- you live in Deline, you live in Dettah, you live in Inuvik, you live in Tsiigehtchic, we need a central point for people to work, Mr. Speaker, and if you certainly live in Yellowknife you demand and need these services.

Every one of us on this side of the House deserves the respect for our seniors and elders, and I hope the Premier's listening so he'll take back to his Cabinet colleagues the need and necessity and recognition of the problem of deleting the integral important piece of what it represents, a seniors' secretariat that is fully funded to support our seniors in need because we care about them deeply and sincerely, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Before we go on to Members' statements, Members, I'd like to welcome the NWT Career Centre CDETNO represented by coordinator Andrea Fowler and participants at the youth employment and skills strategy program. This is a ninth group. Their goal is to assist youth to reach their potential and obtain the skills, tools, and resources to discover or continue along their career paths. So, please, welcome them here today. Thank you.

Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 58-20(1):
EXPANSION OF SNARE HYDRO SYSTEM
TO WHATI

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community of Whati has been facing continuous power outages. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation acknowledges these outages and have listed Whati as a level 1 emergency. NTPC has acknowledged that outages is largely due to aging infrastructure. There is old equipment being used to generate power and to distribute power in the community.

Mr. Speaker, the road to Whati opened in 2021. The NICO Mine project is underway. Whati has beautiful tourism attractions and could be a community ripe for economic development. But in order to develop Whati, a stable consistent supply of power is needed.

The government has identified the extension of Snare hydro distribution system to Whati as a solution to reduce the cost of power and a renewable energy solution. The extension of the Snare hydro system, however, is not estimated to be complete within the life of this Assembly. According to the capital estimate, this project will be completed in 2027 and 2028.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Whati is listed as an emergency level 1 community right now. Something more needs to be done to address the energy needs of Whati.

Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho Highway was one of the first P3 projects in North America with an Indigenous government holding a cash-funded equity stake. It won a national award for innovations and excellence in public/private partnership from the Canadian council for public/private partnerships. Mr. Speaker, we don't have to reinvent things. There are already models of successful major projects in the Tlicho.

Can the GNWT be creative and innovative to secure the funding needed to prioritize and fast track the implementation of the Snare hydro system to support the residents of Whati? I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 59-20(1):
LUTSELK'E WINTER ROAD ACCESS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recently returned from a constituency meeting in Lutselk'e. And once again, my people there want me to talk about the high cost of living. They are just under 200 kilometres away from the rest of us here in Yellowknife but they pay twice as much as we do on groceries. It's almost like taxing the community just for living on their own land. It's only the community was just accessing by barge or plane. The people there would be under less financial pressure. Lutselk'e could use more barges, more flights to relieve the stress, but what would really take the pressure off the community is a road. With even just a winter road, goods, fuel could be transported into Lutselk'e by truck for several months; a far cheaper and more frequent option than by plane or barge. Building supplies like lumber could also be more accessible transported into the community with road access which could ready aid the construction of a new building and renovation of older houses.

Lutselk'e sees more development on the horizon, and the projects we have in the works

could also lower the cost. With the Northwest Territories hoping international investments, a winter road would make Lutselk'e -- would be far more accessible to tourists from around the world and infrastructure would attract more development. More and more tourists will experience Dene culture and land, and businesses want to be part of the opportunity the region holds.

An ice road of this size is proven possible. In 2021, an ice road was constructed from the Nechalacho Mine projects from Dettah to Thor Lake. If expanded by another hundred kilometres, it could reach Lutselk'e, giving a vital link to the rest of the world.

Lutselk'e needs to become more accessible so that people can thrive. I know the cost of living and economic development are topics for this government, so I look forward to hear what the answers are when I ask the Minister for MACA on the ice road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 60-20(1):
HOUSING IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to reflect back on my childhood years before the Housing NWT started building public housing units in our communities. We were a strong and independent people, as were all the Indigenous communities within the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when I was four years old, my dad became sick and he was sent to Edmonton where he stayed for a few years and ever since he was confined to a wheelchair until his passing a few years ago. The responsibility of raising seven children fell upon my mother, and two of -- myself and two of my sisters were not of school age so we were home. And my Mom had to get three of my dad's dogs and we went across the river, she climbed a steep embankment and cut down some firewood and threw it down to us and we loaded it in the sleigh and went back home. And as we went home, she started cooking lunch for my other older siblings. And after lunch, we would get the same three dogs and go down to the river and get ice for water for the day's use of cooking and cleaning.

Mr. Speaker, this is just an example of how strong and independent we were as a people before Housing NWT came into our communities and stripped us of our independence.

Shortly thereafter, we moved into one of the new housing units where Housing NWT stated that our lives would become more easier. Today we are in a crisis with housing as is the rest of the NWT residents. Mind you, my sister still lives in and occupies one of the units that we moved into 50 years ago. With a few Band-Aid solutions, many of the homes within my community and my riding are in poor conditions. These units are an eyesore to the visitors who come to visit our beloved community.

Mr. Speaker, the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories need their strength and independence returned to them. Only the Indigenous people of the NWT know their specific needs. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Yes, Housing NWT staff who sits in their office in Yellowknife and the regional centres do not know the real conditions of these 50-year-old units. Mr. Speaker, it's time to give this responsibility back to the communities and have our own people correct the mistakes that the Housing NWT has imposed on the Indigenous peoples of my community, my riding, and my Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 61-20(1):
2023 WILDFIRE SEASON

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the heels of a global pandemic and devastating floods, an unprecedented wildfire season forced more than two-thirds of the Northwest Territories to evacuate. The roads were packed with cars while the largest airlift in Canadian history brought residents to cities some had never stepped foot in before. As Northerners, we are still coping with this collective trauma. In this House, we must also cope with the public's loss in faith in our governments and institutions. Communication leading up to and during the crisis was confusing and contradictory. Cooperation between levels of governments was strained. Indigenous governments were left out of the decision-making process, and support for evacuees was slow to roll out.

Thankfully, though, there was much to be proud of as well. We were protected by brave firefighters, some from around the world. Dedicated essential workers stayed late or stayed out to maintain order. Volunteers stood

up to support those on the frontline. Businesses and non-profits worked to keep evacuees as comfortable as possible and their homes safe while they were away. This crisis brought out the best in us as Northerners, and there are real heroes amongst us, and we recognize their valor in our darkest times.

Fire seasons decades ago foreshadowed this crisis yet plans to cope with an emergency of this scale did not materialize after the fact. Thankfully, we now have the opportunity to learn from our mistakes and develop more comprehensive strategies for future fire seasons.

I thank all who showed such dedication to public service and public safety during the crisis, to the public for enduring such a traumatic moment in our shared history and hope to honour their dedication and perseverance by better preparing this territory for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 62-20(1):
CHIEF JOHN BAPTISTE CAZON BUILDING

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Good morning, Members of the Legislative Assembly. On Friday, January 26th, I had the opportunity to attend the name of the ECE building in Fort Simpson. I would like to thank the regional superintendent for the Department of Infrastructure in the Deh Cho region for organizing and officiating this event.

The event started an opening blessing as I know, a blessing is a beautiful way to invite positive energy and protection in the new space. I can tell you it was a powerful and heartfelt blessing for the building and its inhabitants. I will ask the blessing to be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard. "Dear God, we ask for your blessings upon this new building and all who enter it. May this space be filled with love, joy, and peace. May it be a place of safety and protection for all who dwell within its walls. We pray that this building be a source of inspiration, creativity, and growth for its inhabitants. May it be a space where dreams are realized and goals are achieved. We ask that you bless the foundation of this building and all the materials used in its construction. May they be strong, sturdy, and resilient. We also ask that you bless the workers who helped build this space and their families. Finally, we ask that you bless all who enter this building, whether they come to work, play, or seek refuge. May they be surrounded by your love and light and may this space be a sanctuary for their souls. We offer this prayer in

gratitude and humility, knowing that all good things come from you. We ask for your continued blessings and guidance as we begin this new chapter in our lives. Amen.

We were fortunate to have the Deh Cho First Nations grand chief and the mayor provide kind words about the former Chief John Baptiste Cazon. The grand chief spoke about how well chief Cazon was liked by other chiefs up and down the valley. Not only was his wisdom respected but so was his drumming and tea dances that he would do after meetings and celebrations. As well, he shared words from his great-grandson who is soon to be a lawyer. I will ask that message to be deemed as read and printed into the Hansard.

As we know, Baptiste Cazon was chief from 1955 to 1974, longest serving chief of our Nation in consecutive years. Baptiste loved his Nation, his community, and his family and friends. This love and passion for the people and land made him a fierce advocate for our rights, culture, practices, and preservation of these lands. This advocacy was shown through his many community travels in the Deh Cho and Northwest Territories, his advocacy during the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline years when Thomas Berger was involved, his meetings with then former Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chretien, and his requested assistance to help Nick Sibbeston run for Northwest Territorial Council in 1970 because of the support he had from the Dene people. These are just some of the many things Baptiste did during his life. Baptiste loved his trap lines, his cabins, living a traditional life, and importantly his family and people. May the naming of this building uphold his legacy in this Nation and our Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho.

The mayor spoke about the family man and how proud he was of his family. He believed in strong families, education and working hard every day. As well, he spoke about how he welcomed son- and daughter-in-laws to the family and shared with them his teachings.

The building is now named Chief John Baptiste Cazon Building honouring the respect of the Fort Simpson elder and chief of the Liidlii Kue First Nation from 1955 to 1974. He passed away on July 31, 2004. Two of his sons did the unveiling of the new building sign.

The last part of my Member's statement, I would ask that it be deemed as read and printed into the Hansard.

In closing the ceremony, an explanation was provided on how the Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes individuals that reflect the importance of the area, people,

culture, and customs. Naming of GNWT buildings is something relatively new and goes through a public process. Proposals are put forward, then reviewed and recommended by the NWT Honours Advisory Council.

Mr. Clerk, the three recognized are the great great -- great-grandkids of Baptiste. The son-in-law was also the grandson of the great Baptiste Cazon, so. Thank you very much.

Members' statements. Member from Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 63-20(1): HOUSING CRISIS

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I almost hesitated to give this statement today on this subject because it seems so obvious that it almost goes without saying, but I wanted to speak to it ahead of our priority setting session because I have a feeling it is going to be the number 1 priority of this Assembly, and it is definitely the number 1 priority for me.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a housing crisis. I think that everybody in this House is aware of that. Most of the public are aware of it. It was the number 1 election issue in my riding. And I think it was probably the number 1 election issue across the territory. I am strongly of the opinion that we need to prioritize housing, and we need to attach a budget to that priority which will result in actually moving the needle.

We need a long-term plan which lays out how we are going to solve this crisis. It's not going to happen completely in the term of this Assembly; I think that's fair and reasonable to state. But I think that we need to state how long it's going to take, how much resources it's going to take, and how we're going to get there and be very clear about what our plan is for how we're going to get there with a timeline for doing so, with an estimate of how much it's going to cost, no matter how big that is, and seek funding to fund that in the long-term.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that partnerships are going to be important in solving this crisis. This is not something that the GNWT is going to do on their own. We need to take a wholistic approach to this. We need to involve Indigenous governments, NGOs. Private industry is going to play a role. So we can't and shouldn't plan to do this alone.

And with the last remaining time I have, I just want to speak to my personal experience with this, Mr. Speaker.

I served on the Yellowknife Housing Authority for several years prior to coming here, and operations and maintenance are a big part of this. I toured some of Yellowknife's most direly in need of maintenance buildings, and the situation is appalling, Mr. Speaker. It really is. And I know I don't need to say this to the housing Minister. I know the community that she comes from has extremely challenging circumstances as well, but I would just say -- Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous could be sent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I wanted to say is when I was on the authority, we didn't quite get it together but we were hoping to do a tour of some of the facilities that I'm speaking to here with the Minister, and honestly I think the media should be along for that tour as well. I think people really should see firsthand the situation that we're dealing with so that they understand why this needs to be a priority and how serious of an issue we're facing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the Yellowknives Dene First Nation Chief Ernest Betsina, Chief Fred Sangris, and the CEO for YKDFN Gaurav Kaushish. I just want to welcome you. Mahsi. And everybody else in the gallery. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Recognition of visitors in the galley. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to echo the same sentiments of my good colleague for the riding of Tu Nedhe-Willideh by recognizing the two chiefs, Ernest Betsina for N'dilo and Chief Fred Sangris for the -- oh, I'm sorry, I got them backwards; my apologies. I wrote it down wrong. But the two chiefs in the Akaitcho territory in Yellowknife here. I'll just move on; my apologies.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Chief Ernest Betsina and Chief Fred Sangris and also recognize that we are -- our proceedings today take place on Chief Drygeese territory. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Range Lake. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would like to acknowledge the Yellowknife Dene First Nation chiefs as well, Ernest Betsina and Fred Sangris. And I would like to acknowledge our young Tlicho citizens sitting in the gallery, Margo Mantla. She is a Tlicho citizen living in Yellowknife. And I would also like to acknowledge Jonas Lafferty of Behchoko and Mary Rose Sundberg, Tlicho interpreters. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognitions of visitors in the gallery. Premier -- or from Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the chiefs as the Premier, so I'd like to recognize Chief Betsina and Chief Sangris. We always appreciate when they show up in the House, and I look forward to continuing to work with them over the next four years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Recognitions of visitors in the gallery. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Chief Betsina and Chief Sangris. Ernest Betsina and I had some associate meetings in the past, and I look forward to working with him during this term. And also considering it's Friday, I'd like to acknowledge the staff behind the scenes that have helped our proceedings for the last several days. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Member from the Mackenzie Delta.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to acknowledge Mr. Ernest Betsina. I went to high school with Ernest, played some basketball with him. So it's good to see him again. Welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Member from Kam Lake.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge and welcome and thank for his very hard work this week, page Maddox Hutchinson who's joined us here for the week and helped us pass notes and fill our water. It's very much appreciated. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery.

Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MR. NERYSOO: Acknowledgements -- sorry, I was referring to acknowledgements, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. You actually need to get it into us before so we can do it. Sorry, I should have explained that process to you before. My apologies.

Oral questions. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 38-20(1):

HOUSING NEEDS IN MACKENZIE DELTA COMMUNITIES

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are in regards to my statement earlier to the housing Minister.

Does the department have any plans to involve the communities in future initiatives for housing needs of our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Mackenzie Delta. Minister responsible for NWT Housing -- Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Through the housing renewal process over the last couple of years, Housing NWT has engaged with Indigenous governments and communities to talk about housing plans in developing community housing plans with the communities to get input on housing in their community over the next number of years. It could be decades. So this is an opportunity for the Mackenzie Delta riding to be engaged with community housing plans through your communities. I'd be happy to discuss that further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know specifically that in my riding, the leaders and other concerned residents would like to meet with the Minister and her staff. Would the Minister commit to visiting our communities to meet with the members of my riding to discuss possible solutions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I'd be happy to visit your riding and meet with constituents to talk about housing issues. And I know we discussed a visit in April, and I would look forward to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 39-20(1):
MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement here, my question today is addressed to the Housing NWT Minister.

Homes on the ground are a stakeholder approach, all local and government approach. This can be seen by the Deline government with 29 homes currently under construction and some made available with Tulita having an eight modular subdivision constructed. Today, I will ask the Minister to share some of the federal contributions that have come to the NWT Indigenous public governments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for the Sahtu. Minister for Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. The Member was able to provide some of the information ahead of time so I was able to collect some information for the Member.

Since 2021, and based on publicly-available information, Housing NWT estimates that the Government of Canada has committed more than \$400 million in direct funding to NWT Indigenous governments for their housing and infrastructure priorities over the timeframe for the next seven years. The details of these funding amounts are subject to bilateral agreements between the Government of Canada and the receiving Indigenous government. This amount does not include application-based funds from the federal government, which to NWT Indigenous governments have been very successful in accessing for specific projects. A very rough estimate of funding provided to Indigenous governments and NGOs out of the co-investment and Rapid Housing funding initiatives is over \$130 million, in addition to the \$400 million that I mentioned previously. We recently saw an example of this January when the federal government announced almost \$19 million in funding from its Rapid Housing initiative for five NWT Indigenous governments.

Since 2021, Housing NWT has received \$25.5 million from CMHC and a further \$55 million from CIRNAC that assisted in resourcing a hundred new public housing units being delivered outside the city of Yellowknife. In addition, Housing NWT received a further \$30 million in 2023-2024 from CIRNAC under the budget 2022 that is being used to support the replacement of 17 aged public housing units and various modernization and improvement

projects throughout the North. Most recently, in partnership with the city of Yellowknife, Housing NWT received under the CMHC Rapid Housing Program a further \$5 million to renovate Aspen Apartments for use of public housing program and a further \$20.8 million to assist with the delivery of a new public housing 50-plex in Yellowknife. Housing NWT received \$1.3 million under the federal government's Reaching Home Program to support the purchase and renovation of a transitional housing project in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks for that lengthy detailed reply there. It's very overwhelming to see the amount of millions of dollars and resources come into our 44K population here and the significance of this is the benefits of construction, which is another joint contribution there for land tenures and so on.

My next question there, Mr. Speaker, now that this money has come in, what roles and responsibilities would Housing NWT offer to these recipients of this contribution? Mahsi.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the housing renewal process, we've established a housing forum. So we meet with Indigenous governments. We talk about various subject matters, and housing is the key topic with this housing forum. So it gives us an opportunity to talk about partnerships and how we can do things better. Instead of working separately, we work in partnership.

So I've advanced, and I've talked to Housing NWT staff, saying we work in partnership, we support each other, we provide them what resources we can provide them. If it's architectural, if it's engineering, if it's land tenure, let's talk about what we can do together to get homes on the ground in the communities. That's the most important thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that the housing Minister is sharing the table saw and the Swede saw and the skill saw with the Indigenous partners. That leads me into my third question here.

Will the Minister of Housing NWT commit to meeting with me and discuss two issues: Number 1 is the last government SSI MOU and trades training, a component within the MOU? Mahsi.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On my way up the Mackenzie Delta, I'll stop by the Sahtu and sit down and have this discussion. But absolutely, trades and training are really important throughout the North. We

need more apprentices. We need more journey people. We need more people with capacity to maintain homes throughout the North so more than willing to have this discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 40-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES CARBON TAXATION

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, although I'm sure she's tired of repeating herself, can the Minister of Finance please briefly explain to the House why the GNWT's carbon tax legislative regime is the better option for Northerners? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Great Slave. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to be brief. Mr. Speaker, it maintains flexibility in how the revenues are used by the Government of the Northwest Territories, in short. So much as I had feared, the federal government, of course, once again changed their goalposts first back in April, which is what led to some lengthy discussions in this House in the last Assembly, and then again in the fall. And they changed those goalposts based on political priorities. They're set from Ottawa and by a different government.

By hanging on to the system by administering it ourselves here, we were able to do the tiered approach which means that rather than allowing the calculation of what amount should go to residents done elsewhere, it is done by our government and it's done to align and accord with the amounts of tax being paid by residents in different regions. It allowed us to use 10 percent of our net revenue and share that directly with communities, which is something unique to our system. And it's also allowed us to maintain a system that recognizes how our industrial system works, how our industrial part of the economy works; namely, the three operating diamond mines, which really are the revenue generating source here, yet they will be probably submitting less under the federal system but have a significant administrative burden and any incoming mines that we might have would not see the benefits of that system. So maintaining that control here, Mr. Speaker, has allowed us to ensure residents are seeing their carbon tax burden offset while also ensuring that we have an economy for tomorrow. Thank you.

MS. REID: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that answer. As I'm sure the Minister's aware that constituents are confused. My constituents who thought they were making greener, smarter moves by switching to propane are, to put it mildly, frustrated by this carbon tax exemption for just diesel-based home heating fuel.

So my question to the Minister is will she commit to seeking exemptions from the federal government for all home heating options in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think people across Canada expressed frustration at the decision to exempt only one form of heating fuel and not others that are arguably greener. And, again, this is where I suggest that that's a question to take up with the federal government, not us. We find ourselves operating within that system. And where I'd like us to get to, Mr. Speaker, while we want to ensure that residents of the North, where our alternatives can sometimes be costly and few between, aren't facing an unnecessary carbon tax burden. We want to ensure that our offset payments continue to cover the anticipated average amount of carbon tax no matter the heating fuel. We want to get to a place where we're providing more options and encouraging people to use those options so they can get to a place where they're using greener options for heating, whether it's propane or LNG or whether it's biomass, but also looking at their transportation use. So what are we doing in terms of finding greener and cleaner ways? Transportation is one of the biggest sources of carbon tax because it's one of the biggest sources of GHG emissions. So, again, certainly don't want to discourage people from doing that. Long term, that's how we're going to see bigger savings. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 41-20(1):
LUTSELK'E ROAD ACCESS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is probably the second time I'm bringing this issue up for the winter road for the community of Lutselk'e. And I'd like to see if we can try to get Cabinet on side to finally realize the high cost of living in Lutselk'e is very important to people in the community. So my question to the Minister is will the government commit to building a winter road from Yellowknife to Lutselk'e? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was in the House over the last Assembly when this issue came up. I want to start by acknowledging it is a challenge with a community that is isolated and not on the winter road resupply right now. The safety of residents as they travel remains top priority for everyone and building a winter road across Great Slave Lake certainly is not without some significant challenges. And while I acknowledge there was a road out in that region, as the Member noted, it would be an additional 100 kilometres to actually make that accessible and with no guarantees as to what that would do. So at this point, looking at a winter road across Great Slave is not something that's in our capital plans, but I certainly would like to continue to have conversations to make sure that resupply does happen in a timely and reliable fashion to this community. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I brought this up a few times already, and I still haven't got no correspondence back to me in writing on this subject. You know, we got a budget of \$2.2 billion, and my constituency of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh we get less than half a percent of that.

And so my question is will this government commit to building an all-season road to Lutselk'e connecting it through Hay River; is that possible? Right now I don't see any plans from this government to address the high cost of living in Lutselk'e. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any studies or plans that would propose an all-season road to Lutselk'e. But I do want to address the other comment that there's been nothing in writing. I'm new to this portfolio, and I'll certainly commit to making sure that we do provide the information that I have available regarding what studies have been done, what efforts have been made, and some of the challenges that are faced so that there's a thorough understanding of that. But from that point on, we can hopefully get to a conversation about what is possible in these next four years, and I'm committed to getting that to this Member. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, things we take for granted in bringing in supplies into Lutselk'e, for example just a bed is about \$600. And you know, small communities do matter, and I kept saying that in the last Assembly, and I'll say it again in this Assembly. Will the government commit to more -- to getting more barges or air flights to the community of Lutselk'e to help reduce the cost of living? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again let me take a look at what number of barges we have going in, when or if they were missed, and what we need to do to make sure that that doesn't happen again. I certainly can't promise that low water levels won't necessarily interrupt the barging season again but what we can do, and I know that this was something that I saw discussed from afar last time, was ensuring that the timing and the planning around when those barges arrive aligns in accordance with what the community needs and the timing of their resupply. So I certainly will commit to sitting down to make sure that that coordination happens early and that we all do our best and hopefully Mother Nature will comply. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about, again, small communities really do matter. I hear from my constituency on the high cost of living. What is this government going to do to help lower the cost of living in the community of Lutselk'e? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No hesitancy required. Bringing down the cost of living is something that, I think as perhaps Minister of Finance as well as infrastructure, I'm certainly alive to and keen to see happen for our residents across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, that is a bigger, much bigger conversation. It's not only about corridors for roads, barges, ensuring our airlines can land in small communities. That is something top of mind for me. Perhaps focusing on my transportation portfolio, which I think is where the Member's at, I can say I'm at a transportation Ministers meeting next week. I'm actually the co-chair with the federal government, and I can assure you I've been working to get some discussions going between other colleagues attending because I want to put the issues that are relevant to northern communities, northern small communities, rural communities, top of mind for all the Ministers that are there to hopefully bring down costs through some better options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 42-20(1):
SUPREME COURT OF CANADA RULING
REGARDING THE INDIGENOUS CHILD
WELFARE ACT

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to my statement this morning on the Supreme Court of Canada decision on Indigenous child welfare, I'd like to ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier's plan to ensure the principles of the Supreme Court's decisions are upheld?

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were happy to see that the decision was in line with the principles that we are already upholding, so we will continue to do what we're doing. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, given the statement that the Premier just made, I only have one other question, Mr. Speaker. Will this government be issuing an apology to the Indigenous government it fought in court?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This decision was made by me as Attorney General in the last government. The Attorney General makes decisions in a way that is apolitical. There is no desire to put a political lens on these decisions. What was in question was a very specific legal question. It wasn't -- we weren't fighting any Indigenous governments. We weren't on side with the provinces. The reason that I intervened in that case is because there was specific language in that federal Act that we needed clarity on in relation to how it interacted with the NWT Act. That's not an issue for any of the provinces. They're not established by the NWT Act. They're established by the Constitution. What the decision looks like at first glance, and it's only been a few hours since it was released, is that the territory is essentially on the same footing as a province. So we wanted the Act to continue. The first line of the submission was to the -- to the Supreme Court was that the Attorney General affirms the inherent right of self-governments of Indigenous peoples and their inherent jurisdiction in relation to child and family services. So that's continuing as well. The court reaffirmed that.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we were seeking is clarity. This wasn't a fight that we were getting engaged in. It wasn't an attempt to hold on to power. We need a predictable and workable legal system in the Northwest Territories, and we were looking for clarity on that.

Politics does not come into decisions of the Attorney General. I recall not that long ago there was a federal case where the Prime Minister was accused of trying to interfere with the decision of the Attorney General, and that didn't work out well. So I keep the political side and the Attorney General side separate. That's the way that it should be. And I just encourage all Members to look at the decision, understand what the -- what we put forward as a government and not politicalize this and try to turn it into something that it's not, because it is not what it has been portrayed in this House on a number of occasions. It doesn't matter how many times I stand up and explain this, it doesn't seem to sink in.

So we have been working with the Indigenous government. We're going to continue working with the Indigenous government. We all have the same end goal, and we're going to work together to get there. And I'm glad that this case came out and provided clarity. I've said that this situation is some -- thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take your direction. I will end it there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 43-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES NOMINEE
PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the challenge of finding employees in the territory is not new just to Yellowknife; it affects all our communities. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the interest things about this is that jobs beget jobs. In other words, when we stimulate the economy, more things happen. People earn money. You know, money gets spent, and it has a positive ripple effect. So whether you're trying to keep the restaurant open in Inuvik or you're trying to help people serve contracts in Yellowknife, it's the same problem from the top to the bottom of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of ECE. Perhaps she could enlighten us briefly, not in the most loquacious manner, what the nominee program is and how it serves Northerners? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories nominee program is a program that ECE works with the federal government by which people from around the world can move to the Northwest Territories. I'll

stop there and wait for the next question. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the brief answer from the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, my next question for the Minister specifically is how do they directly support employers trying to bring employment opportunities to life in the Northwest Territories? Again, whether you live in Tsiigehtchic, you live in Inuvik or in Yellowknife, how does this office help? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ECE has approximately three staff members who deal with immigration for the Northwest Territories Nominee Program. They do their best to work with employers in order to let them know what the process looks like but it is very much and largely a process that is directed by the federal government under IRCC. And so here in the territory, we definitely do our best and it's a program that I would like to see grow here in the territory so that we can continue as a government to support labour development and workforce development and especially supporting employers in order to grow their workforce. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't have said -- or sorry, it was a perfect answer in the context of hearing that they want to grow the workforce. So I'd like to hear how that office directly works with employers to grow the workforce? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can say personally I've never actually worked through the process. I can also say having worked with multiple residents who have gone through the process of hiring workers, what they have done is hired a consultant to help through the process because it is largely a process that takes place with the federal government, and there's -- it's a very extensive process that happens, Mr. Speaker. But these three staff members do their best to work through educating employers as to how that looks, how that works, what forms are required, and also what entry programs might work. For example, we have an express entry. We have a Francophone entry that people can also use so that you're actually able to target, first of all, skilled workers and then, second, able to target people from certain countries in order to increase the Francophone speakers in our communities as well. So it's used not only just for increasing our workforce but also enriching our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's kind of like a one thing follows the next. Jobs means taxes. Taxes mean money to the government. Government means services. Etcetera, etcetera. The Minister just said it's an extensive process. She wants to grow the opportunities in the Northwest Territories. I have employers coming to me saying they can't fill out the paperwork because of time, energy, and inability to follow through properly.

What is the Minister willing to do to help support northern employers who are trying to create employment opportunities to serve Northerners and create opportunities that continue to create further opportunities in all our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I can commit to doing -- let me start over. I was distracted by my earpiece. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the Member that I am absolutely interested in seeing our immigration program grow. I believe that us, like the rest of the country, are very much reliant on immigration in order to empower our employers in the Northwest Territories to be able to put people and the dreams that they have to grow their businesses, and I can say that I am committed to extending our immigration strategy that is currently in place and has recently expired. That's something that I wanted to announce later on this month, and so I will come back with more information on that. But what I would encourage is for all of these employers that are having difficulty to feed into that strategy, to allow us to really work together, so that I can help employers with where they see gaps in this system so that I'm able to support them as Minister of ECE and ITI who also has a role to play in immigration and so that we can work together to make this a more robust program in order to see more people, more Canadian newcomers showing up in the Northwest Territories and making the North their home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 44-20(1):
CHILD AND YOUTH COUNSELLOR
INITIATIVE

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

Following up on my Member's statement, my first question is why did the government move forward with changes to the child and youth counselling initiative in the fall of 2023 instead of waiting for the results and recommendations from the independent evaluation that was already underway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a review of this program was launched in the last Assembly, and this review was jump-started based on feedback that was received by education bodies along with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association. And what it was responding to ultimately was the need for the unique instances in each of our communities to be acknowledged and, really, for us to be able to acknowledge, along with education bodies, that the needs of our communities are different from Yellowknife to regional centres to small communities and the ability of education bodies to respond to their differences needed to be respected and that one size really doesn't fit all in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, it also addressed the concerns of prolonged recruitment and retention challenges. That's something that on both sides of the House in the 19th Assembly, we heard about quite frequently, was that some communities weren't able to hire the clinicians that were required of the program. And included in that was a real call for need of intervention and prevention supports for our children and our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair for me to say that a number of our youth in the North are suffering right now and that we really need to be able to respect the autonomy of our communities and our schools by providing them with options. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So most jurisdictions in Canada seem to be moving towards more integrated service delivery. And integrated service delivery is also something that this government in other ways seems to be moving towards and yet this change appears to be a step away from that. Can I ask for a clarification whether clinical counsellors are still available in the schools or only in locations outside the schools? So has the -- yeah, I'll leave it at that. Thank you very much.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the specifics on kind of what schools have who in them, that would definitely be a question that would be best directed towards health and social services, but I can say that it really is regional dependent. Some regions have -- all regions now have the ability to have different setups and are in the process of putting those setups into place.

What I can speak to and what schools do have is schools have the access to not only be using clinical counsellors for their children, but they also have access to Indigenous counsellors in schools now. They have access to personal support workers in schools now. They have access to wellness counsellors in schools now.

And so just in reflection on the Member's comment about integrated service delivery, what some of these personal support workers are doing are actually connecting families from the schools to different government support workers so that that's another member of our communities that is really helping act as connectors and connection points to the different programs and services that we have available. And so while not all schools are -- and all school systems are built the same, this provides schools with the opportunity to hire different people and, should schools want, they can also use their 55 percent of that funding to access more clinical counselling services if they so choose. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it sounds like there was a sense of urgency last fall to make these changes to allow more school -- to allow schools to hire the counsellors that they need. Can I ask the Minister, have these changes that were implemented in the fall of 2023 resulted for this school year in more counsellors, personal support workers, mental health workers being hired in schools; has it achieved that goal for this school year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can answer that by saying absolutely yes, because the funding didn't exist before for schools to be able to hire the personal support workers unless they were getting funding through Jordan's Principle. And so just that alone means that schools who are having those recruitment and retention issues for our clinical counsellors can now turn around and go get personal support workers, wellness counsellors and Indigenous counsellors that are more responsive to the cultural needs of the school as well. Some schools have even been able to hire elders and Indigenous knowledge-keepers in order to

bring them into the school to provide students with daily access to elders. Thank you.

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

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request that the Minister perhaps follow up with more details on the effect that these changes had on schools versus previously in terms of detailed numbers around the number of clinicians available in schools before versus now and the number of other personal support workers, Indigenous counsellors in schools before versus now. I would love to see those numbers, so I request that the Minister could follow up and provide those on a later date. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that. I can honestly share with the Member that I am, as a parent and as a member of the community, very much committed to ensuring that the mental health of our students and our youth and children is supported and would appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak with any Member of the House about where this program is going. This program with many education bodies is still rolling out. They're still looking for people and deciding what this looks like. So not every education body hasn't absolutely hundred percent, you know, set in stone what it looks like. But there is also an accountability framework as part of this that is being developed, and I look forward to being able to share that with Members of this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 45-20(1):
EXPANSION OF SNARE HYDRO SYSTEM
TO WHATI

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister what is the total cost of the Snare Hydro Expansion to the community of Whati and how much of that funding has been secured? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's -- I'll have to get the number to the Member, standing on the floor of the House I'm just looking at my notes and don't have it in front of me. So I will correspond back

to the Member on where the budget is at. I can also say that there certainly has been some advancement. There are some funds already secured and discussions are underway with the Tlicho government on this project. Thank you.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay, well further to that question, what has been spent to date on this project and what is the remaining to be spent? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, please one question and that has two. So Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I could tell you that I've got some notes. They're in a paragraph, and that's not going to be a good way for me to answer a question on the floor of the House trying to get numbers like this. But certainly I can give a general -- and I certainly don't want to miss out on the amount of money that's been secured. That's my bigger concern here. There's been money that's going back to 2022 that has already been -- that's already been secured. We are working with the Tlicho/Kiewit partnership. They are doing planning studies. And so at this point, the project is proceeding forward. There does appear to be, from my brief review here, adequate funds to proceed through the planning stages and the design stages, community engagement stages. And obviously, the next point will then to be to get to a fully cost estimated project so that the more detailed work can be done to connect the community. Thank you.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, the Minister can tell me this, how much funding is the GNWT contributing and how much funding is required from partners?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, again, Mr. Speaker, I definitely will commit to providing here in the next couple of days detail to the Member from Monfwi about what has happened over the last several years and where the project's at in terms of its progress. Some of the funding certainly has come from CIRNAC. The GNWT is also, then, applying for additional funds from CIRNAC. I can't say off the top of my head whether the Tlicho government's contributed anything directly and I certainly expect -- and I know that they are involved as a partner as this is a project on their lands. And, again, I don't know what position I may be in to speak to that but I will commit to getting a letter to the Member so that she has that detail. Thank you.

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

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Has the GNWT explored partnership that could implement the Snare Hydro Expansion within the life of this Assembly? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's quite a bit of work underway already with respect, as I've said, to different phases of the project to the extent that they're known. So, again, planning study that was completed with the Tlicho-Kiewit partnership, that was completed already in 2023. So, again, that does suggest that there is a good working relationship in existence. There does need to be some further conversation with that partnership in order to determine what the next steps would be based on their planning study. But phase 1 is where we would get to a point of having a more shovel ready project. The phase 1 of the project is next. That's where you get into your community engagement, your design, environmental studies. It's my understanding that that's where we're at, that discussions are underway with the Tlicho government. I don't know what the most recent conversations have been, but I will certainly find out. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 46-20(1):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES CARBON TAXATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Northerners keep getting told that our system of carbon pricing is more flexible than the federal model, but it seems to me that the only flexibility we have is to copy what they're doing in Ottawa when the dictates of Parliament come down to us. So can the Minister of Finance tell me, is the GNWT simply mirroring changes made to the federal backstop with our own carbon pricing regime? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are limited in our flexibility in terms of what fuels are taxed and in terms of the tax rates on those fuels. And so to that extent, when the federal government has opted to exempt a particular type of heating fuel, yes, we did mirror what they did as that is the limited flexibility that we have. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to that, Yukon and Nunavut maintain their own rebate systems, including rebates to mines, yet they use the federal backstop for tax collection. Why can't we do the same in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Yukon and Nunavut are under, long before we did, many, many years ago created their systems with the federal system. At this point, we would come in under the federal system much like Alberta and Manitoba and others did when the last round of changes came through. So, and I wouldn't -- I mean, I can certainly provide a more detailed comparison between the Yukon system and ours and between Nunavut's system and ours. There's differences in terms of the rebates that go to individuals. There's differences in the rebates that go to businesses, including differences in the ways that there's rebates that go into large emitters and large systems. So the systems are quite significantly different, in my view, and I don't know that -- again, I don't know that I can do it briefly on the floor of the House, but I don't know that we necessarily want to put ourselves under that system at this point. The system we have was designed for the Northwest Territories' large emitters, and that's where we want to stay. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, BC's carbon tax is revenue neutral with all revenues going to rebates for clean energy programs or rebates to individuals. Why is our carbon tax generating net revenue instead of being revenue neutral? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all of the revenue that comes in, there is -- what's left after the rebates to residents and businesses and then to the community governments, what's left at that point does not cover the full amount of programs and services that the government has, for example Arctic Energy Alliance, EV vehicle rebates, bike rebates, the carbon climate change efforts by ECC, and certainly does not cover the costs of infrastructure projects that we have underway to bring about cleaner energy. So, for example, the Inuvik wind project, studies that are on the transmission line into Whati that we were just speaking about to bring hydro, those projects far outweigh -- exceed whatever net revenue is left over after the rebates. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 47-20(1):
YELLOWKNIFE WELLNESS AND
RECOVERY CENTRE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a very important issue downtown in Yellowknife is the wellness and recovery centre. Many of the residents in my riding, in Yellowknife Centre, are concerned. But equally so, I've talked to many of my community colleagues, including my good friends deep into the far reaches of the territory, all wondering the same thing, where their wellness and recovery centre is. Is Yellowknife getting everything again they say, and I say to them I support my communities and colleagues, but I'm concerned about that particular messaging that that does.

So maybe the Minister of health could give an actual update as to where the wellness and recovery centre project is, because I know they filed for a building permit with the city of Yellowknife, so something must be happening. Can she give the House an update. Thank you.

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

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within the wellness recovery centre in Yellowknife, as many may be aware, that there was a large federal announcement for that and right now, the Member is accurate, there are the -- as -- sorry, as there is moving forward on the accessing the land from the city and then for the permits and stuff, and then I guess they'll be -- the plan is to have it -- I think it's 2024, this coming year, to have the RFP go out, so for the building. And then, you know, if everything moves along smoothly, I think it would be hopefully before the end of my term, then we would have this facility, wellness recovery facility open within Yellowknife. But that doesn't take the fact away that we are continuously working with Indigenous governments and that we're trying to work with them on how to provide wellness within each region because that is the message that we heard. We all heard. We heard from Indigenous governments. My department is fully aware of those engagements that need to take place. Myself, as a Minister, is willing to engage with any Indigenous government that wants to, you know, discuss what they vision in their regions. And so, you know, because we say Yellowknife is getting this, you know, I can't -- gladly, as the government, will take money from the federal but it's them to decide where that goes, so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I want to make sure it's clear to the House, and certainly the public, the merits

of the project, they're not being debated in any form whatsoever. So I don't want anyone to misunderstand.

So, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the accessibility of information on this particular project, what is the Minister doing from the department's point of view of promoting and educating the public as to each step of what's happening? Because the impacts have neighbours and communities very concerned. Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, as to what the department and what has been done, you know, there's been a long engagement within the city of Yellowknife. As a Regular Member who sat on the other side, I am not from Yellowknife, but I know I sat in many conversations and many concerns that other Yellowknivs Members that were bringing forward, so I know that there's been long ongoing conversation. If the Member wants to discuss further what is being done and what needs to be done, I'm willing to have that conversation with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Perhaps my question was just too simple, Mr. Speaker. I'll go about it this way: Can the Minister put all information on the health and social services website as to the stages and where it is with respect to this particular project and where it's going? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will work with my department to make sure that the steps of the process are public. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the issues the Minister raised herself specifically in one of the questions was accessibility to land, and we had -- we cannot let that pass without questioning what does that actually mean? Does the department have access to the full land that they intend to put the project on, or is there a further complication the public, including myself, am not aware of? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with that question I'll have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 48-20(1):
HOUSING NWT OPERATIONS AND
POLICIES

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the housing Minister. First off, why is maintenance chronically underfunded? I'm curious to know what circumstances caused this challenge so we can better understand it as we're priority setting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: (audio) maintenance with housing units is not chronically underfunded. We do have a budget for maintenance. It's throughout the Northwest Territories. A lot of times what we're finding is with timelines and entry into housing units, it sometimes crosses wires where the maintenance doesn't get done and we have to follow up with the tenants. We do have a budget. It is in place year after year. Sometimes that maintenance issue is pushed forward, but we do try our best to get the unit maintained to a safe manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question I have about Housing NWT is why do we cap the number of units in a community? And to give an example, Mr. Speaker, the Minister announced that the 50-unit project in Yellowknife, which I'm very excited about, but that won't actually result in more units of NWT Housing units in the community. So I'm curious to hear from the Minister why that is.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why we cap the number of units in a community, most proposals and most funds from the federal government are provided by proposal. Unlike the Indigenous governments, we don't have actual distinction-based funding where a lump sum is provided to the government. Sometimes we're fortunate as a government to be able to be provided some funds, but most funds provided to this government are provided for specific projects. There's no need to cap projects or cap units or cap communities. It's based on needs. It's based on waiting lists, like the waiting list in Yellowknife. We have 330 people on the waiting list here in Yellowknife. We're providing what we can. We have over 330 units in Yellowknife. We do lease in Yellowknife to provide some of that stop gap between people waiting on the waiting list, but there's no intention to cap, and we do what we can with the funds that are provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for the answers. So

just coming back to the Minister's answer to my first question, I mean, it seems to me -- when I say chronically underfunded, what I'm speaking to is I'm constantly hearing from constituents, and the situation I've seen from myself, is that it seems like we don't have the means to maintain our stock. So I would just ask the Minister directly, I mean do we not need to increase funding in order to stabilize the capital budget to continue building and repairing units in the territory? Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: I'm just going to put my earpiece -- thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I would love the support of this House to increase the maintenance budget for housing units across the North. There is so much work to be done. I mean, throughout the campaign, everyone was knocking on doors. We all know the conditions of homes in the North, and we know that there's a lot of work to do. And if we can do that as a House in our priorities and planning session, absolutely, let's look at that and let's increase that budget. But, again, like the finance Minister says, we're in a fiscal restraint and we have to be careful of where we're committing to at this point, but let's have that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 49-20(1):
YELLOWKNIFE ASPEN APARTMENTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last summer, in June of 2023 that is, Canada supported one of the housing projects here in Yellowknife, and it's called the Aspen Apartments. It will provide 36 permanent units, homes that is, for families.

Mr. Speaker, noting what the Minister had just said about 330 people on the waiting list and how slow it is to get on that list, and it appears to be a chronic problem, where is the current state of this particular project and when can we expect them to be putting families into homes? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Two questions, but I'll turn to the Minister for Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the Aspen Apartments, the 36-unit here in Yellowknife that Housing NWT recently acquired, according to the updates from Housing NWT it's going to take up to 24 months to get them housed and to have tenants in the apartment building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a former employee with the department of public works for the government, I actually helped do projects in that building. Many of us in this room, you know, maybe even some Cabinet folks, will remember the crisis that happened to the YWCA where one of their buildings burnt down and they were able to facilitate to let people move into that place even for about a year. So, Mr. Speaker -- and there were other opportunities. What is so dangerous to that building that we couldn't do a phased move in and a phased repair to ensure people and families are safely living in an environment that they can be rather than at risk or sitting waiting at risk on the 330 waiting list? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had an opportunity to visit the YWCA and to look at their new unit and new building, and it was amazing. At the end of the day, the service that they provide and the programs they provide, I'm so happy to see that type of facility here in Yellowknife.

With the Aspen Apartments, we'll look at if we can have a phased-in approach, and I'll follow up with the Member to see if that's possible. I don't know if that's possible, but I can find out from Housing NWT considering the waiting list in Yellowknife, like throughout the North, there's a long list. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on that point, across the North, as the Minister said, there's homes sitting being heated and families not -- accessible throughout the territory, and the Minister knows this.

Mr. Speaker, my next question is specific to the units. Is there a way to develop a program that builds pride and we'll call it theoretic ownership into this? In other words, is there a way to get families involved in the project? And when I'm saying involved, I mean like painting rooms and being involved in that stuff. The moment you get clients building some type of relationship with where they live, they build a personal ownership and hence there's a ripple effect of pride and taking care of the place.

So would the Minister, as I'm getting at, is would she be able to look at seeing if there's any way to get these social clients who will be moving into involved in the project? So, you know, when they know it's their home, they feel it's an investment into their future as well. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I could understand where the Member's coming from, pride in our home is very, very important and investing into that

home is important as well. I don't know if there's a way but I can find out if there's a way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 50-20(1):
EXPANSION OF SNARE HYDRO SYSTEM
TO TLICHO COMMUNITIES

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: (audio) this is for the infrastructure. I want to ask the Minister, has the GNWT advanced any discussions with the Tlicho government to explore how another successful P3 partnership could support the development of stable, secure energy to the community of Whati, Gameti, and Wekweeti? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of different conversations happening both between the Government of the Northwest Territories as well as the Northwest Territories Power Corporation along with the Tlicho government. I make note, firstly, that we were all at Roundup together recently, both the Department of Infrastructure and, I think for the first time ever, the CEO of the power corporation also has attended, as did representatives of the Tlicho government, including the grand chief, and it was a very good opportunity to, I think, begin to advance some of these discussions that I know there is a lot of eagerness to. There's a lot of interesting ideas coming out of Tlicho region. They're theirs to show, not mine. But they present all kind of interesting opportunities and we want to be there to be partners, we want to work with them. I'm glad the Member mentioned the Tlicho Highway. It is now an internationally award-winning project that they have, and this is a chance to really -- to see further advancements.

So, yes, I mean -- I suppose I could just say yes, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to emphasize that there's a lot of opportunity and a lot of discussions, and it's incumbent on us to make sure that they move them along quickly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Infrastructure. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: (audio) willingness to work with Indigenous government and the communities because there's a lot of communities out there that are in

the same situation. So it's just more of a comment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 51-20(1):
INVITATION TO VISIT SAHTU
COMMUNITIES REGARDING LAND
TENURE

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today, my final question is to the Minister of ECC. Will the Minister work with my office in conjunction with the Housing NWT to look at dates of convenience for the remaining last month of the winter road season for a Sahtu tour to discuss land tenure? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Land tenure, ECC Minister.

HON. JAY MacDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Member, for the question. I certainly will speak with my staff and ensure that we provide you with the opportunity to have that conversation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of ECC. Time has come, no more oral questions. Oral questions. Written questions. Member from Range Lake.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 1-20(1):
CARBON TAX REVENUES AND REBATES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

1. What is the total net revenue from carbon pricing in the Northwest Territories since 2019;
2. What is the total amount of carbon tax rebates remitted to large emitters in the resource sector in the Northwest Territories since 2019;
3. What is the total amount of carbon tax rebates remitted to Northwest Territories residents through cost of living offset (COLO) payments since 2019;
4. What is the total amount of carbon tax revenue that has been shared with Northwest Territories communities through grants since 2019; and,
5. What is the difference in carbon tax rebates between an average household in the Northwest Territories using diesel for home heating and the

same household using propane, natural gas, or any other fuel, after the proposed carbon tax exemption for diesel heating fuels is implemented after April 1, 2024?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Range Lake. Written questions. Return to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 17-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CORONER
SERVICE 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 18-20(1):
34TH ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023 VICTIMS
ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 19-20(1):
ADMINISTRATION OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES ACCESS TO INFORMATION
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT
ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 20-20(1):
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CORRECTIONS
SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 21-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LAW
FOUNDATION 40TH ANNUAL REPORT FOR
THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 22-20(1):
LEGAL AID COMMISSION OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL
REPORT 2022-2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 23-20(1):
ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF
THE RENTAL OFFICER - APRIL 1, 2022 TO
MARCH 31, 2023

TABLED DOCUMENT 24-20(1):
TERRITORIAL POLICE SERVICE
AGREEMENT - RCMP ANNUAL REPORT
(2022-2023)

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following eight documents: Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2022 Annual Report; 34th Annual Report 2022-2023 Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories; Administration of the Northwest

Territories Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act Annual Report 2022-2023; Department of Justice Corrections Service Annual Report 2022-2023; Northwest Territories Law Foundation 40th Annual Report for the Period Ending June 30, 2022; Legal Aid Commission of the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2022-2023; Annual Report on the Activities of the Rental Officer April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023; and Territorial Police Service Agreement - RCMP Annual Report 2022-2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for WSCC.

TABLED DOCUMENT 25-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND
NUNAVUT WORKERS' COMPENSATION
APPEALS TRIBUNAL 2022 ANNUAL
REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 26-20(1):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2022 -
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND
NUNAVUT

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents: The Northwest Territories and Nunavut Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal 2022 Annual Report; and the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Annual Report 2022 - Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for WSCC. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Colleagues, we will take a brief break and give the interpreters a bit of a break, and then we'll bring it back to finish. Thank you.

---BRIEF RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, and I apologize for the tardiness. I had a couple things to go, so I appreciate the House allowing me to get what I had to get done. So motions. Member from Range Lake.

Motions

MOTION 9-20(1):
ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO
THE 2023 WILDFIRES,
DEFERRED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS the Northwest Territories experienced a historic and unprecedented wildfire season in 2023 that displaced

two-thirds of the territorial population through emergency evacuations and that destroyed community infrastructure and private property in many northern communities;

AND WHEREAS the people of the Northwest Territories are still experiencing individual and collective trauma induced by the 2023 wildfires and subsequent emergency management operations;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories is undertaking an internal review of its emergency operations during the 2023 wildfires;

AND WHEREAS there were municipal, territorial and national responses to the crisis that require a broader scope of review that is practicable by the after-action reporting undertaken by the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS Indigenous governments and municipal governments have called for greater inclusion in emergency management operations and greater transparency for decision-making during the 2023 wildfires;

AND WHEREAS the public has a right to know what the government has done on its behalf during the 2023 wildfires to make informed decisions about protecting themselves and their communities during a state of emergency;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that this Legislative Assembly resolve that the Commissioner cause an inquiry to be made into the 2023 wildfires pursuant to the Public Inquiries Act;

AND FURTHER that this resolution include the Commissioner establishing a Board composed of four persons appointed by the Commissioner to make the inquiry and to report on the inquiry to the Commissioner;

AND FURTHERMORE that the Commissioner receive recommendations from the Executive Council for two persons to be appointed to the Board;

AND FURTHERMORE that the Commissioner receive recommendations from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for two persons to be appointed to the board;

AND FURTHERMORE that the Commissioner ensure the perspectives of all Northwest Territories residents are adequately captured in the public inquiry undertaken by the Board;

AND FURTHERMORE that the Commissioner ask that the public inquiry to make

comprehensive recommendations into the future management of territorial emergencies by the Government of the Northwest Territories based on its findings;

AND FURTHERMORE that the inquiry establishment order is prepared jointly between the Executive Council and the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight;

AND FURTHERMORE that the inquiry establishment order be tabled on the first day of the May sitting of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. To the motion. Member from Hay River North.

MOTION TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATION
OF MOTION 9-20(1): ESTABLISHING A
PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE 2023
WILDFIRES, TO FEBRUARY 22, 2024,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Yellowknife South, that the motion be postponed to Thursday, February 22nd, 2024. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Hay River North. The Member from Hay River North has moved to postpone debate on Motion 9-20(1). I will ask that the motion be distributed to the Members. The motion is in order. Rule 6.2(5)(i) states the motion is non-debatable, the motion cannot be amended. As a result, I will call the questions. Member for Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: The Member from Range Lake has requested a recorded vote. We'll just wait for the motion to be delivered. Okay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

(audio) this debate if we're going to postpone the debate on this motion today to the 24th of February. Right, 24th of February -- or 22nd. Sorry, the 22nd of February. For all those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for

Frame Lake. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstained.

Thank you. The vote is nine yeases, nine nos. Because we have a tie, I have to cast the vote. And as the role of the Speaker, we vote to encourage and continue debate so the debate will be scheduled for February 22nd at that time. Thank you.

Motions. Ms. Morgan. Sorry, motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

MOTION 15-20(1):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO FEBRUARY 20, 2024

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

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member from Hay River North, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when the House adjourns on Friday, February 9th, 2024, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, February 20th, 2024;

AND FURTHER that any time prior to February 20th, 2024, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All in favour? Opposed? Abstention? Motion passed.

---Carried.

Notice of motions for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Minister's Statement

4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Tabled Document 13-20(1), with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

**Consideration in Committee of the
" Whole of Bills and Other Matters**

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. What is the wish of committee to proceed? Mr. Rodgers.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): (audio) the floor to report progress. Is there any nays to the motion. (audio) nays. Motion carried.

---Carried

---BRIEF RECESS

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The committee has been considering Minister's Statement 4-20(1), Minister's Statement 5-20(1), Tabled Document 13-20(1) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Do I have a seconder? Member from Yellowknife Centre. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion has been carried, and the report of Committee of the Whole has been concurred with.

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 20th, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

7. Returns to Written Questions

8. Acknowledgements

9. Oral Questions

10. Written Questions

11. Returns to Written Questions

12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address

13. Petitions

14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion

16. Motions

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Minister's Statement 4-20(1): 2023 Wildfire Season Review and Planning for the 2024 Season

- Minister's Statement 5-20(1): Emergency Management Preparation

- Tabled Document 13-20(1): Interim Estimates, Operations Expenditures, April 1 to June 30, 2024

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 20th, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. Thank you.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

