



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Colleagues, it is my duty to inform you of the passing yesterday of former Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Mr. John Havelock Parker.

Mr. Parker was born and raised in Alberta and came north in 1954. He worked in the mining and exploration industry in various capacities over the years. His first step into public office was his election as a town councillor of Yellowknife in 1958. In 1965, Mr. Parker was appointed to the Carrothers Commission on the Political Development of the Northwest Territories. Its recommendations became a draft for the development of a more responsible government.

Mr. Parker was appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in March 1967, and retained that position until April 1979. He also served as member of the NWT council and chair of the executive council. He became Commissioner on April 15, 1979, succeeding Stuart Hodgson. John Parker was considered the last Commissioner acting as Chief Executive Officer. He retired on July 31, 1989.

John Havelock Parker contributed significantly to the social, economic, and political development of the Northwest Territories. In 1986, Mr. Parker devolved the responsibility from the Commissioner's Office to the Legislative Assembly. What we now know as the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly is a testament to his vision, hard work, and dedication.

On behalf of this House, I send our sincere condolences to his wife Helen, his children, and grandchildren. He will be greatly missed, and his contribution to the development of this territory can never be forgotten. We will now have a moment of silence for Mr. Parker.

---Moment of silence

POINT OF PRIVILEGE

MR. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Members. I would like to first address the Member for Monfwi's point of privilege raised yesterday. I will then return to the rulings I made yesterday.

Yesterday, the Member for Monfwi rose on a point of privilege regarding his ability to meaningfully participate in the proceedings due to a lack of Tlicho interpretation. He indicated that his ability to fulfill his duties as a Member was interfered with due to the lack of translation.

As we now have Tlicho interpretation available, I will hear debate on this point of privilege and will ask the Member for Monfwi to begin the debate. Thank you, Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] After yesterday's proceeding, I felt that I need to apologize, and I also would like to apologize to the people of the Northwest Territories. I apologize to all those who have ever had to go to court and have been unable to truly express themselves in their own language. I want to apologize to all my elders who have to go to the health clinic or hospital and are unable to describe their pains properly because they did not have proper interpretation or translation. [End of translation]

Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the people of the Northwest Territories. I apologize to all those who have ever gone through court proceedings and have been unable to truly express themselves in their own language. I apologize to the elders, to all the elders in the Northwest Territories, who have gone to the health clinic or hospital and been unable to describe their pains properly because they did not have proper interpretation or translation. I apologize to the committee Members who can speak English but still need their first language to truly advocate for themselves. I apologize for all the times anyone has felt compromised for needing to speak their language.

Yesterday, I left this House frustrated because I was unable to do my job as an elected official. I was frustrated because I was denied my right to speak my language in the House; a right to choose to be deemed worthy of notice; a right that was worthy of notice, but not of action.

Mr. Speaker, I choose to speak Tlicho, one of the 11 official languages, because this is my first

language. I think in Tlicho, also. Tlicho is the heart of who I am. When I speak English, these are already translated words. Every speech I make in this House, every idea I bring forward, is translated once by me and then again interpreted by a translator. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it is condensed to fit into a time it would take the English language to say and rearranged to fit into an English way of doing and saying things. They're very different. My thoughts and ideas, my voice, is condensed every day I use my language in this system. I have been able to deal with that. Yesterday, though, was the first time I felt muzzled in this House.

For the past 16 years I have been able to serve in this government, both sides, and in your chair as well, Mr. Speaker, as MLA, Minister, Speaker, with a privilege of speaking the Tlicho language at every opportunity, because I have had my interpreters and translators available to serve me in this capacity. Throughout this time, I have also advocated for the language speakers to have the same privilege in this House.

Mr. Speaker, again, I apologize to all the speakers of the nine official languages for treating my language as a privilege. Our language is not a privilege. Our languages are a priority under a TRC Act call to actions and the UNDRIP. The NWT Language Act guarantees the right to speak our Indigenous languages and to receive the services as required.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be speaking Tlicho language, and I will continue to exercise my right to speak my language in the Legislative Assembly, in this House. Furthermore, I promise the people of the Northwest Territories that I will continue to advocate for what is right, and I will apologize only when I am wrong. I will continue to advocate for Indigenous languages. As you know, a lot of languages are depleting. Gwich'in is a prime example. I will continue to challenge this government to offer the resources and the services required to keep our languages strong. Our languages are our right. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Are there any other Members who wish to speak to the point of privilege? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start off today by acknowledging the hard work done by the Legislative Assembly's public relations group, who have made sure that our interpreter booths are generally quite full. Interpreters are a huge part of our family here at the Legislative Assembly and are part of our day-to-day operations in the House. They are a very important part of the day-to-day operations in this House. Language preservation is important. Language

allows us to see the world differently, to open up our interpretation of the world around us, and to re-evaluate the way we are working. Language is also a part of the beauty of our diversity in our group of MLAs who sit here today. Not only does language support language resurgence across the Northwest Territories, but it can also affect someone's ability to thrive or even survive. Our MLAs use question-and-answer period to draw out information about our programs and services from our Cabinet, about how they work, and about how maybe we can change them for the better. Without access to that information, we are doing a huge disservice to the people of the Northwest Territories. Lastly, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we are leaders, and we need to be leaders when it comes to supporting Indigenous language. We need to put government dollars behind our intent to revitalize language, but our actions are stronger than our dollars. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Next, we have Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say a few words in my language. Mr. Speaker, [English translation not available]. I am going to go back in English now. What I said there was: for me [microphone turned off] ...and that we should always respect that. I know that for our interpreters in Dene Zhatie, if they weren't here, I would request that the House be suspended. I think that on the flip side of that, if we all spoke Dene Zhatie, Tlicho, or French and we all spoke that primarily in here and we didn't have an English interpreter, if you could think of that in those terms, if we couldn't translate to that, the record would show nothing in English. We'd see nothing. That is how we'd go forward with that. To me, that's not right, so I support the Member for Monfwi from that standpoint. Those are my thoughts going forward. I am hoping that we can move forward now and have some sort of understanding now. If we ever encounter this in the future that we know how to deal with it. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Next, we have Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. [Translation] There are instances I recall for French in this, like in August 2019, my statement was in French, and it was not interpreted, but I gave an English translation for the Hansard. [Translation ends] The honourable Member for Monfwi, his point of privilege, he has no reason to apologize. It's his right to speak any official language in this House. I support his point of privilege and the ability of any of our Members to speak in any of the official languages. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge that there have been significant improvements in interpretation services

in this Assembly since I started in 2015. I do want to recognize the hard work of the Assembly, all of us working together with our staff, the interpreters, to improve the availability of interpretation services, but I still think we have a long way to go. I remember the days when all of the official languages were available. There was a language bureau, numerous interpreters, and all of the official languages were used regularly in the House. I think we need to make better efforts to bring back a lot of that, which will mean extra costs for this Assembly, but I think, if we are serious about promoting all of our official languages, that is a cost that is well worth it. I do support the point of privilege. I want to thank the honourable Member for Monfwi for bringing it forward. I look forward to further discussion on this issue. Mahsi, Monsieur le President.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former chief of Salt River First Nation, I don't speak the native language because my father was a very strong leader within the Indigenous groups up in the Northwest Territories. He developed the first Aboriginal organization in the Northwest Territories in the early years and very, very strong and spoke the Chipewyan language. I never got the privilege of learning that because he always thought that he didn't want us to speak it so that, when we went to school, that we did very well in school because he always thought it would be a burden to us. I only wish that he did that and made each of us speak the language. I stand up today in support of the Member from Tlicho because it is an official language, and I only wish that I had the privilege of also knowing my official language. Therefore, I support his stand on the point of privilege. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Indigenous languages are official languages here in the Northwest Territories. As such, each of us, if we are able to speak an Indigenous language, we have that right. It's a right. Also, if we can't speak it and we don't understand it, we also have a right. We have that right to be able to understand what another Member is saying in his own language or her own language. Most importantly, as well, is that the people of the NWT have a right to understand what's being said. We denied them that right. That should have never happened. In hindsight in what happened yesterday, what I should have done as a Member was to walk from this Chamber with the Member for Monfwi because that would have been the right thing to do. If we expect the people of the Northwest Territories to

recognize that Aboriginal languages are important, then we have to make sure that we walk the talk when it comes to it. We have it as a priority to make sure that they are kept alive. It is up to us to lead the charge. In the point of privilege, I support the Member for Monfwi. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to talk in support of the Member for Monfwi. As I had mentioned a few times, I don't know my language. As I sit here, I am proud of who I am, but I don't know my language. I have Lillian, who is here to interpret in Inuvialuktun every day when we are here. We have been lucky. When I go back home, I think about my grandmother who sits and watches. She has the opportunity to watch in her language. Our elders back home have the opportunity to listen in their language where they don't have to translate, so for Member for Monfwi, if this first language and knowing what I know is coming out in English when your first language is another language, you don't always get the message across right. When he gets to speak it in his language or if we were able to speak it in our language, we might be able to get that message out how we mean. I think that it's very important that we make sure that the territory is able to get the right message. If the Member is able to speak their own language, they should be able to do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the Member's point of privilege. Although this is not my birthplace, I've lived in the Northwest Territories long enough to have heard many awkward conversations between people who speak Indigenous languages fluently and people like me who only speak English. I have wondered in very important settings such as courts and health centres and the hospital whether, in fact, the two sides really understand one another. That really has impressed on me the importance of having interpretation services available and having people speak the language that is the one they know best. For that reason, I think it's important that this matter be taken up and investigated further. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I rise in support of my colleague, Mr. Lafferty, in regard to our languages, the 11 official languages across the territory. Yesterday, I think if it was English, if we couldn't speak, they would have shut

the House down. With our languages that we do have, I think we have to support them, not only just to have translators here but, when something like this does occur, it has to be dealt with properly. What Mr. Simpson said, we should have walked out with him yesterday, too, because of that. I am in full support of him. I am in full support of your judgment and what's going to happen, moving forward for the people of the Northwest Territories to get the business done in the day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to rise in support of my colleague's point of privilege. I think, as a person who only speaks English, this is an issue I can never truly understand. I've worked in the courts, and I've seen people I struggled to understand, and I think the importance of interpreters in the Northwest Territories -- and this issue is so much bigger than us, and so much bigger than this House -- every step we take as leaders to support our Indigenous languages is the right step, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Are there any other Members who wish to speak to the point of privilege? Colleagues, thank you for that discussion, and I am prepared to make my ruling.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday, the Member for Monfwi requested an adjournment of the House due to the lack of an interpreter in his first language, Tlicho. The Member suggested the lack of interpretation impeded or prevented him from performing his parliamentary functions as a Member of this Assembly.

As Speaker, I must determine three matters:

- first, whether a matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity;
- second, whether there has been a prima facie breach of privilege; in other words, that at first glance, the matter appears to be a breach of privilege and warrants immediate consideration by the House; and
- third, the extent to which the matter has infringed upon any Member's ability to perform their duties or appears to be a contempt against the dignity of the House.

Yesterday, when I delivered a ruling on a point of order raised by the Government House Leader against the Member for Monfwi, I asked the Member to withdraw his remarks and apologize to the House. When the Member for Monfwi rose to

speak, he noted that Tlicho interpretation was unavailable and raised this point of privilege.

Clearly, this point was raised at the earliest opportunity.

Next, I must consider whether a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred.

Colleagues, the use and preservation of all of our official languages are issues of great importance to the people of the Northwest Territories, to this Legislative Assembly, and to me as Speaker.

In fact, this issue is of such great importance, it is written in the preamble of our Official Languages Act, which states: "...preserving the use of official languages, and enhancing those languages, is a shared responsibility of language communities, the Legislative Assembly, and the Government of the Northwest Territories."

This responsibility is one I take seriously. We have increased our capacity to provide interpretation in all of our official languages. Our languages are an important part of our shared culture and heritage, and their use and preservation is vital to reconciliation.

Compared with our recent past, this Assembly has greatly increased our investment in, and commitment to our official languages. We have more interpreters, representing more of our official languages, working longer hours. We are making efforts to share our interpreted proceedings via our broadcasting and social media networks. Although it can be quite challenging to find qualified interpreters in some of our official languages, yesterday we were able to provide interpretation in seven official languages.

I also note that a Tlicho interpreter was scheduled to provide service yesterday. However, due to an illness, they were unable to attend. We were provided notice of this illness less than an hour before the start of our proceedings. It was unfortunate, but I feel it is important to note that the lack of Tlicho interpretation yesterday was an exceptional circumstance.

I would also like to comment on the timing of my rulings. Due to the absence of the Member for Monfwi late last week and the absence of the Premier for the rest of this week, I made the decision to deliver my rulings yesterday.

Colleagues, the improvements related to interpretation in our official languages made in this Assembly are a continuation of the work done in the previous Assembly. The work was begun under the direction and guidance of the Member for Monfwi when he served as Speaker. I understand that this

is an issue of great importance, and I thank him for being a champion for our languages.

A similar situation occurred during our 11th Legislative Assembly. On October 26, 1989, day 7 of the 5th session of the 11th Legislative Assembly, the Member Rae Lac La Marte spoke in an official language for which interpretation was not available. Another Member rose on a point of order. Then Speaker Nerysoo adjourned the House until such a time as interpretation could be provided. In his decision to adjourn for the day, Speaker Nerysoo noted that the rules of the Legislative Assembly at that time expressly provided that a Member had the "right to speak and be understood in his own language."

Our current rules are silent on the right to use and be understood in our official languages. However, the Official Languages Act provides that everyone has the right to use an official language in the debates and other proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. Colleagues, I find that there has been a prima facie breach of privilege in this case. In other words, at first glance, the matter appears to be related to privilege. Given this ruling, I will now entertain any motions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Motions

MOTION 5-19(2):

REFERRAL OF POINT OF PRIVILEGE RAISED
BY MEMBER FOR MONFWI ON MARCH 10,
2020,
CARRIED

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that the ruling regarding the point of privilege raised by the Member for Monfwi on March 10, 2020, be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for their consideration;

AND FURTHER, that the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures provide a report to this House within 120 calendar days of this referral. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The motion is in order. To the motion. Government House Leader. Second.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to second this motion. I was the deputy under the previous Speaker, who is now the Member for Monfwi, and I saw what he did in terms of expanding this Legislative Assembly's language capability. I think it's a point of pride for this territory. It's something that I talk about when I speak with legislators from other parts of the country. I think that this Legislative Assembly is the voice of the

people, and the voice of the people needs to be understood. While we have made strides, clearly there is still a way to go. I believe that by referring to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures we can further develop our language capacity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I neglected to thank the honourable Member for Monfwi for his work as Speaker in the last Assembly, to promote the use of all the official languages. He often encouraged me to actually speak French in the House, and I want to thank him for that. I do support this motion and want to acknowledge the work that he did to increase the use of all the official languages in the last Assembly. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the motion. Motion has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. And the abstentions. Motion is carried.

---Carried

This matter has been referred to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures.

SPEAKER'S RULING

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I will now return to the rulings I provided yesterday. Yesterday, I ruled on the point of privilege raised by the Member for Monfwi and a point of order raised by the Member for Hay River North. Based on that ruling, I directed the Member for Monfwi to apologize and withdraw his remarks. Now that we have Ticho interpretation available, is the Member prepared to do so? Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] What we're talking about for the last two weeks, each and every one of us that are in here, we know what had happened [translation ends].

MR. SPEAKER: [microphone turned off]... Monfwi that I have ruled on the point of order and have directed him to apologize to this House fully and withdraw his remarks. Thank you.

MR. LAFFERTY: [Translation] Mr. Speaker, I am getting there. Whenever you're speaking your language, it's hard to get right to the point, but, if you're speaking English, it's totally different, but I will get there. The reason why I'm standing here is because I'm speaking my language. I will apologize now. I'll speak in English, Mr. Speaker [translation ends]. It was never my intention to scandalize this House. I am sorry if the word caused my fellow MLAs discomfort. Truth and integrity are important,

however, than hurt feelings. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, for speaking the truth, I will not apologize this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty, has refused to fully apologize and withdraw his remarks. Mr. Lafferty, pursuant to Rule 26, you must leave the Chamber for the remainder of the day. Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Government House Leader.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 34-19(2): MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Caroline Cochrane will be absent from the House for remainder of the week to attend the First Ministers' meeting in Ottawa, Ontario. Also, the Honourable Katrina Nokleby and Honourable Diane Thom will be absent due to personal matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our 2020-2021 operations budget has excluded continued funding for the NWT friendship centres. I understand the funds had a sunset date, but, like everything else, times and circumstances change, and we have to adapt. We are dealing with increased negative social influences while we see employment opportunities disappearing within a faltering economy.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT friendship centres secure and administer approximately \$6 million annually in funding by leveraging the small amounts they receive from territorial, federal, and Indigenous governments. The centres support approximately 13,000-plus community members, of which more than half are women and 5,000-plus being youth.

The NWT friendship centres have developed and facilitated over 100 programs, services, and activities and have invested over \$60,000 in professional development last fiscal year. In addition, they employ 100-plus Northerners and have over 500-plus volunteers. With all this success, friendship centres in the North still struggle with such things as the high the cost of

living, aging infrastructure, creating competitive employee salaries, funding delays, funding barriers, and a lack of sustainable funding for long-term planning.

Mr. Speaker, we all understand the fiscal position this government is in. We all understand this government has limited funds to work with. Therefore, it is important we allocate what funds we have to places we receive the greatest benefit. Allocation of a small portion of these funds to non-profits, such as the NWT friendship centres, will result in the most vulnerable being provided with cost-effective and timely programming services.

The reality is that the council of NWT friendship centres is more than an NGO. It is a home for First Nations, Metis and others to gather; it is a place that provides solace to those who need it; it is a place that works to empower our youth at the darkest of times; and, it provides our elders with a purpose as it is their wisdom we rely on.

We are all aware that the funding previously in place was only temporary, that it was intended to assist in developing long-term capacity. However, it would be to this government's benefit to provide the NWT friendship centres with an additional \$250,000 contribution for this fiscal year because I know they will not only multiply what they receive but provide services this government is not capable of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to talk about Child and Family Services. Child and Family Services has been continuously criticized by the Indigenous families for years, by the Aboriginal groups, not just in NWT but throughout Canada, as well, by the past two Auditor General reports.

This system is broken. I have walked with people through this system, and what I have found is a system that says they are there for reunification, but, in reality, they are forced to check boxes by what is best practice instead of meeting people where they are at to assist them and support them.

Mr. Speaker, whose best practices are these? Because they're not Indigenous best practices.

I think of what happened long ago, if there were people or families who struggled with their children, it was the stronger people in their family who supported them, or other people of the community. They taught them, they encouraged them, and, only

if everything else could not work for those family members, they would care for them; but, Mr. Speaker, they were always there to welcome them back and give them the opportunity to try again when they could.

Mr. Speaker, I know and understand there are those cases where it is in the best interest of the child to be in a safe space and with another family, and I do support this. I do know that the department is doing what they think is best. Knowing that there are around 1,000 kids in care in the NWT and that they are all Indigenous, how do we educate those who are new to our territory, non-Indigenous social workers who have never grown up in a small, isolated community and have not lived through the trauma that our people have lived through, even to begin to understand and meet people where they're at?

What I would like to suggest is that we need traditional support workers and/or advocates for family members to be present when meeting with the child and family services department to ensure that they are being heard and that they have support to know what their rights are and if and when they are not being provided with all the information, as well as to acknowledge when the visit goes well, and may be able to support the parent through the system to access what they need to work toward reunification with their child or children, and this does not become a "he said, she said" scenario, which we know who will be believed in this circumstances, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL ARREARS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have talked about the challenges in Nunakput and the small communities across the territory for rental arrears. The housing clients who live in our communities, so many of them are struggling with rental arrears. Arrears can accumulate for reasons beyond the tenant's control. Illness, unemployment, seasonal employment, and rental charges that are too high based on the former T4 system; now the Minister fixed that for us last week. These things, or a combination of them, can put a person into arrears.

Once someone is in arrears, it is really hard to climb out of that hole. Many public housing residents are living paycheque to paycheque need every cent of every cheque on a daily basis, let alone finding money to pay off debt that we put them in. The higher arrears get, the lower the chances that the tenant is going to be able to pay

them off. The consequences of being in arrears cause people a lot of worries and a lot of sleepless nights.

A recent housing study done by a researcher from the NWT found that "rental arrears with the Housing Corporation make it impossible to access public housing in the Northwest Territories, and affect one's references when trying to access private rental housing." Which we don't have in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

Still, many people do their best, but it can be discouraging in trying to get ahead. Some people give up, Mr. Speaker, because it feels like they will never be free from arrears, which puts them in a vicious cycle they can't get rid of.

To help these people, I would like to see the Housing Corporation put a rental arrears abatement program in place, modeled on the Department of Finance's Property Tax Arrears Program. This program would help someone who is doing their best to pay off their arrears by forgiving a portion of them, not the total arrears, but, every payment that they do, a portion comes off it, as well, in kind. This would provide an incentive to people who have arrears and are not making back payments, to start it off. It would give positive encouragement to those who are trying their best to pay off arrears, by enabling them to reach their goal more quickly. It would also demonstrate that the GNWT is not using arrears as a means to punish the ones who have not paid their rent.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Nunakput, please seek unanimous consent to conclude your statement. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. It would also demonstrate that the GNWT is not using arrears as a means to punish the ones who have not paid their rent, but rather that the GNWT is doing everything in its power to encourage responsible tenancy.

Mr. Speaker, I am encouraging the Minister to seriously consider this proposal. It will give people in public housing a way to move forward and maybe even towards the goal of eventual home ownership. I have been encouraged by this Minister's willingness to work with Members on this side of the House. I'm sure she will recognize the merit of the idea, and I do want to say that I feel strongly about this and will make a motion in this House to direct the work, if necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS AND SELF-
EMPLOYMENT

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to speak a little bit about small businesses and self-employment in the NWT and the state of our economy, and our unemployment rates. Last week, on March 6, 2020 the NWT Bureau of Statistics released a report on the labour force activity in the NWT. As of February 2020, the employment rate in the NWT is 63.5 percent and appears to be trending downwards. This is concerning to me.

I feel that, as a government, we need to ask three main questions when we observe a statistic like this. First, what are we doing in each of our government departments to help keep employment numbers up? Secondly, what are we doing to assist business and industry to help them retain and train their employees? Last, what are we doing to help the public gain meaningful business and employment opportunities?

Mr. Speaker, in my reply to the budget address last week I mentioned that business, particularly small business, will be the key to getting us through this financial and economic stagnation or decline we are currently going through. To put it in bush terms, I feel like we are slowly moving through the slough water financially, right now, and I feel there are definitely a lot of things we can change and improve on.

If one wanted to start a small business, they would need to be aware that there are many resources out there to help them realize their dreams. For example, the BDIC is a great resource to help start-up businesses to grow and be sustainable. There are loans for financing and training available for those who wish to go out there on their own and start a new business.

Mr. Speaker, there are also options out there for those who wish to be self-employed. Our economy needs more tradespeople out there in the workforce. We need to see more plumbers, electricians, mechanics, cooks, hair-dressers, etc. These trades I mentioned are transferable skills and can be used anywhere in the world, and they are crucial to our economy and we would be helpless without them. I want to applaud all these tradespeople and I am hoping that our government will do what they can to keep people in these trades in the territories.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the people of the North know that there are resources

out there to help them to be employed through not-so-traditional methods. We want to give people hope and for them to know that many successful businesses all started with one simple idea. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. I am tongue-twisted today.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. NORN: As I was saying, we want to give people hope to help them know that there are a lot of businesses out there that were successful in the past, and they all started with one idea. With that, I would like to ask some questions to the Minister of ECE. I would have liked to ask the Minister of ITI, but she's not here today. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
STUDENT LOAN REMISSION PUBLIC
REPORTING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. For years, now, the GNWT Public Accounts published the names of NWT students who have received remission of their student loans. The schedule contains the individual students' names and the amount of each remission. Since the review of the 2014-2015 public accounts, the Standing Committee on Government Operations has recommended that the Department of Finance stop this practice. This information used to be published in a Schedule of Bad Debt Write-offs, Forgiveness and Student Loan Remissions.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner questioned this disclosure of personal information in correspondence with the Department of Finance that was tabled in the last Assembly and said: "Is it necessary for the program and/or for public accountability for students to be required to give up their financial privacy to take advantage of a program designed, by its very terms, to accommodate the forgiveness of debt in certain circumstances?"

Finance undertook an internal privacy impact assessment that did not seek outside views or assistance. The Information and Privacy Commissioner was not consulted, despite committee's requests. Finance separated student loan remissions into its own schedule beginning in 2018 but continues to publish individual names and amounts. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment now requires students to agree to have their identities and loan remission amounts published as a condition of getting such loan remissions; hardly free, prior, or informed consent, Mr. Speaker.

I sought advice from the Legislative Assembly's law clerk on this matter. The clerk found that there is no legal basis to continue to disclose the identities of students getting loan remissions and the corresponding individual amounts. I believe strongly that the Department of Finance is subjecting NWT students to an inappropriate level of disclosure that is inconsistent with standards applied elsewhere in government. I intend to continue to press Cabinet to modify this practice as soon as possible. Mr. Speaker, I do want to recognize that there is a new collaborative spirit and approach from the current Cabinet, and I have been pleased to work with them on this issue. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON THIRD-PARTY REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is about some important work done near the end of the last Assembly and which I hope will continue. I'm talking about third-party reporting of sexual assaults and third-party oversight of sexual assault files. Mr. Speaker, here in the NWT, we have high rates of sexual assault, especially for Indigenous women, and low rates for reporting that crime. Statistics Canada found that only one in 20 sexual assaults are reported to the police. The reasons for not reporting are diverse, ranging from shame and guilt to the perception that sexual assault is not a crime. In order to increase rates of reporting, some jurisdictions have set up third-party reporting, where someone who has experienced sexual assault can go to a non-profit organization, for example, and make a report rather than go directly to police.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice brought a group of people together to discuss this issue over two days last June. They came from all regions of the NWT and from non-profits, victim services, health authorities, the RCMP, and the GNWT. According to the What We Heard report, the group anticipated there would be a high volume of sexual assault survivors who would use this third-party reporting service if it was implemented. They saw the major benefit as giving survivors a barrier-free opportunity to tell their stories and feel heard. This change may also help to improve service delivery to survivors. They identified the major challenge as whether NWT non-profits with paid staff have the capacity to take on this responsibility. It may be possible to train staff in existing organizations to

provide this service when protocols are agreed for collecting and passing on the information.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue discussed was third-party oversight of the RCMP files. The point of this initiative is to increase public confidence in the way police respond to sexual assault complaints, by reviewing their files. The review team could make recommendations about conducting more interviews or ask questions. The RCMP has already completed the privacy and security work required to make this kind of advocacy feasible, and review teams are in place in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the Department of Justice has completed this step, and I hope to see it implemented without any delay. Thank you very much.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARBON OFFSETS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak about carbon offsets. Firstly, a carbon offset is a credit for greenhouse gas reductions achieved by one party, that can be purchased and used to compensate the emissions of another party. Mr. Speaker, there are a variety of carbon-offset schemes, and some have proved to work better than others. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak about not just simply buying carbon offsets but the possibility of selling them and using what is an increasingly larger and larger market with billions of dollars to access and fund projects in the North.

The Northwest Territories is extremely well suited to access carbon offsets and to purchase them, for the same reason, Mr. Speaker. Getting all of our communities off diesel is not an easy task. It will require significant investment in infrastructure. The whole point of carbon offsets is to allow energy organizations and communities to find funding for projects that would not otherwise be feasible. As governments around the world start to wake up to the reality of climate change, we are seeing an increase in the purchasing of carbon offsets. More and more companies are being faced with regulatory requirements to lower their carbon or greenhouse gas emissions. I hope, Mr. Speaker, we can get the air regulations in place during the life of this Assembly and make that the case here. I see carbon offsets as a pivotal tool in growing our renewable sector in the North, as well as a safeguard for a number of our protected areas and our boreal forest. We've seen the Department of Environment and Natural Resources begin to access federal money for replanting.

There is plenty of opportunity for the Northwest Territories to become a leader in selling carbon offsets. We've seen these used in the Amazon rainforest. I see no reason why they can't be used in the boreal forest, Mr. Speaker. There is significant amount of money on the table to be invested in carbon offsetting, and, with more and more projects meeting the qualifications for certification, I believe it is prudent for our government to take advantage of that market and to assist our constituents in doing the same. We have seen the federal government begin to take these steps. I don't want to leave that money on the table. I want the Northwest Territories to be a leader in carbon offsets. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REPATRIATING PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes questioned the health Minister about repatriating NWT residents with disabilities currently living in southern residential placements. These are long-term care arrangements that displace persons with disabilities. More than two-thirds of these men, women, and children are living with cognitive disabilities. Over the last seven years, the cost of southern placements has increased by 77 percent, to \$30 million per year. Over this sitting, we have heard Members speak about how Indigenous persons represent 99 percent of children in foster-care, upwards of 85 percent of the inmates in correctional centres, and 90 percent of our homeless population. Mr. Speaker, the sad fact is that 90 percent of residents in southern residential placements are Indigenous. Recognizing the negative impacts caused by removing people from their families, culture, communities, and lands, we must not support the continued dislocation of Indigenous people out of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, continuing the removal of NWT residents living with disabilities reinforces and legitimizes systems of care that perpetuate the dislocation of Indigenous people from the territory under the guise of care. It does not allow for the integration of these people into our communities, which is a benefit to our society. In some instances, families have reported being too fearful to seek help for the care of a loved one living with a disability for fear of losing that family member. Southern travel from our remote communities is expensive and means that some families suffer permanent segregation.

If we continue to increase spending on out-of-territory residential southern placements as we have in recent years, program spending could reach \$50 million per year by the next Assembly. This isn't only about the government's bottom line or even about human connection; this is about rights, Mr. Speaker. The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People Article 9 states that Indigenous people have the right to belong to an Indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.

Mr. Speaker, this Assembly has committed to implementing UNDRIP. One way to do this is to minimize the use of southern placements to those cases where no other alternative is possible and to instead develop approaches that invest in territorial supports, community care networks and training, and made-in-the-North care models that support keeping our Indigenous residents with disabilities at home while increasing northern caregiver employment opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 177-19(3): SUPPORT FOR TRADES EMPLOYMENT

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Just going back to my Member's statement on self-employment and trades, I have questions for the Minister of ECE. My question is: what programs are available in the NWT for those interested in the trades vocation? Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If someone wants to get into trades, there are a lot of ways to do it, of course. We offer trades courses at Aurora College here. There is more emphasis being put on the trades at the high school level. Our career development, it's a different name. The officials from ECE go into the schools and talk to the students, and tell them about other career opportunities. They are having those conversations with students now, saying that trades is a career that you can get into. That type of work needs to happen more and more. I know, for a long time, trades was sort of a secondary consideration, but the fact is it's good work.

Over the past couple number of years, the labour numbers in the NWT have gone down, but the number of self-employed people has actually gone up, has increased by 500, and trade is a perfect way to become self-employed. There's always work if you are a tradesperson. There are a number of programs. I won't go through them all right now. I'll let the Member ask some more questions because I might just answer them all if I keep going on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NORN: Well, I'm glad that his department is going into schools and promoting trades. That is something we need to start earlier with the kids. My next question is: what is the department doing to promote trades and self-employment initiatives in the NWT as a whole?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: One of the things that ECE is committing to doing is creating a blue seal certification program for journeymen or journeypersons. This is something that exists in other jurisdictions, and what it is is the technical aspect of being a journeyperson plus a business component. This is something that requires that the people who get the certification have those business skills. It's an additional thing that people can strive for. There is also the ECE self-employment program, in which the department will work with clients to help support their business idea. There is funding for courses to attend training, for books, for tools, for travel. ECE will help facilitate meetings with BDIC as the Member mentioned earlier, and they can help come up with a business plan. If someone is committed to starting their own business, whether it be trades or anything else, there are programs that are available. I can provide more detailed information to the Member, as well.

MR. NORN: Just to give a little context on this one here, I used to work for Diavik and for the community's department, and we used to go to places like Wekweeti and Whati and stuff. I remember going to school. We were trying to explain trades to very young grades, and we couldn't get through to them. Finally, I said, "You know, I think I have a good example." I told a grade 6 term, "You know how, in Star Wars, there's Jedi's? You don't just become a Jedi overnight. You have to become a Padawan first. You have to train under somebody, and then you become one. That's how trades works."

I guess, on that note, I want to know what the Minister is doing to promote trades in our schools, in grade school?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: As I mentioned earlier, we have the career and education advisors. What they do is they have those conversations with students, starting at grade 7, so it's not quite as early as the

Member is speaking about, but they start letting kids know about their options early on so that those students can then make sure they're taking the right courses to get where they need to be. We also have the SNAP program, which is something that's available all over the territory, although it does take some partnerships; it's not something you can just roll out. There are a number of things like that, and, like I said, we just need to do a better job, and I'm working on this myself, in promoting the trades. Trades are great occupations. I don't really like to have a boss, necessarily, and, if you have a trade, you can be your own boss. Always, that work is always needed. You can work in a big company. You can work on your own. You can work in a small community. You can work anywhere. Trades are great opportunities, and we really need to get that word out there and make sure that we are guiding the students who want to go down that path down that path.

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

QUESTION 178-19(2):
THIRD-PARTY REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT
OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice. I spoke frequently in the last Assembly about the benefits of involving third parties in sexual assault reporting and oversight of police sexual assault investigations. I believe that these initiatives will allow us to provide better services to survivors and to get a better idea of barriers to reporting and resolving cases. My question for the Minister is whether she supports moving forward on implementing these changes in the NWT. Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has already alerted me previously to the fact that there is a report produced on this matter in June and that NGOs and stakeholders met at that time. Since then, Mr. Speaker, there's been some update, which is that the RCMP continue to engage with the proposed review committee and that, meanwhile, the GNWT Department of Justice is also putting forward a second meeting of the same stakeholders to review progress with respect to having the NGO group come together. So I say all that, Mr. Speaker, because the degree of support or program development that will result will depend very much on what happens at these subsequent meetings, when we hear back from these same stakeholders, to determine exactly how they want to see this program unfold and that that will then better inform my ability to stand up in the House and explain the

nature of the program as it goes forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. What we are proposing here for the Northwest Territories isn't new. It's not even new in Canada. There is third-party reporting in place in the Yukon. There is third-party oversight of police files available in Ontario. It is my understanding that the RCMP has already done the preliminary work to make this happen. Given that landscape is already fairly well formed, what are the barriers to implementing these changes in the Northwest Territories?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: There are two different things that are at issue. First, with respect to third-party reporting, that certainly would provide another avenue of reporting, another way in which victims can come forward, and arguably in a way that would provide some flexibility and alternatives when people may not be in a position, for whatever reason, to attend the RCMP. That said, the model that is being looked at at present involves non-governmental organizations or victim service providers who are not necessarily GNWT employees, so, of course, we need to ensure that those individuals or those organizations have the capacity to deliver the training and capacity to then deliver any kind of services in order to perform the function of third-party reporting. I certainly don't want to underestimate what that might entail or assume that those agencies would have the ability to take that on. We would want to ensure that either they have that capacity or that we are able to support them in developing that capacity.

With respect to the third-party oversight, at that point, the Member points out that this is happening in other jurisdictions. However, wanting to work with our RCMP partners to ensure that, when this is happening or if there's going to be third-party oversight, that that is done in a way that is respectful of their operational processes.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister is being cautious, but the fact is that the stakeholders who were at the special meeting in June of last year were uniformly in favour of these initiatives, recognizing that there were some issues to be sorted out. What I'd like a sense of from the Minister is how long it's going to take to work through the considerations that she has named in order to put these services in place.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I understand that the next round of stakeholder engagement is actually scheduled to take place in April of this year, so only just next month. At that point, there will be a review of what work has been done so far, what programs have been undertaken to this point. At that point, if in fact the various NGOs and

stakeholders, victim services providers, and organizations are able to say that they can roll out and move forward, I would anticipate that there won't be a stop put in place, but the Department of Justice would be there to support their provision of those services. We do need to hear back from them, being partners in these programs. As I say, I expect that that's going to take place next month.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. I just want to point out what a glacial pace this is moving at. I've spoken about it for, say, three years, and the consultation happened in June, and the follow-up is happening in April, so I really am concerned about when this is actually going to happen. I wonder if it makes sense for the government to put out an RFP for a service provider and work specifically with the respondents to that RFP in order to launch the service, rather than doing more consultation and then moving on to an RFP at some other point?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I had been hoping that I could simply say that I would commit to get back to the Member with the results from April. I am more hesitant to say that I'm going to put out an RFP based on the fact that I don't know what the reports of the pilot will say. That said, as I've said, the GNWT doesn't want to hold this back. If the stakeholders are in support and they are able to undertake the project and to continue it forward, the GNWT is not going to stop third-party reporting from moving forward under those circumstances. I think the best that I could perhaps do for today is to say that if, in fact, the reporting comes back and the pilots come back as being positive and that there is capacity to move this forward, then, at that point, the matter will move forward and it will move forward in a fashion that is timely, keeping in mind that we have June session where, if I haven't issued an RFP or if the department hasn't issued an RFP, then, by that stage, I would expect the Member to be asking me questions again, and hopefully it would be much easier to commit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 179-19(2):
CARBON OFFSETS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I previously asked questions on carbon offsets to the Minister of ENR and, in time, I will ask them to the Minister of Infrastructure to make sure that any green energy projects can access what is an ever-increasing pool of funding, but I guess, since it's money-related, I will ask the Minister of Finance

today: can the issue of carbon offsets be provided to the relevant climate change committee and a policy document be produced?

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, in contrast to some of my previous responses, I'll just say yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I appreciate that answer. The importance here is that carbon offset pools are increasingly becoming a more and more common, larger pool of money to tap into. The federal government is looking at setting up a credit scheme nation-wide, and I don't want the Northwest Territories to be left behind. One of my concerns with this is that it's not really built into our energy strategy or our climate change strategy, so I want to make sure that we look into this properly. Can the Minister work with her counterparts in Infrastructure and ENR and make sure there are some clearer points of accountability for who is responsible, ultimately, for the many aspects of carbon offsets?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I think I have all-around good news on this one. There are two different questions coming out of the Member's question just now. The first was with respect to the carbon offset program that is being developed by the federal government, and I am pleased to tell the House that, indeed, Department of Finance officials are already working with their federal counterparts on this so that we certainly will not be left out, and we want to ensure that we have an appropriate place at that table.

Then, second, with respect to having a clear point of accountability, this is, again, good news. Climate change is a project that is receiving collaboration from a real whole-of-government approach. Many departments are involved, and that is a positive thing. It's bringing together the many different facets of this issue. I acknowledge the Member's point and the challenge he is having asking questions of Cabinet, and so I would certainly commit to ensuring that there is a clear point of accountability that can answer to all of these different facets, or that I can direct to Member to which aspect of the collaboration will respond to questions. I will make sure that that is communicated.

MR. JOHNSON: I appreciate that answer, and I recognize that this is a new area, but I think carbon offsets and carbon trading are only going to get bigger and they are only going to become a greater source of revenue for the Northwest Territories and green projects. I'm happy to hear that we are working with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada to make sure we have input into that carbon credit scheme that's being

developed nation-wide, so I guess my question to the Minister of Finance is: can we direct the staff who are doing that to make sure that the priorities of the North, and perhaps a carve-out for northern credits and our unique situation, are reflected and we advocate for that in that policy?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: As I said, the Department of Finance is already active on this file. They are already engaged at the federal level, and the point of engagement at the federal level is always to ensure that the people of the Northwest Territories and the needs of the Northwest Territories are being fully considered. I am confident that that will happen. I am confident that that will happen in the follow-up to this conversation here in the House, and I am quite confident that, indeed, if carbon offsets are a direction that the federal government moves to, we will be, as I've said, engaged and involved and we will not let ourselves fall behind on the issue.

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

QUESTION 180-19(2):
PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL ARREARS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, the Department of Finance put the Property Tax Arrears Program in place, out of recognition that some people who have had to have taxes at times higher than their annual income may never be paid off with their arrears. It allows remission forgiveness in property tax interest in return for a person making a payment on the principal that is owed. Will the Minister have her department develop a similar program with the arrears and forgiveness of debt, money put on, and they will get some of their arrears freed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation is open to new methods. I would have to take a look and see what is working and what is not working before we establish new ideas going forward, but I am going to commit to be working with the Member to look and see how we can work with the outstanding arrears within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: That sounds really good. It could be the Minister Paulie Chinna Arrears Program. We're thankful for that. This work will involve assessing the total amount of arrears owed by an annual income for those who owe arrears. Will the

Minister provide an assessment to the appropriate standing committee when this is completed?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Once a review is done, yes, I will be submitting something to the standing committee.

MR. JACOBSON: Will the Minister share the proposed program, the parameters of eligibility, the requirements, with the standing committee before the program is finalized and working?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I will, because I would be open to further comments and suggestions once the information is provided.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is such a big issue we have in our small communities, because there is no job employment. Everything is seasonal. Can the Minister provide a time estimate on what time we could look at having something before the House for approval for arrears write-offs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Unfortunately, I wouldn't be able to provide those numbers, but I will be able to provide them going forward, because it is going to end up needing a full assessment and I need to see the material to see what is working and what is not working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 181-19(2):
STUDENT LOAN REMISSION PUBLIC
REPORTING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Earlier today, I discussed the ongoing saga where individual student names in loan remission amounts continue to be published in our public accounts. Can the Minister tell us whether he has had a chance to review this practice and whether he is prepared to change it? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member knows very well that I have reviewed this concern. I sat in many meetings with him while he opined on the merits of displaying students' names in the public accounts. I'm well aware of the issue, and yes, I'm going to fix it.

MR. O'REILLY: I guess today is my lucky day, and it is for all students in the Northwest Territories, as well. One of the options to stop this unnecessary invasion of privacy is to make legislative amendments to the Student Financial Assistance Act and/or the Financial Administration Act. This, of course, could be undertaken by Cabinet or as a private Member's bill. Can the Minister tell us how Cabinet intends to proceed and what changes will generally be brought forward?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I think there are the minor amendments that ECE would like to have made to the SFA Act. One of those will be changing the rules so that, notwithstanding the FAA, the student names will not have to be publicly reported. What needs to happen here is a legislative proposal will come to me, I will approve it, and it will go to a standing committee. The standing committee will have to provide response and comment. At that point, it will have to go to Cabinet for approval, and then a bill will have to be drafted, which will then have go back to Cabinet for approval. At that point, it will be brought into this House and the Legislative Assembly will take hold of the bill. This process could be done. We could see the introduction in the May-June sitting, if we hear back from the standing committee soon enough and if it goes through all those steps. That's the plan right now, to introduce the bill in the May-June sitting.

MR. O'REILLY: I do want to sincerely thank my Cabinet colleagues because I know I've been talking to them about this over the last several months. This is great progress, I think. I'm very happy, and I think we should all be happy with some movement on this. Can the Minister tell us how soon the practice will stop and whether it will be in time for the 2019-2020 public accounts?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Like I mentioned, there are a lot of factors that are out of my control, personally. While we may have seen the last publication of student names, I can't make any promises. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 182-19(2):
SUPPORT FOR AURORA COLLEGE STUDENTS
WITH CHILDREN

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I was really happy to hear my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Willideh question the Minister in regard to increasing interest in the trades. It was nice to hear that the Department of Education is working towards getting kids excited about working in the trades, but the fact of the matter is that a lot of us in

the Northwest Territories start our families quite early and end up with children maybe younger than the national average. I had had my first child when I was 23. What I'm wondering is: what supports are currently available to families with children who want to become students of Aurora College? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of ECE.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. SFA does provide additional funding for students who have children. If you're a single individual with no dependents, you will get less than if you were a single parent, say, with one, two, or three, et cetera, children, so there is that. In terms of Aurora College in particular, I've been in talks with the department regarding the childcare situation there. I think everyone is aware of that, everyone in this House anyway. I know that in Fort Smith there is a deficit in terms of childcare, as there is in many places. That's something that needs to be addressed if we really want to have this world-class polytechnic university.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'm very happy to hear that the Department of Education is looking into more options. In regard to a Member's statement that was actually shared last week by my colleague from Yellowknife North in regard to increasing uptake of women in trades, we also know that women quite often end up being the primary caregiver in some situations. Would the Minister of education be willing to entertain the idea of a pilot childcare program for the Fort Smith Aurora College in order to help increase women in trades?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're looking into a lot of different options. Right now, ECE offers many, many different pots of funding that can help with creating childcare spaces: there is money for start-up; there is funding that can be used to top off wages of employees; there is funding for all sorts of different things. In terms of just the college, yes, the college is looking into figuring out how we can better support parents. ECE is always open to having those conversations about how we can create more childcare spaces, and, in fact, that's exactly what we're mandated to do.

MS. CLEVELAND: Would the Minister be willing to sit down with Members from this side of the house and find out ways that we can support potentially growing that space in Fort Smith and put together a universal childcare with the Member for Thebacha so that more people can uptake trades in the Fort Smith area? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I'm always happy to sit down with Members and have these discussions. In terms

of universal childcare in Fort Smith, it's a difficult conversation to have, to create a pilot program. When we know full well that we can't afford to expand that pilot program to the rest of the territory, we're creating a real inequity. However, there are options and there is plenty of money available to assist Fort Smith, whether it's the college, whether it's the community, or an organization, to develop the childcare space. We have someone in Fort Smith who is there to help do those kinds of things, someone who is in contact with the Fort Smith Daycare Society, someone who is well aware of what is happening and very much willing to help. She's willing to have those conversations in Fort Smith, and I am willing to have those conversations with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 183-19(2):
ROLE AND DUTIES OF MINISTER
RESPONSIBLE FOR HOMELESSNESS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's kind of nice to have only four on that side because we seem to be getting lots, and there's a lot of happiness on this side. I've got a question for the Minister responsible for Homelessness. I'm not sure if she's responsible for the homeless situation or if she's responsible for looking after it. I get questions in Hay River with respect to what that responsibility entails. Can the Minister explain to me and the people of the NWT what is it that she actually does with that responsibility? What is her responsibility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the portfolio that I have been given, it's quite complex because we are, as a Housing Corporation, responsible for the structures. Homelessness does not come with any additional funding. It is a responsibility that the Housing Corporation has just taken, and we have provided the infrastructure for the program. It started to become a wraparound service. We are working with this issue within the Northwest Territories, and we are trying our best with what resources we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: That responsibility, my understanding is now, is that it comes with no money. Does it come with any staff?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I'm not aware if we actually have staff who specifically deal with the homelessness issue throughout the Northwest Territories. We do have staff who deal with the programming for homelessness that entails the

infrastructure and wraparound services. I just wanted to maybe elaborate a little bit quickly on the path program that we do establish and the community initiatives program. Right now, we just opened up a facility in Aklavik that is structured for homelessness. It comes with four units, and we do have a homelessness worker in Aklavik who the Housing Corporation does fund internally. It is open to the rest of the Northwest Territories.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Now I understand there is no money, but there could be staff. My question is: how would an organization address homelessness in a community with support from you as the Minister responsible for Homelessness when a plan of action is needed to be developed in that community to address homelessness?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: We do have a program that is called a community housing support initiative that we have adapted to this issue, and we have been working with homelessness throughout the Northwest Territories. Also, going forward, if there was any Indigenous partnership, and I am really heavy on partnerships throughout the territory, we are able to work with them in conjunction to work with on this issue within the territories.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One thing I have noticed here in the territories is that some of the communities have access for accommodation for people during the winter who have nowhere to go, but not all communities have that. I am just wondering if the Minister has a plan to address this situation for next winter because, in Hay River, we are going to have to deal with it. We have dealt with it internally within the community with assistance from the people of Hay River, from local businesses from Hay River, and non-profits from Hay River, with no cost to the government. I am just wondering if the Minister has any idea what her department is going to do for next winter, for looking after that situation, homelessness in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I am familiar with the file that the Member is speaking of. The organization is encouraged to submit a business plan to us so we can provide assistance to the program that is happening in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 184-19(2):
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR
COVID-19 VIRUS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I got an email from one of my constituents regarding coronavirus. Every hamlet community has a hamlet office. Every hamlet office has an emergency plan. Is the MACA Minister willing to get, on the community level, making sure that they are starting to enact that plan in case somebody has the coronavirus? I am not trying to cause panic, but I am trying to give a heads-up to the communities to start looking at the community emergency plan and how they are going to act on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, the coronavirus is very new, but it is spreading very quickly throughout the country. We have not had any reported cases in the Northwest Territories. I just want to inform the Member that Municipal and Community Affairs has addressed the concern. Letters have gone out to the chartered communities and the hamlets to work with an initiative going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: That is really good to hear. I think what they should be doing also is making a phone call to the hamlet SAOs to get them enacted on that plan and working together. I am happy to hear that. With this illness, this flu that is happening that is able to kill people, our community health centres are so understaffed in regard to that. I think what we should be doing is really working with the health department, as well, in regard to getting a plan ready for this epidemic because it is coming. People are taking it too lightly.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I just want to inform the Member that Municipal and Community Affairs and the department of health have been meeting regularly, and we do have updates every day. We are going forward with that information. We will be informing the communities a lot more.

MR. JACOBSON: One more thing: today, they started back home for spring break. All the people who are travelling now, our teachers, anybody who is able to get of the community because it is spring break, I think: how is that going to work in our communities? Is the Minister or other Ministers putting that in effect into email to the principals, to the hamlet offices, all the people who need to be notified in case somebody does come back, does show symptoms of the sickness, and to be self-quarantined or quarantined? The staff that we have in our remote communities for health centres, they are going to send you home with Tylenol. Are they notifying all the government staff through the government mail?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: As I know for my department, Municipal and Community Affairs, we have been working in conjunction with the other government departments, as well. We do get briefings going forward. I would inform the Member to follow up with the Minister of health for further discussion.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to let it be the first year that we do have to make sure that we are following through with the local emergency plans, with our local mayors and counsellors who have to make sure their plan is in place and to act upon it. This is a really serious matter and sickness that is coming, that there is no cure yet. Just a note for the education Minister, as well, to make sure that all the teachers who are travelling around to Mexico and all those nice, warm places, to make sure that the staff know that they should be self-checking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I will take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 185-19(2):
CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE CHARTER

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I previously asked questions to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs regarding a Yellowknife city charter. I was hoping that the Minister responsible could outline a process and provide that document to the City of Yellowknife on what a path forward for a Yellowknife city charter could look like.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to elaborate quickly on the charter that the City of Yellowknife is proposing, that it is a new approach. We need to gather, and we need to identify what it is that the city is wanting to change within the Cities, Towns and Villages Act. Going forward, I just need to be more clear. I am open to having further discussions with the City of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: One of my concerns regarding this is that there are no plans currently to bring the City, Towns and Villages Act forward during this Assembly. I know the department has a lot of work to do regarding the Property Assessment and Taxation Act, which ultimately ties into the city charter issue. My concern is that the municipalities

have been asking for the Property Assessment and Taxation Act to be brought forward for over a decade, and the department has been very slow to do so. I don't want to be standing here in a decade, asking about a Yellowknife city charter. Would the Minister be willing to reach out to the City of Yellowknife and get them to provide what they would see as a process going forward for a Yellowknife city charter?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: MACA is prepared to receive information for city and the charter proposed. We are open to be meeting with them and discuss concepts. We will also of course need to gather other relevant information. I really want to see why the city would want to change their status and adapt the charters act. It is available in other jurisdictions, but it does not exist in the Northwest Territories. Going forward, yes, I am available to be meeting with the City of Yellowknife.

MR. JOHNSON: I will convey that information to the city, and I look forward to asking about those discussions. I can tell you the reason that the City of Yellowknife has asked for this is because they find dealing with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs extremely frustrating. I am happy to finally see the Property Assessment and Taxation Act coming forward. There is a number of unique things that we can do in Yellowknife, whether it be municipal bonds, local services, vacancy taxes, that simply just would not make sense in the smaller communities and may not even make sense in the other tax-based communities. So, during the development of the Property Assessment and Taxation Act, is the Minister willing to reach out to the City of Yellowknife and hear some of their concerns around property assessment and the unique needs of the City of Yellowknife?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I will be wanting to hear and elaborate a little bit more on the approach that the City of Yellowknife is taking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Member for Kam Lake.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 8-19(2):
REPATRIATION OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to repatriating Northwest Territories residents with disabilities living in southern residential placements:

1. How many people are living in southern residential placements?
2. What is the total cost the Government of the Northwest Territories is spending to support Northwest Territories residents with disabilities living in southern residential placements?
3. What region-specific support services would be required to support people with disabilities to live in their home communities?
4. What would a phased repatriation plan look like to support people with disabilities living in their home communities?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Correction, that was item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Government House Leader.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 57-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 31-19(2): RESPONSE TO PROGRESS OF GOVERNMENT

TABLED DOCUMENT 58-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 92-19(2): FORT PROVIDENCE DENTAL CARE SERVICES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 31-19(2), Response to Progress of Government;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 92-19(2), Fort Providence Dental Care Services." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 59-19(2):
WHAT WE HEARD: SEXUAL ASSAULT INVESTIGATIONS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION, JUNE 11-12, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the report "What we heard: Sexual Assault Investigations Stakeholder Engagement Session, June 11-12, 2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Tabling of documents. Item 15,

notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Member for Thebacha.

Motions (Reversion)

MOTION 4-19(2):
REQUEST FOR SPECIAL AUDIT BY THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA ON THE STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL RENEWAL PROJECT,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS Members of this and previous Assemblies have expressed numerous concerns about the Stanton Territorial Renewal Project and the impacts it may have on the long-term fiscal well-being of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the people it serves;

AND WHEREAS, at a cost of \$750 million over 34 years, the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project is reportedly the largest capital project ever undertaken by the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories reportedly overlooked to include in the project costs a grant-in-lieu of property tax payment to the City of Yellowknife, valued at \$4.5 million annually, pushing the total project cost to an estimated \$900 million;

AND WHEREAS the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project has been described as a public/private partnership between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Boreal Health Partnership;

AND WHEREAS the fundamental features of this partnership, including the long-term liabilities and obligations of the Government of the Northwest Territories, are included in a project agreement that was executed in the final days of the 17th Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS there have been, and remain, numerous deficiencies with the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project that may affect the long-term operation and costs of the project;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Legislative Assembly requests the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to undertake a special audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, and report thereon to the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER, that this special audit investigate the actual project costs and long-term financial

implications of the partnership arrangement, compliance with the Financial Administration Act and the financial policies of the Government of the Northwest Territories, value for money considerations, appropriation authority, reporting, and adherence to standard public procurement practices and processes;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Auditor General investigate and consider any other factors that, in their opinion, is relevant;

AND FURTHERMORE, that all employees and officials, respecting the broad powers of investigation granted to the Auditor General under the Auditor General Act and confirmed under the Northwest Territories Act, actively cooperate with the Auditor General in providing all appropriate documents, papers, and information requested by the Office of the Auditor General;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government inform the Boreal Health Partnership and all relevant contractors of the nature and purpose of the special audit;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Office of the Auditor General is requested to complete the special audit as soon as practicable and provide a report to the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Speaker formally transmit this motion and the content of our proceedings in relation to this motion to the Office of the Auditor General of Canada for their consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, my motion today on the P3 Stanton Renewal Project is about ensuring that public funds are being used for the right reasons. In speaking to this motion, I would like to reiterate my previous statement on the Stanton P3 project, which I spoke about a couple of weeks ago in a Member's statement.

Following the public technical briefing on the new Stanton Hospital, which took place on February 11, 2020, officials within the Departments of Health and Social Services and Infrastructure confirmed a series of pervading issues that have been plaguing the new building since it opened in May of 2019.

Mr. Speaker, for clarification, the initial amount designated for the new hospital was \$350 million as of October 1, 2015, which was one month before the 2015 territorial election. This project over a 34-year period, which includes the old Stanton Legacy

building, will now cost \$750 million-plus. The operating and maintenance contract is also included in this P3. Boreal Health Partnership and Dexterra are the main proponents in this agreement. According to officials of the Departments of Health and Social Services and Infrastructure, this agreement/contract is being defended as a good agreement despite it putting our future governance and the people of the NWT in a crucial financial deficit because of a very dysfunctional agreement, decisions and final signoffs being done improperly on behalf of the people of the NWT. However, as an MLA who is concerned about P3s, I think the figure that the Department of Finance provided is neither concrete nor precise and it will cost much more than that. As all MLAs have experienced, we have had a couple of supplementaries in this 19th Assembly already.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the terms and conditions of the Stanton project are not clear, either. Once again, not enough attention was paid to the details of this agreement. When detail is not properly taken into account and politicians sign off on these types of agreements, these projects can and will have a major impact, both on the people of the NWT as well as the future of our government. This is exactly what happened with the P3 agreement of the new Stanton hospital along with the legacy building of the old Stanton hospital.

Mr. Speaker, accountability and transparency are extremely important when dealing with public money. The money that is being used belongs with the people of the NWT. Most of the P3s are contracted with southern companies, and the money flows south with little benefit to the NWT. P3s can be a positive way of doing business if we're dealing with northern companies or Indigenous groups and the detailed agreements are firm, signed off properly, and all monies stay in the North. Mr. Speaker, an objective overview by the Auditor General's office of this P3 project will be appreciated by the people of the NWT and the Ordinary MLAs of this 19th Assembly.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, public-private partnerships are an option if the Government of Northwest Territories management team follows the rules, options were looked at properly, and it understands that the money that is being spent belongs to people of the Northwest Territories. Accountability and transparency of public monies is paramount. Managing public monies is a privilege, not a right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The Stanton Territorial Hospital is in my riding of Frame Lake, and I did second the motion. This motion,

though, is modelled after a similar motion that called for the Auditor General to carry out a special audit of the Deh Cho Bridge. That is the format that this generally reflects, that previous work.

I raised concerns around the Stanton Territorial Hospital, particularly the P3 arrangement, in the last Assembly. I want to make it clear, though, that there has been full financial recording under generally accepted accounting principles of the day in the public accounts of the Northwest Territories, so there is no question about the public reporting of the financing of this arrangement. It's clear, it's transparent, it's passed through the Auditor General, but this audit is really to focus on matters around the actual project costs versus the predicted costs, long-term financial implications, compliance with the Financial Administration Acts and financial policies. It's more of a performance audit, and I certainly support that.

We've heard concerns, as well, around the performance of the building and the contractors. We had a special briefing earlier this year around those matters, and I've heard from members of the public with concerns about those issues. I also want to make it clear that there is no obligation on the part of the Office of the Auditor General to actually carry out the audit. This is a request. The Auditor General will decide, ultimately, whether to carry out this audit. The Auditor General could decide to carry out an audit even in the absence of this motion, but this is clearly a request that I think a number of Regular MLAs are going to support. I think it's really important that we do a lessons-learned, retrospective look at that, of the largest project ever for the Northwest Territories. That's what this motion is really about.

This government is committed to further P3 projects, whether it's the Tlicho all-season road, don't know what the financial arrangements for the proposed Slave Geological Province road are going to be, but I think there are a lot of lessons that we need to learn from the Stanton Territorial Hospital. Mr. Speaker, I'll be voting in support of this motion. I request a recorded vote. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. To the motion. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Accountability and transparency in all public dealings, in all public accounting, is fundamental. It's critical. I share the Member's view entirely on that. This particular project has gone through quite tremendous financial reporting. I acknowledge the comments of the Member just now, and I appreciate the faith that's being placed in the Department of Finance and in all the GNWT to always do our best to be transparent and accountable. In addition to the lengthy briefing that

was done, I just wanted to make a few comments, Mr. Speaker, with respect to some of that financial accounting and reporting that has gone on to date on this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, back in 2016 when preparing the public accounts, the decision was made to report the then-arrangements as being a public-private partnership. By doing so, it would then trigger an involvement of the Auditor General's office, and, indeed, ultimately the Auditor General's office agreed that that was the prudent course of action and in fact at that time also agreed with the GNWT costing of this project. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, for the years ending 2016, 2017, 2018, every year, the accumulated costs as the project was going on were being reported, and they were being audited, and they were being found every year by the Auditor General's office as being accurate. When the final project costs rolled in, they had been again reported in the March 2019 public accounts, which were tabled in this House in December and which will be reviewed by standing committee in April of this year. That briefing and that review, Mr. Speaker, is done with the Comptroller General's office, the Auditor General's office, and standing committee. It's done confidentially, and it's done with fulsomeness. I'm confident that it will have a very thorough review and that many questions will be asked, as they should be, and they'll be answered. To date, the Auditor General's office has been involved and been providing only positive reviews of all the financial aspects of the project. Speaking more specifically to that, this was a \$350-million capital project. It was roughly \$1,000 over its budget estimate. That is a very positive return in terms of the capital costing of the project.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge, of course, that there has been much discussion in this House around the functioning of the building. That said, there has been action taken immediately by the GNWT to ensure that we have remained active and involved on the unfolding of the project, on the unfolding of the hospital as it has opened. We have already addressed more than once here the work that's been done on a GNWT level, at a senior management level, to be engaged, to take action, to ensure that the partners in the project are taking responsible action and, if necessary, to take action under the contract in order to have the service delivered as was provided for. It is a complex contract, but it is actively being monitored, Mr. Speaker.

My one last note, as I've spoken to before, is that property taxes were not considered as part of the capital cost. Property tax is considered part of the operations of any building, and, in the course of a building that is owned by the GNWT, those property taxes are not in fact property taxes; they're paid as a grant. That is something that is separate and

apart from the capital cost or from the operating costs that's been factored into the contract here, and it's something that, at this point, has been factored into MACA's budget and will continue to be going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ultimately, I will be supporting this motion. I just wanted to speak to a few things. I think we have to limit expectations of what the role of the Auditor General is. The Auditor General does not make political decisions. They ultimately review financials, and they have been involved with this project extensively and may review compliance with policies. I think there is a larger question here, and it's ultimately a political one, and it's one we're stuck with. If I were in charge back when this decision was being made, I would not have built this hospital, Mr. Speaker. I would have hired nurses and doctors instead because people heal the sick, not buildings. Here we stand in this Assembly, and the hospital is constructed. We're left with it, Mr. Speaker. There is not much to be done about that.

Secondly, to the process of the Auditor General, they just completed the education audit. I believe their other one is starting or currently ongoing. Usually, those audits take about 18 months. If they choose to do this, and they have complete control over what they audit, I expect it to be a number of years, Mr. Speaker. I question what we're really going to get out of this in a couple of years, when we receive this audit. Ultimately, like I said, I wouldn't have built the hospital, but I have been convinced that this project probably actually came in on budget. In fact, I think there are some concerns with Dexterra that they are not able to make a profit because they didn't really consider the realities of getting northern labour. I guess the benefit of this audit to me, Mr. Speaker, is that we have a number of very large P3 infrastructure projects that are on the books or that are really coming forward, and the more information we can get regarding P3s, the better. I have a number of concerns with P3s, whether it be the requirements to not have enough northern labour; I think, on the hospital, we saw too many southern contractors. I also question some of the use of non-unionized labour in P3s, but those are political decisions, Mr. Speaker, and they are political decisions we in this House must decide. Ultimately, they are not the decisions of the Auditor General, and the Auditor General is not a political body. They can't provide us with direction on those questions.

So I look forward to continuing having these conversations. I hope, in time, if we do get this audit, that it provides more information, but ultimately we have to have some serious

conversations about infrastructure such as hospitals when we could be hiring staff and the future of P3 projects, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called, and a recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Thebacha, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Hay River South.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise. Sorry, all those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Sahtu.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote: nine in favour; four opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021; Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), 2020-2021 Main Estimates, for the NWT Housing Corporation. Marsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will have a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021. We are under the NWT Housing Corporation. Does the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation have any opening remarks?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Overall, the corporation's estimates propose an increase of \$5.3 million or 5.1 percent over the 2019-2020 Main Estimates. These estimates support our fiscal objectives to prioritize responsibilities and strategic spending while matching the modest expected revenue growth over the coming year.

The proposed estimates include approximately \$4.2 million of additional spending that will support a range of priority investments to promote housing partnerships, home ownership opportunities, and the preservation of the corporation's existing public housing stock. These strategic investments include additional funding for the multi-year community housing plans initiative, increases to the community housing support initiative program, the new home program, the Securing Assistance for Emergency program, the seniors aging in place program and the fuel tank replacement program.

In addition, the corporation is allocating additional funding to support a range of priority preservation investments for the corporation's existing public housing stock, including additional repairs funding for local housing organizations, funding for the demolition of surplus units, and addressing the continued decline in Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation funding for social program operations.

Also included in the 2020-2021 Main Estimates is an additional \$1.4 million of incremental forced growth funding for collective bargaining increases, supporting both the corporation and the local housing organizations. These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly by:

- fostering strategic partnerships, including those with the federal and Indigenous governments, to deliver additional affordable housing for our

residents, especially seniors and vulnerable persons;

- investing in energy-efficient solutions for both new construction and repairs;
- delivering increasing opportunities for home ownership; and
- expanding educational resources and supports for homeowners.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do you wish to bring any witnesses into the House?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I do.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, could you please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. To the right of me, I have Mr. Franklin Carpenter, acting president and CEO, and to the left of me I have Jim Martin, vice-president, Finance and Infrastructure Services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. For the Members, we will be doing one round of questions, so 10 minutes per activity, and if you can keep your questions to the activity. For the Minister and her witnesses, the Members only have 10 minutes, so if you can answer their questions to the point so that we don't use up their time, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

I will now open the floor to general comments on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. If there are no comments, does committee agree to proceed to the details contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will defer the summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with community housing services, starting on page 362, with information item on page 364. Questions? Members, any questions on this section? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I confirm that this is the appropriate section in which to raise the question of providing building materials to local housing authorities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister, would you be able to clarify?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, it is. I didn't know if you could hear me.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you want to start, then? So, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I read in the media that the NWT Housing Corporation was going to look at a program of supplying building materials to communities to do their own maintenance. I wonder if the Minister could tell us more detail about this program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do have funding to support community building initiatives. I will just have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter elaborate on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we are doing over the next four years is putting a big push on getting people into private home ownership, particularly in smaller communities. One of the things that we see as essential to supporting this is that they have access to building materials, and perhaps even services from our local housing organizations, and this is only going to be available in small communities where those services aren't currently provided. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to the witness for that. Could he provide more program details, such as whether these building materials are for sale or are they granted, and is the labour paid or is it granted, and what the criteria is for applying, other than living in a small community, and some of the more immediate details of how this is going to work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do support Indigenous partnerships and partnerships within the Northwest Territories. We do have programs that would be able to work within certain deliveries. I will have Vice-President Franklin Carpenter elaborate on the program delivery in this area. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The services or the materials are going to be fee-for-services. However, those households are encouraged to apply through our existing programming and, if they are eligible, the costs can be covered that way. The types of materials we're aiming to utilise, in our opinion, will be common materials that address emergency repairs; things such as water pumps or furnace-related heating equipment, that type of thing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. What I don't understand here is that people are going to pay to fix up houses they don't own. Like, aren't these homes currently owned by the NWT Housing Corporation? Maybe the Minister could clarify that ownership situation with respect to the programming. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The programs would be identified with the stock that we own in the communities. The Housing Corporation doesn't own all infrastructure at the community level, but what is owned by the NWT Housing Corporation, we will be working with those. With the building supplies, that's meant for home ownership clients. Does that answer your question?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister. So what I understand, then, is, if the client agrees to buy the home, then that client is eligible to apply for the building materials program. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the Minister tell us about what the equivalent program is for encouraging home ownership in Yellowknife? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to elaborate on the programs that we have within Yellowknife to support home ownership. We do have a home ownership program that we do work with the client for the down payment assistance program for the Northwest Territories. I will just have the vice-president elaborate on that a little bit more, Franklin Carpenter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister indicated, we do have a down payment assistance program for the major centres like Yellowknife, and we also participate, where needed, in groups that promote the development of housing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure that I understood the witness's last sentence. Could he repeat that again, with some elaboration? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our approach to addressing increasing housing in major centres is different than our approach in smaller communities. In the major centres, there are different stakeholders, whether it's the private market or the municipalities, so we engage with them to see what role we can play to encourage more development of housing. Perhaps in this case we could promote the co-investment fund that we just achieved from Canada through our bilateral agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you for that. I didn't realize that the co-investment fund could be used for home ownership. Can the witness confirm that that, in fact, is the case?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The co-investment fund is directly used for partnerships, and it is not a home ownership program. I just want to elaborate that the support for the bigger centres is for the down-payment assistance that we do offer, and it's also for the home-repair program that we do have, if there is an individual or a private homeowner who has purchased their own home and they need

renovations or fuel-tank replacement. For the co-investment fund, that would be through partnerships and investments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. According to the Housing Corporation's own numbers, only 19 families have taken home ownership in Yellowknife in the last five years. How is the Housing Corporation going to work with families in Yellowknife to get them to take up home ownership and move them out of public housing to make room for the massive waiting lists of families that we have now? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through our program delivery, we have started to do an assessment, where we would find high-income earners who are eligible for home ownership. We do have the initiative to work with our clients to transition them into becoming homeowners and guiding them through the process where they'd be able to purchase their own home, so that they're set up for success. There is a process with that, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. That seems like a reasonable approach. I understand that as many of 20 percent of families are at the top end of the rent scale, and so they might be able to afford home ownership. Is there any obligation on this group of high-income earners to go into home ownership, or can they continue to be public housing clients indefinitely? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I realize that. When we have clients who have moved into our public housing units and they gradually change positions, they change lifestyles, they either decrease or they increase in the income that they are earning, we do work with them closely, and we do try to get them into the home ownership programs. The initiative is to counsel them because the Housing Corporation is almost like a social program delivery, as well. We make sure that we are setting our clients up for success. I hope that answered your question. I'm not too sure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any other questions under community housing services? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I'm in the wrong section or off topic, please let me know. With respect to the MMIs on page 363, we are looking at a revised estimate for 2019-2020. It went up in 2020-2021 by \$2 million. Can you elaborate on that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see there has been an increase in this section. I'm going to have my director of finance respond to the question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there was a \$2.2-million increase from the 2019-2020 Main Estimates to the 2020-2021 Main Estimates. This is primarily explained by a couple of adjustments here. The first larger one is we have set aside \$1.1 million in that budget to support additional demolition work in 2020-2021. We have particularly one larger building that we have to demo, expect to demo, in 2020-2021 that we will have to address. That's one larger item. We also increased modernization and improvement funding for local housing organizations in 2020-2021. That was an increase of approximately \$200,000. We also added in \$300,000 for LHOs, for additional collective bargaining requirements associated with the increases from the last collective bargaining agreement. We also set aside an additional \$250,000 for designated subs and surveys, which involves environmental assessment work that has to be completed in advance of modernization and improvement projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to demolishing buildings, what's the criteria for that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that this is an aging stock that we do have, and we do monitor the life of the buildings. I'm going to have the director of finance.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation undertakes a routine assessment of all of our own assets each year. We conduct unit condition ratings. For those assets that have essentially reached the end of their life in terms of age and condition, we would then identify those assets as surplus units, and then they would be integrated into our unit-disposition plan for the year and coming years. That's essentially how we identify housing assets or buildings that are in need of demolition. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I take it it's based on age, so it's a good thing they're not looking after health. Another question I have is: you mentioned selling material within the communities; has the department talked to local businesses to see if they were able to take that on? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation emphasizes on local businesses, and I'm going to have Franklin Carpenter elaborate on this approach. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Before we even start that initiative of selling materials and services, we are going to reach out to the local contractors to make sure we're not intruding on their business opportunities there. We're thinking of more isolated communities that are only accessible by air, where we'd need something immediately. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The next area is to do with apprentices. I see that you have a few dollars in there for apprentices within the organization. Does the NWT Housing Corporation draw down on any of the financial support that ECE provides with respect to apprenticeships? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do emphasize on apprenticeships within the

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. We do work with ECE, as well, but then we do support the apprenticeships going forward, that are working within the local housing authorities. I'm going to have Jim elaborate on it a little bit more so he could determine how much we've invested into the training that has happened within the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation does maintain and support an apprenticeship program. This is a program that is separate and distinct from ECE's programming. The Housing Corporation sets aside the approximate \$861,000 each year, and we utilize those funds to support approximately 12 apprenticeship assignments within our local housing organizations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to go to contract services. I understand the Housing Corporation uses a number of contract outfits to do the work on the units. I also understand that there is something in place, a suspension list for some of the contractors who do work for the Housing Corporation. I am just wondering what the criteria is to get on that suspension list. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have contractors within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation who have defaulted on our projects, but we continue to work with local hire and small businesses. With the suspension list, I am going to have Franklin elaborate on that a little more. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. For a contractor to be suspended by the Housing Corporation is really a last resort. We make every effort to work with them to take corrective action on whichever contract they are involved in. However, if it comes to a serious point where it's impacting our clients, whether it's safety issues or heating issues or something like that, we will follow the steps and verbal warnings to written warnings and then place them on a suspension for a certain time period. We always encourage and work with those contractors on the way they could get back the ability to do our work by demonstrating. We will probably give them

some small contracts after their suspension period. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am curious to know with respect to that: you are in a small community. You've got limited number of people there, looking after the projects with limited experience. To get on that list, I am wondering: if it is an issue with heating, do you have a heating specialist there? If it is to do with electricity, does the same guy who has the heating expertise decide whether it is electrical or whether it is carpentry or whatever? I am just trying to figure out who actually makes that call when it comes to the actual suspension. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand the question that we do have people working in the isolated communities and the determination of the quality of work that is being presented. We do have technical advisors at the district level who do follow up with the contracts. We do educate and support them through the lifetime of the contract. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list is Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the questions, I know that it was brought up under the minor modernization and improvement because it jumped, the large infrastructure. Can the Minister confirm where that large infrastructure is?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just have the vice-president for finance and infrastructure services to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. The large building that we have on the radar at this time for demolition next year is the Inuvik Sydney Apartments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Knowing what we know, that we have a shortage of single units and possibly a lot of people who could afford single units at a market rent, was there ever an opportunity to put this building up for sale first, before demolition? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am familiar with the Sydney Apartments that you are speaking of. That it did end up becoming an item that was up for sale at some point. We did think of an initiative to going forward and working with that building, and we did recognize that there is a need for one-bedroom apartments. I will have Acting President, CEO to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As Mr. Martin has mentioned, we do have a budget set aside to demolish that property. However, we have heard there might be some interest, so we are going to go out one last time and advertise it, see what response we get. If we don't get a response to repurpose that building or reuse it for some other reason, we will proceed down the demolition route. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Since we are going down that area, I know in my community, there are other units that are on the future to be demolished. I am just wondering. I know some time ago, the same units, they did sell. The lots sold. Families are still living in those units that are privately sold. I am just wondering if there is a reason why those units haven't been put up for sale, as well. I am looking at the multi-builds that are down in my riding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just need clarification. Are these vacant, multi-built houses in the Member's riding? Is that clear?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. These are vacant. I think they are shut-down, vacant, multi-builds. In the past few years, they've been renovated, they have brand new siding, they have new windows, and then they are sitting empty and now are being slated, I am understanding from a briefing that I got, to be possibly torn down. I am just wondering if there is an opportunity to sell them that people in my community with low income who may meet that threshold want to buy those before we tear them down after we spent money on putting new siding and new windows and stuff on them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would have to get back to the Member because I am a little bit confused. I don't know if these areas are meant for -- because we do have RCMP units that are coming up, and we do need to build in the communities. I believe that Inuvik is getting 17, I am assuming. Yes, 17 units. I just need to be clear on where these units are. If they were renovated and if we don't have anybody living in them and if they were vacant, I need to verify if we are the owners of these units or if they are potential sales. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The reason why I am addressing it is because it's been asked and I've asked the housing department why there are empty -- these were back from your department, from the Housing Corporation department, that they are slotted to be torn down. I just feel like there are some times we can make some money off these. Even if we need the lots for different functions, would they be considered to be sold because there are companies and people who may buy them and move them and put them somewhere else? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would have to follow up with the Member because I would like to see where these units are located, and I would like to verify the location and the condition of these units. If we do own them, then I would get back to the Member to see what the plan is going forward for them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. I am good.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Okay. Thank you. Next on my list, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. If I could turn your attention to page 363, I had a question on heating fuel. I noticed from the actuals from a couple years ago now to the mains, there hasn't been much change in that. I know that heating fuel is very expensive in a lot of the small communities. I am just wondering why this number from the actuals from couple of years ago now to the mains, there hasn't been much change in that. I know that

heating fuel is very expensive in a lot of these small communities. I'm just wondering why this number is staying the way it is. Does the Minister believe this will be adequate to help out our small communities with their heating? Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was too eager to answer the question. I see that our heating fuel subsidy, our program that is available within the Housing Corporation, I look at the programs that are available for this program to go forward and the criteria that is expected of it. I'm going to have Jim elaborate on the dollar amounts and to reflect the Member's question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the Housing Corporation at this time has maintained the current budget at the same level as the previous year for the heating fuel requirements. In the past, our expenditures actually were up around that range a couple of years ago, so we have obviously been pleased that the fuel rates have been somewhat lower than they were a few years ago. Our recommendation and how we've established this budget is to keep the budget consistent for the time being to ensure that we have those dollars sufficiently in place to deal with future fuel rate increases. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair, and marsi cho for that answer. I just want to make sure I get this straight. Part of this line item, the seniors' home heating fuel subsidy, is part of that that program, as well? Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The program that we're talking about is for public housing units. I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the response. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister indicated, this whole section deals with our inventory of rental units. The majority of them are public housing units, and we have some units that we rent as market units. The heating fuel in here is the cost we pay for those rental units. It doesn't deal with any of our programming or the

programming the Member alluded to. That's delivered through ECE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for that answer. Moving on, I'm looking at another item here, the rent supplement leasing. This number seems to have fluctuated in the last couple years. Can the Minister just explain to me what this rent supplement we see is and is this final number going to be adequate for this fiscal year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a program that is utilized, the majority of it is utilized, in Yellowknife. We don't have the number of public housing units that we currently have to meet the needs of the city, so this is a supplementary program that is used here to take care of the first month's rent and the damage deposit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the response from the Minister. What I'm gathering here is that there isn't a whole lot of access to this to the small communities, so this is mostly a Yellowknife program. Is that what the Minister is telling me?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to clarify, my apologies to the Member, that I was looking at the program delivery that we have within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, and this is actually our community housing services. My apologies. I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on this because it actually has to do with our department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The rent supplement leasing refers to units that we rent off private developers, that we utilize as public housing. We own a majority of our units in our public housing program, but we still, for the major centres where we require more units, actively rent those units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. What I'm hearing right now still is that this is mainly a Yellowknife program. Was there still access for people in the regional centres and the smaller communities for this program? Is a lot of this money being used for those areas?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope I can clarify this for the Member, but I just want to give a really strong example. We have limited public housing units available throughout the Northwest Territories, so the Housing Corporation actually leases out of private markets. We do have apartments that are within an apartment building, and the Housing Corporation leases a bunch of those apartment buildings within that from a private owner. We lease those out as public housing units. For an example, just to elaborate, two more seconds, is that, if we're in an apartment building and the person rents at \$2,500, they could be downstairs paying \$70 because it's a Housing Corporation unit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I want to make a statement on housing. Housing is probably the most critical thing in the Northwest Territories, as an issue. I want clarification on co-investment fund for partnerships. Could you clarify that, if a partnership is like the Salt River First Nation or the Fort Smith Metis Nation and if they went and put a proposal together, Madam Chair, would they be entitled to the co-investment fund if they wanted to build, say, 10 units for their membership? I just want clarification on that, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Madam Chair, yes, that is correct. If the Salt River wanted to put forward an application for the co-investment fund, that is correct. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I also, Madam Chair, would like to ask a question on the home ownership program. The lease-to-own, how do they determine the assessment, the value of the actual home ownership program, on the assessment value of the

municipality? How is that determined if an individual wants to enter into the home ownership program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the home ownership program as it does come with it certain deals, I guess. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As part of our objective to get more people into private home ownership, we've got this initiative called the lease-to-own. We're going to make available our detached inventory of public housing units, available to tenants who have steady and stable incomes, who want to enter into home ownership. The way we assess the value is we have an internal assessment calculator that we use. It's largely based on the age of the unit. Our inventory is, as many may know, fairly aged, so the value of these units is commonly not very high. We would also apply current programming to that to assist these tenants to become homeowners. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I also want to have clarification on the RCMP units that are being allocated for the community of Fort Smith. Are they going to be demolished, or are they going to be going into other lots? Because the units are in good condition, and I would like to see the units, if they come under the Housing Corporation or the housing authority or whatever way they are going to dispense of these units, that they are divided between the Fort Smith Metis Nation and the Salt River First Nation because, in the rental units, they are mostly Indigenous.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regards to the old RCMP units that are there, they do have their own procurement process that they follow. I just want to elaborate a little bit that we did have some units that went up for sale in Norman Wells, but they ended up going over to the Indigenous groups. I'm not too sure what their process would be. I wouldn't be able to speak to it. I'm not too sure what their plans are for the older units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I'm just going to clarify. The RCMP units, it's a different item, just because we're talking about the community housing. If there are further questions on the RCMP housing, is it under the programs and district operations. Can the Minister clarify? Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: It is not identified in our main estimates because it is a federal program that is coming forward. Going forward, we will be identifying them because the Housing Corporation would be the department that would be administering them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Just to clarify, the RCMP are not in our main estimates. Member for Thebacha, do you have any further questions?

MS. MARTSELOS: I am very much about accountability and transparency, and I want to just ensure, Madam Chair, that, with the local housing authority, that we ensure the needs of the community, and service from management at the local housing authority is that they serve the public, and I want to ensure, Madam Chair, that all the programs and services that are offered by the local housing authority should be advertised.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will ensure that the programs that we have at the local housing authority and at the district level are advertised. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha. Are there any further questions under community housing services? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is this the part of the Housing Corporation budget where the community housing plans would be found? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is not in this section. We're still in community housing services.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Which section is it found in? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: It is in the next section, executive activity.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Thank you for that information. Can the Minister tell us how many technical advisors the Housing Corporation has? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would have to get back to the Member on the amount of technical advisors we have throughout the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I'm just looking at the organizational chart in the front. Is it fair to say that there's a technical advisor for each of the districts? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct. We have technical advisors in each of the district offices.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Has there been any change in staffing levels for the technical advisors or a reduction in positions? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. There is an activity, I think it's four activities down, that goes through district operations, and I'm thinking that technical advisors would be under district operations staffing. Would you want to keep your questions until we get to that activity? Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I'm happy to do that. I was just trying to pick up on my colleague's questions, my colleague from Hay River South, because he had some questions about technical advisors. I guess I just want to get some assurance that there's a proper level of resources given to the Housing Corporation so that communities or regions can get the maintenance

work done on the units. If it's not in this section, I can ask elsewhere. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just take that as a comment, that he'll wait until we get to the appropriate section.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. This section, just for my clarification, if there are any further questions, this is for the local housing authority and their maintenance and their costs and their units, just to be clear, so we can stay on the right activity for low-cost housing. Thank you. We'll move on, then, to Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair, just in regards to picking up off of the RCMP housing units in the communities. Do you want me to go ahead, Madam Chair? I see your hand up.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The RCMP units are not in this budget because they're not built, and they're not part of their budget until next year, is my clarification that we got. Thank you, Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: I just want clarification, letting them know that we want those RCMP houses for my community. I know Frieda just said it. I just want to let it be known for the record that we need those houses. We're short houses. Just in regard to that, low-rental housing, we don't have enough of them in our communities, one single bedroom and two-bedroom multi-plex style house units. I'm wondering if in the communities that I represent in Nunakput, say for Paulatuk, for Tuktoyaktuk, for Ulukhaktok, are there any plans to build five- or six-plexes in the community? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. I'll start your time now. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, currently, we have completion of a Tuktoyaktuk triplex that is to be completed May 1, 2020 of this year, and we have a completion of a four-plex that is to be done in Paulatuk June 1, 2020. Going forward, I don't have a list of the infrastructure projects that are going forward, but I'll have Mr. Martin elaborate on those activities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. For the outlook for next year, the Housing Corporation

is planning to deliver a new public housing duplex in Ulukhaktok.

We're also looking at delivering a new home; this is a single-family, multi-generational home in Tuktoyaktuk. That's our second new construction planned for 2021 in the communities mentioned. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to that, I wonder if there is any thought given to putting like a four-plex of single-dwelling units or one-bedroom apartments, because we have young families in my ridings, and they're just staying with families. It's pretty tough on everybody. So, to try to alleviate the pressure in regard to that, I'm just wondering if, instead of building a house in Tuktoyaktuk, could we put another four-plex in the community, if it's possible? Same thing for Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk; we're really needing not single-dwelling houses. We need multiplexes, because the young families are having babies, now, and creating their own families, but have nowhere to go. There are no rental houses, private rental units in the communities, so this would alleviate some pressure, because the lists are so long, you know. If that's possible, any thought given to it, because we're still a year out on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The delivery of public housing units is completed by an assessment on the need for each community and each district. I'm just going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the project for Nunakput. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Definitely, the need for singles, particularly public housing, is on our radar, because the amount of applicants, the majority of them is for single units. We are looking at that for our future plans, to get units that are specific for singles, whether they are bachelor units or one-bedroom units, in multiplex format; however, we're not there yet with our planning. Just to go back to when we talked about promoting home ownership, I know it sounds like we're just doing one home, but this is a really exciting project for us where we're building a four-bedroom home where one bedroom is barrier-free on the main floor. That is targeted at our public housing clients who have steady and stable income

who can go into that unit, so we're really hopeful that a family and perhaps somebody in a seniors' home moves into those units once they are constructed. We want to get back into home ownership with these types of houses; we haven't done that, really, since the mid-1990s, when we used to be in a previous program that was quite popular. So we're excited; we want to get back into those types of projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Every house, I guess, in the Housing Corporation is for sale in regard to people who want to purchase their housing that they're living in. Is that correct, Madam Chair? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am emphasizing detached units. These are not multiplexes or six-plexes; it's detached units that we are interested in selling. Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, and I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In our public housing program right now, we have a really good system where we track our tenants and their incomes, and things like that. As the Minister said, we're looking at our detached units that have that type of tenant in there, where it would make sense that, if you meet the minimum income to go and become a homeowner, we're going to do everything we can to make that happen for you. What that does for us is, as we move more people into these detached units, we could look at future replacement units with those conditions that maybe it's more seniors or more singles, in modern multiplex configurations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to that, when we build these units, the detached units that are sold to the clients in the communities who can buy the fuel, pay the power, and stuff like that, are these units taken out of our system, and then does CMHC give you the opportunity to get another unit to replace that unit in that community? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at, I guess, maybe refurbishing the current stock that we have, because we do have aging public housing units, this is an initiative going forward. I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have an agreement with CMHC that provides operating money for our public housing units. It doesn't apply to all of our public housing units; there are some units we operate on our own, with funding we receive from the government. It's a complex process, if there is CMHC money involved in a unit we're trying to sell, but we work our way through it in the best interest of the client. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, just in regard to that, I mean, when we were looking at the broader picture in regard to the planning of new housing units going into the communities, I think what they should be doing with the Minister is coming into the community. The housing stock that they do have, like, you know, we buy a lot of doors, we buy a lot of windows to try to keep those places warm. Like I said before, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s; some of our units, we have old units in my riding. So the monies that they are putting forward and the house planning that they do have, they should be looking at replacing; not so much replacing, but getting units that are needed in the community, like single or double apartment buildings. That's more of a comment. I thank you for the work that you're doing; thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to just conclude with the Member's comment. That's the purpose of our community plans, is to identify the core needs and the needs within their community, and what it is that they want us to build within their community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just in regard to CMHC funding and the declining O and M support, I'm wondering, for a long time, now, we have held the cap of housing units within the Housing Corporation at the 2,800-unit mark. I'm wondering if there is an appetite from the Housing Corporation to review that number and

figure out how we could go about increasing the amount of public housing that we do have within the Northwest Territories, because we know that we are not meeting our housing needs currently within the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Member, for your comment. I do realize that we do have the 2,800 units, and it just looks as if it's a cap, but I don't want to look at that. We're looking at the home ownership program and we're wanting to, I guess, recycle those units and move forward from it. The co-investment fund plays a significant role in this, so, looking at Indigenous partnerships and stakeholders that we would be able to partner with them and create more units going forward. I will pass the comment on for further clarification to Mr. Carpenter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The real answer on why we haven't expanded is cost. It's very expensive for us to operate and maintain a public housing unit. It typically ranges around \$20,000 a year. We do need more. Our waiting list across the territories for public housing is over 950 right now. As I said before, our programming is different for major centres, as they have other housing options that might be available to people. Where we are really stuck is in what we call the rural and remote communities, the small communities where there are limited options, there are limited incomes. Right now, we are sitting with about 333 applicants there. We have heard situations where people have sat on that list for a very long time. It is those areas that the Minister has directed us to continue our efforts with Canada as a partnership to try to address that. We haven't really expanded our portfolio since the mid-1990s, so this is something we will have to keep working on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to how the Housing Corporation works alongside the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, given that their housing programming and income assistance programming are really tightly connected from the user's perspective. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Within our departments, we see a lot of collaboration going forward. There are a lot of similarities. We do have similarities, as well, with the department of health, and we are working towards an initiative of how we are going to be working with our clients going forward and try to simplify and clarify what programs and services are available to the public. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just in working with constituents, I have noticed that there is some overlap and there are definitely similarities between the information that we collect from people from a housing standpoint, from a health standpoint, from an income assistance standpoint, but very much so from a housing and income assistance standpoint. I am wondering if there is an appetite with housing to work closely with Education, Culture and Employment to make that access and the reporting structures a lot more user friendly for the client. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. There is an appetite to work closely with my colleague and looking at the structure programs that we do offer within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Looking at page 363 under minor modernization and improvements to units, it is notable that that number has significantly gone up this year. What can we expect to see as far as how that will play out in public housing units? Where will that money go? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the significant change in the numbers, I will have Mr. Martin elaborate on the response. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. We certainly do note that there has been an increase from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021. The areas that were noted, we are setting aside about \$1.1 million for additional demolition work in 2020-2021. We are looking at additional investment in minor modernization and improvement repairs for local housing organizations, additional collective bargaining funding for local housing organizations. We are looking at \$250,000 additional for designated subcontracts and surveys, which are pre-environmental assessment work, basically, to support our modernization improvement projects. Those are the main increases. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Given that some of these improvements are things that will make, hopefully, units more cost effective to run because they are more efficient, will we end up seeing a difference going forward in the cost of utilities for public housing units? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope we are able to see a difference, indeed, because we do build and we are renovating to be more energy efficient within our public housing units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): [Microphone turned off] ...for the NWT Housing Corporation, community housing services? If not, please turn to page 363, NWT Housing Corporation, community housing services, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$58,268,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Now, we will be going over to page 365, NWT Housing Corporation, executive, with information items up to 367. Are there any questions under the executive? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at page 365 where it states that the executive there manages the implementation of the government's direction related to housing services, can the Minister tell me what is the direction she

received from this government with respect to delivery of services? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is within our mandate letter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is it possible for the Minister to expand on that for the people of the NWT to hear? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is really the items that are set out in the mandate priorities, which was increase the stock of affordable housing units of 100 units over four years. We have the transition of 100 individuals to home ownership, increase seasonal part-time employment; developing skills of community trade people; increase availability of childcare spaces, I suppose; increase supports for seniors; and improve services for individuals with addictions to return to their communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the strategic and operational direction, has the department put something together in writing with respect to that strategic and operational planning? Is there a plan in place, or are they working on something? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working towards our annual business plan right now. It is not complete. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to qualitative and quantitative research that is being done, what is the criteria for that? Has it changed over the years, or do we just follow the same process year after year? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Martin elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation does undertake numerous studies year-to-year to inform our investments, to inform our program renewal efforts. Examples would be the recent seniors planning study that was completed. That is a study that identified a number of areas that could certainly benefit from additional investment in seniors' housing. We are certainly taking that into account. We also participate with the statistics bureau every four years, complete the core needs survey. Again, this is a very important document for the corporation to inform our work and our efforts. We also undertake a range of technical studies, as well, and research with various parties, such as CMHC and Enercan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to technical studies, I know the Housing Corporation is always looking at ways to improve efficiencies with respect to heat loss and that type of thing. I guess you do studies, as well, to see the cost of doing nothing versus the cost of making changes. Is there a big cost savings between doing nothing and just leaving houses as they are? Because I look at it like we've got a cost of maybe, if you have some high-end equipment and you have to fly people in from Yellowknife to fix it, and on, and on, there is that cost associated, as well, so I'm always skeptical of that, by making something energy-efficient, you've got no problems; you've got all these other things. So is it advantageous for us to actually go above and beyond with the technical aspect of housing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to say absolutely, because we do deal with and we do have clients within the higher part of the Arctic and we do have to invest in our public housing units to make sure that they are cost-effective and that they are affordable. As we go forward and look at these units, it does cost the Housing Corporation quite a bit to maintain and, looking at the future development, like, we're looking at wanting to set our clients up for home ownership. So I hear the Member's comments on are we going to weigh this out, but, you know, we work with what we have and we try to enhance for the betterment of the Northwest Territories and our clients. I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the response. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the technologies and the systems we use nowadays, the Member is right, we really have to be careful of over-designing or the types of new technologies we put in, because they have to be able to be serviced by our staff, or even in the communities. There is a lot of new technology out there that is really sophisticated. Some of it is really complex to maintain. Some of it is tough to get parts for, so we watch all of those. Even with our ventilation systems, it takes an education component for our tenants, our clients, to utilize those systems, to deal with moisture in their houses that may cause mould, and those types of things. Those are things, when we're designing new buildings or new programming, we really have to take into account those types of things, that we're doing the right thing with those technologies and building styles. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You had mentioned earlier, you had discussed rent supps. Can the Minister tell me if there has been a comparison done, I guess, between the cost of rent supps and NWT-owned structures and, you know, if it's cheaper one way or the other? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the rent supps and the differences between the rent supps and becoming a homeowner. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Just to clarify, that was what you were asking, Member for Hay River South?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. My understanding is that the rent supps are buildings that are owned by a third party, and then you have the Housing Corporation-owned. I just want to know the comparison costs between operating or maintaining those two. Is it cheaper to just get people to build you units and rent it off them? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Member, for clarifying your question. I'll have Mr. Carpenter respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the volume of our inventory, the number of owned units we have is 2,644, and the number of units we lease is 200, so it's really a small portion, and it's likely that, in the coming years, you will see that 200 diminish. It's just easier for us when we do our own maintenance on our units, that it's better. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one last question, here. My understanding is that a lot of the employees in housing are currently aging, and they are going to be retiring. What plans does the corporation have in place to bring on new recruits? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize that, as well. I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on that response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. We have a lot of staff; we have 128 positions that operate public housing for us throughout the territories, and a lot of them are long-tenured; some of them, in excess of 35 years, long-term employees. In terms of succession planning, we are in constant communication with them about, you know, when they're planning to retire. For the maintenance side, we have a heavy

focus on apprenticeships in those areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. I will move on to the Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I will begin with: why does the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation not have a board?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will revert this question over to Mr. Martin. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, looking back a few years ago, the Housing Corporation did have a board. However, at the time, there were studies done and there were some organizational changes made that resulted in the Housing Corporation reporting directly to the Minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's an odd theme of our government that we consistently demand to give us less power, whether it be the Power Corporation being run by boards of the Aurora College getting rid of its board altogether, and now also the Housing Corporation. I guess my problem is, with all due respect, this is not a question for staff; this is a question for the Minister. I mean, her staff is not in a position of whether to change the governance structure. That's only something that can be done at the political level. So my question is: would the Minister be willing to look into reinstating a board for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. It would be something that I would like to just take a look at and see how active we were when the board existed, what decisions were made, what programs were happening at that time, compared to how effective they actually would be in this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Minister looking into that. I do think there are some very large structural governance issues with the Housing Corporation that will require political restructuring. On that, we have local housing authorities, all of which have boards. There is always the trade-off; the more local control we give to the housing authorities, you know, we get better decisions on the ground, but each of those cost us money to run. We also know they're not exactly the best at collecting rent. Is the Minister planning on looking at the governance structure of the housing authorities across the territory?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize that this was a concern throughout the Northwest Territories and how the boards do program delivery at the community level, but yet we're looking at communities making decisions on their own, and we're looking at them structuring on their own. With my leadership, I want to go down, up; for the community members to tell the government what it is that they want, instead of the government coming forward and saying, "This is what we're going to give you." So it opens up the table for discussion. I'm quite interested because times have changed, and we do have some scenarios that are happening at the community level that would need a little bit more support. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess one of my concerns with the local housing authorities is that in many communities you have the housing authorities, you have the Indigenous government, you have the municipal government; we essentially have three or four voices who you could define as the community. I know we're developing a number of community housing plans, I'm supportive of those. I think the first one we've seen is definitely a step in the right direction. In part of those community housing plans would the Minister be looking at changing governance models? I think there is potential here to essentially get rid of some of the local authorities, pass over the funding to Indigenous governance. Is that something we would be looking at in those community housing plans?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is an approach that we've already initiated

throughout the Northwest Territories. We have working groups with the Tlicho, right now, that have been successful, where they've identified housing needs and programs within their area. Deline has approached us, as well. They are a self-governing community. We haven't had very much interest in communities wanting to take over the housing initiative and the housing program. It's time coming, but we're there working and educating them on what it takes to program deliver the Housing Corporation. I do realize that we do have the Indigenous groups, the municipalities, but, to be honest, we haven't had very much interest. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm aware, you know, that Indigenous governments will take on powers when they want, but I wouldn't be interested, and I don't think anyone would be interested, in taking on housing without the money there. We all know it's a struggle. I think a lot of the Indigenous governments are capable of doing this and would if they knew they were also going to get the funding that the local housing authorities get. Would the Minister be willing to take a bit of a proactive approach here and make offers regarding what we would actually offer to fund the Indigenous governments? To just download housing but not give them any money is nonsense.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. With my experience, that would work with some of the self-government initiatives throughout the Northwest Territories, and, to be honest, the housing is considered but it's more wanting to be supportive. I see the territories as kind of reluctant and with our programs and support that we have initiated the independence for stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories through our program delivery, and that needs a lot of support, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to further discussions on this. I've spoken with a number of Indigenous governments who, if the Housing Corporation and the local housing authorities would simply be transferred over to them, and the funding and the units, they would gladly take that on and they would go to CMHC and get better funding than us. I'll continue to talk about this.

I wanted to speak a bit about the cap on units. I know the Minister doesn't like thinking of it as a cap, but that is simply what it is. I've heard a number of numbers; 2,400 units is what I understood are public housing, but I understand we manage around 2,800, but then I also heard 2,600. Can I just get some clarification on those different numbers I hear?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the amount of units and clarification on what it is that the Housing Corporation administers and how. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to give Member the specifics on what we're operating as our public-housing-unit inventory that we're running right now is 2,418. We also run some units under what we call affordable housing, that we rent out as a home ownership type program at 221. We have a portfolio of 190 units in what we call our market units. These are in communities where there is no private market. They're typically rented to teachers and nurses. That should get us close to the 2,800 figure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do appreciate that breakdown, and I guess it wouldn't be fair for us when referring to the cap to include market because, if we can build more market housing and then it pays for itself or even makes us money, then that's great. I guess my question is: I'm not satisfied with our current mandate commitment which says we'll build 100 units if we can convince 100 people to get units. In many of the communities, a house is not an investment; it's a depreciating asset, and we're just passing on something that will never increase in value to a person. I question whether that's ethical or something we even want to do in nonmarket communities. The heart of this matter is Nunavut's building hundreds of new units. They've managed to get money out of CMHC; they managed to surpass their cap, so will the Minister of housing meet with the appropriate Minister in Ottawa and try to get us above this 2,400-unit cap?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I actually had made a trip down to Ottawa in

February, and I wanted to just elaborate on that trip a little bit. I did identify the housing needs for the Northwest Territories, and I also did meet with the housing Minister for Nunavut, as well. Looking at the support that we have in the Northwest Territories, they do have an advocacy group where they do have ITK. In the Northwest Territories, we have our Indigenous groups, but it's challenging to get them all together to lobby at the same time so that we're able to achieve a certain amount of federal dollars coming forward. Going forward, I have instructed my staff to make their way down to Ottawa and lobby, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. I have Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have questions that follow along from my colleague, the Member for Yellowknife North. I know that the Housing Corporation has invested money in research such as the seniors study and the community survey, which includes the housing need numbers, and that they are now investing in community plans. My specific question is: how does funding relate to the results of all of these studies? The seniors study says we need more seniors' housing. The community survey shows more housing need in 2019 than 2014. I'm going to say the community plans are going to say we need more houses. How is the study going to be related to the funding for the results? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know there are a lot of studies that we've done, but they've been done over a significant amount of years. Looking at the changing of the wants in the communities, what we could identify was that the communities are wanting to build. We have a different approach. We want information from the community to determine what it is that we're going to be putting on the ground. Maybe they want home ownership or home repair, or do they want public housing units? That's what that study determines. If we're going to be going in and we're going to be building a bunch of market units and putting them in the communities, is that community going to actually be able to afford those units, looking at the cost of living, as well, and really trying to structure how we're going to program deliver through the Northwest Territories? Those plans really identify what is needed throughout the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the answer from the Minister. We actually already have some documents that are current, that show what's required, such as the community survey which was done a year ago. It talks about the housing that's unaffordable, needs repair, not large enough for the people. I'm not getting my head around how much more information you need in order to make the investments that will produce more housing in the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I went to Ottawa, I met with the Nunavut Minister for Housing, and he had a similar approach in looking at what is identified in the community and looking at what is feasible. These plans and these studies identify: are we going to be energy efficient going forward; the people in the community, are they going to be able afford the houses that we are putting on the ground; are we going to be able to afford the houses going on the ground; and what style do we need?

I know it seems like there were a lot of reports, but then, looking at what needs to be delivered, just for an example, right now, the Member for Nunavut expressed that they need duplexes, single units. The Housing Corporation has come forward, and we're putting in a multi-unit. That is something where the community plan would have identified what style of houses are to be in that community and what is more cost effective, if we were to build a triplex or else a duplex. I'm not too sure. Just for an example, that's what I would rely on those plans for. Looking at the feasibility and the amount of houses that are going to be put on the ground, if we could stretch the dollar that we have, and if we are to be instructed by the community to say, well, we want a nine-plex or, no, we want to become homeowners, then it changes up the dynamic of the community. We also look at the income and the amount of employment that is in that community.

I hope I answered your question, but I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on it a little bit more. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in terms of those specific studies, they're very valuable to us in that they help us plan, or where we're going to target our investments. For example, the seniors study, we looked at it, and there are a couple of major centres that stuck out for us. The Minister has given us direction that seniors are very

important for the next four years for her, and two communities that stuck out for us are Yellowknife and Hay River. Those are two areas we're really going to look at, what can we do in terms of partnerships or projects over the next four years.

The needs survey, same thing, we're waiting for the final results to get the core need numbers, but the study that came out had a couple of items that stuck out there, too, which was affordability and adequacy. When that comes out, we have to take a hard look at our programming to make sure it remains responsive to those types of issues.

The other one I mentioned earlier is we look at our waiting list. When you see that the waiting list is dominated by singles, that really drives. We have to think about that, what can we do to address that, and things like that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that there are community housing plans underway now. Can the Minister tell us at what cost and when they will be completed? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll revert the question over to Mr. Martin. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. For 2020-2021, the Housing Corporation has set aside \$336,000 to support a community planner for the corporation, to support that activity in-house. Also, the balance of those dollars will be used to support engagement sessions with the various communities and associated promotion, advertising. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't get an answer to when the 33 plans are going to be finished. If I could ask that again, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Sorry, I didn't answer that question. The 33 plans are to be done by the end of my term. I am really pushing my department now to, honestly, get a majority of them done by April

because I need to submit something to Ottawa. I need these numbers. I need the studies done so I could present something. I want to make my way down, and they're looking at their budget for November. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The sooner the better. What I hear is that people are caught in a more or less continuous cycle of study, which may be valuable to the Housing Corporation, but I'm going to say bluntly is of questionable value to the end user and simply because I don't hear that there is in fact more housing. In Yellowknife, in Hay River, we need more housing for seniors. I don't know of any projects that are going to be built this year for seniors. I'm just going to ask one more time to go back up to my original question which is: how do the studies actually relate to investing in housing? There just seems to be a disconnect here. We've got lots of information, but we don't have lots of end result for the people who are waiting for housing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to quickly elaborate because I wanted to look at the structures that we built that were determined by those plans going forward. We went and looked at the study for seniors, so then we put seniors' complexes in the majority of the districts, in the regions, looking at that and trying to have them age in place. Looking at multi-built units that need to be established and put on the ground, in Yellowknife, specifically, the majority of the units that are here are public housing, but then, we do lease off of the private in the city. I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on this a little bit more. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will speak to the item I should have elaborated on before, where we said that the seniors study said that projects in Yellowknife and Hay River stuck out the most. What that does for us is we're going to be reaching out now to different stakeholders in these two areas to see where we can help to get a project started up. Where I mentioned before that we've been successful with Canada to achieve a carve-off of the national co-investment fund, that's going to be a really good program to leverage federal dollars and perhaps some GNWT dollars to get projects like this off the ground. We will be reaching out,

seeking partnerships or encouraging partnerships for those types of things. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Committee, we will take a short recess and resume in about ten minutes.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. We're going to call committee back to order, and we are going to continue on where we were, in NWT Housing Corporation, executive, operation expenditures summary. Questions. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I just want to ask a question. As you know, in the community of Fort Smith, or the constituency of Thebacha, the standard of living is the lowest in the Northwest Territories to live. We have a very aging population, and we have a lot of seniors in the community of Fort Smith, therefore I'm wondering why only Hay River and Yellowknife are included in that community planning policy that is being put together in these next couple of years. I would like to ensure that consideration for the community of Fort Smith is also in the planning. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was under the impression that all 33 communities were going forward with the housing plans. I will have Jim elaborate on it a little bit more. Thank you. Sorry, I mean Mr. Martin. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the Housing Corporation did undertake the seniors planning study. The Phase I of that study, the focus was on Yellowknife and Hay River. There were some subsequent reviews done, as well, more statistical-type studies, analysis, tabletop analysis, but it is recognized that there is further research that will need to be drawn upon for the other communities; but, at this stage, we have completed an in-department review of Yellowknife and Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I'm not really satisfied with that answer. We have a lot of retirees and aging population and seniors in the community of Fort Smith, and I would like to make sure that the Housing Corporation would reconsider making sure

that Fort Smith is part of that planning process, and they are included.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. To elaborate on the response, I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter respond. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in follow-up to what I said before about the programming such as the co-investment fund, we said we would reach out to organizations in Yellowknife and in Hay River, but it doesn't mean we're just locked in on those two communities. We will reach out to organizations in places like Fort Smith to not only promote the program but see what interest is there, as well, to participate in seniors projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that the waiting list for senior units in Fort Smith is a long one. Some seniors have to wait a long time to get into one of the units, and many of the seniors in Fort Smith would prefer to be in their own units. As I know, as I told you before, there is a long waiting list, and sometimes it takes up to two years or so before they get into a unit, so therefore I'm concerned about the availability of housing for seniors and our aging population in the community of Fort Smith.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will follow up with the Member in regard to the seniors' available units in her riding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I was told this was the place where I could ask about the community housing plans. The Minister said that there are 33 to be developed. How are the community housing plans going to be done in, say, the regional centres, including Yellowknife? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Drafting and putting these community plans together, we have 13 participants so far and we've completed one. My push is that I want the majority of these community plans to be completed and done by August of this year. I'm going to have Mr. Martin elaborate on the community plans going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, as the Minister alluded to, the community housing plans are a priority for the corporation. We recognize the importance of what they're going to provide in terms of informing future investment and partnerships. As the Minister mentioned, this will continue to be a top priority for the corporation, and our aim is to make significant progress between now and August, as the Minister alluded to, and certainly we'll continue to work with the communities and also take into consideration their needs in terms of timing, et cetera, as these plans unfold. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the community plans, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in terms of the question related to our approach to working with major centres like Yellowknife, we would have to work with all the stakeholders involved, particularly the city, and we have to find out what our role is that they want us to play in the development of that plan. It might be a small one, it might be a major one, but we haven't yet determined that with the city. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the last speaker, who actually answered my question, which is about how there is going to be a different approach with I'll call them the tax-based communities. Have there been any preliminary discussions with any of the tax-based communities about how they're going to approach developing the an approach with we will call them the tax-based communities. Have there been any preliminary discussions with any of the tax-based communities about how they are going to approach to helping the community housing plans? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the answer. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: In terms of us reaching out or being contacted by the major centres, not yet. Right now, it is a new initiative for us. The ones that we have been dealing with have been actively coming forward to us. What we are doing now is to strengthen up our activity towards reaching out to all communities to see how interested they are to get this process going. We haven't reached out to the major centres yet. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I am going to make a suggestion here to the Minister and her staff that a scheduled work plan for getting all of these 33 done would be really helpful. I agree. I think approaching the tax-based municipalities is going to be a different kind of process and involve different partners and so on. The City of Yellowknife has a homelessness strategy. They survey the number of homeless people in the community. There is quite a bit of work that the city's done. There are a lot of NGOs here in town that are doing work on this issue, as well. My suggestion to the Minister is to develop a timeline for this work to make sure it actually gets done and set out in there different kinds of approaches they need to take for the tax-based communities.

I want to turn now to some of the numbers that are on page 366. Policy and planning, there is what looks like a large increase of \$400,000 between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. When I look down into the expenditure categories, it seems to be made up of an increase in compensation in benefits and travel. Those seem to be some of the major areas, contract services, as well. Can someone tell me what is going on with this part of the Housing Corporation? This is a relatively large increase in expenditures, and I would like to know what this is related to. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to have the question reverted to Mr. Carpenter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the major increase there, most of it is related to what we might have mentioned earlier, that we set aside money there of over \$236,000 for the community planned activity. That was to support these community engagement costs. Part of that development of the community plan, too, is that we hire. Whenever we get into a community, we make sure we hire somebody local to participate in that process. It is a really community-driven process. The other funding that makes up that increase is, we will see it in a lot of our costs here, forced-growth increases related to the UNW collective bargaining process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That is a helpful explanation. I certainly support the development of the community housing plans. This is the section of the Housing Corporation budget that seems to deal with federal, provincial, territorial matters, as well. In November of 2018, the bilateral agreement with CMHC on the National Housing Strategy was signed by our government. I don't think I've seen an action plan that spells out how that money is going to be used. I thought that was a requirement of the funding agreement. We are now a year and a half into this nine-year program, and I still haven't seen an action plan. When is the corporation going to have an action plan? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the action plan that was developed in 2018, I am going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we did sign our bilateral agreement with Canada in November 2018. Part of the requirements of all the bilaterals across Canada is that provinces or territories are obligated to develop three-year action plans throughout the duration. We have been working on that since then. All of the provinces and territories have been. We are pleased to announce that we just got ours approved and signed off recently. We plan to table that during this session so the Members can see that action plan. That action plan includes priorities related to maintaining

our existing social housing stock, repairing and replacing where possible, and there is some money in there for home ownership repairs, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is there any money in there for new housing to be built and added to the stock? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Martin elaborate on the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. As Mr. Carpenter alluded to, in the action plan, there are a number of areas that we are planning to invest in. One of them is the repair and replacement of existing housing stock. That would be an example of where we would be constructing new public housing, for example. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am kind of anxious to see this plan. I wish that it had been shared even in draft form with Regular MLAs before it had been signed off on. That is more of a comment than anything else. I would encourage the Minister to do that in the future. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Are there any further questions under the NWT Housing Corporation, executive? Seeing none, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, executive, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$2,528,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will now move on to finance and infrastructure services, beginning on page 368, with information items on 370 and 71. Questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am wondering if the Minister can explain the first item on page 369, debt repayment, which has grown substantially since the 2018-2019 actuals. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Martin elaborate on it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The debt repayment component represents the annual debt payments that the Housing Corporation makes under the Social Housing Agreement. The components in there are both an interest component, which is approximately \$370,000, as well as we do budget for the principal portion. That is the balance of the \$955. The previous year actuals, that represents a net amount of the debt payments. You can see that the actual payments in the previous year, under mortgage payments, social housing agreement, you'll see that that is \$463,000. That represents the interest portion.

From an audit standpoint, you report your expenditure for interest, but the principle portion would have been charged against the debt obligation. What you are seeing here is just the interest portion. However, the Housing Corporation does budget for both because we do need the cash set aside in our fiscal framework to accommodate both payments.

The combination of the "mortgage payments - social housing agreement" \$463,000 in the previous actuals, 2018-2019, are netted with the valuation allowance of \$350,000. You will see that as a credit. Those two net together to give you the hundred. The hundred, the valuation adjustment, just to explain that as well, the valuation adjustment represents an adjustment that was made on the mortgage receivable portfolio. This past year, the Housing Corporation's mortgage valuation improved, so it ended up being an offset to the expenditure. Lots of details, but that does explain the change. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The next line item is finance and administration, and then the third is financial planning, which was broken away from finance and administration. I'm wondering if you can explain what is encompassed in that line item, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Jim elaborate on the response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the financial planning section, we have two staff who are in that area. Their primary focus is to support the Housing Corporation and the development of our main estimates, supporting with the annual business planning process as well as our capital planning process. It's a focused shop, basically, in those areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. Are these staff members also responsible for liaising with CMHC? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, they're not. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Is there a staff member within the Housing Corporation currently that liaises with CMHC and creates that relationship, and, if so, what division are they found in? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Currently, we don't have a position right now that deals directly with CMHC. It is the president who deals directly with them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. In the absence of the president, would that be one of the vice-presidents who would take control of that role? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. I'm going to switch gears here a little bit and talk about waste management a little bit because we sat with ENR yesterday and talked about our responsibility as a government to look toward including waste management and disposal of construction material when we're doing buildings in the Northwest Territories. Does the Housing Corporation have a waste management plan for the buildings that they produce within their communities, or do they have an expectation of waste management for contractors whom they hire to do that work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is a very important question. I'm going to have Jim elaborate on that, what we do with the material. Sorry, "Mr. Martin." Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. When we structure our contracts, the contractors who are carrying out the demolition work for the Housing Corporation, the expectation is that they will adhere to all of the local and territorial laws in ensuring the safe disposition of building materials post the demolition. We would look to the contractors to ensure that that is done. If we're doing the work ourselves, then we would also do the same. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The Northwest Territories currently has a very high per-capita landfill. Our landfills are quickly filling, and I'm wondering if the Housing Corporation will be able to work with ENR to put in some policies or legislation that would allow them to be more mindful of the waste that they are creating within our communities and to be able to work also with procurement and with contractors to make sure that we're taking that into consideration when we're hiring people or when we're doing work ourselves within communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I will take that comment and that recommendation from the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will move on to the Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to just ask some questions first about homelessness initiatives. They are \$2.9 million in this budget. Can the Minister remind us when the homelessness strategy is going to be complete? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. June is the set date. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Is the intention of that strategy to provide a rationale for additional investment in homelessness initiatives? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's correct, and it's throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. At what point will the request for additional funding for homelessness initiatives come forward, following the completion of the strategy? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to revert the question to Mr. Martin. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, this is a very important document coming forward, that we're looking forward to having to inform future engagement with the federal government as well as to inform priority setting with our existing resources, as well. Those decisions and engagement activities would follow shortly after the release of that study. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that response. What I understand is, there's no new money that will be allocated to homelessness initiatives; it will either be reprofiled from other

programs and services in the Housing Corporation, or it will come from the federal government. Is that correct? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are looking at pursuing additional federal funding to deal with the homelessness issue throughout the territory, in working with the Indigenous partnerships and really relying on partnerships going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm a little discouraged to hear that because, if there's no federal engagement at this point, it means that the money is a long way out, and, up to this point, I'm not sure what success there's been with partnerships on housing with Indigenous government organizations. For example, maybe the Minister could tell us about existing partnerships around homelessness with Indigenous government organizations? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Throughout the Northwest Territories, we have different initiatives that we have, funding that is available through our programming and that we enhance shelters throughout the Northwest Territories. Looking for new funding going forward, I just really want to emphasize that this is why the community plans are very important. I did go to Ottawa, and I did see that Nunavut had displayed a document that was something that the Minister was able to reference and being able to review in regards for the need for homelessness in that territory in Nunavut. This is why I wanted the majority of the community plans to be completed in August. This is specifically why. I want to make my way down and lobby for more money to deal with our homelessness issue and to put more houses on the ground, and this absolutely has to be done in August. I want a report completed and done by September, so I have something to present when I get down there in November. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of follow-up questions. Are there any existing partnerships with Indigenous government

organizations that specifically relate to homelessness? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I got a little bit passionate there about the information collaboration, and really lobbying on behalf of the territory. I will have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the programs and the partnerships that we have that address homelessness in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are really excited about our Northern Pathways to Housing program. This is a program where we partner with typically an Indigenous community organization to put up a building that is for typically homeless people, and this is the only program that is targeted at communities outside major centres, or mainly targeted. We have some on the ground right now that are doing very well. We have one up in Aklavik; we have a four-plex there. We have one out in Behchoko. We have one down in Fort Simpson, and we have one out in Fort Good Hope, there. This is where we have worked really hard to develop a relationship with an operator. We've provided funds to renovate or build a new building, and we're quite excited about that one.

Another one is we've talked about our community housing support initiative. That is something in-house where we will contribute to community projects will have some sort of benefit to addressing homelessness. The other one I keep promoting, or I've mentioned several times, is the co-investment fund. That's going to be another avenue where we will get some homelessness projects off the ground. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to use the rest of my time to talk about the Transitional Rent Supplement Program. I see that the 2018-2019 actuals, the fund wasn't fully subscribed. Has the Housing Corporation gained some insight into why this program isn't usually fully subscribed? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on this

rent supplementary program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Transitional Rent Supplement Program, we like the program. We've always wanted to see it more fully subscribed, but what we've done is we've included it in this year's planning because, as part of our bilateral agreement, Canada is coming out with a program called a Canadian Housing Benefit, and that's going to be a program that is going to be delivered or provide a benefit right to individuals for housing. Our plan, or our intent, or our hope is that that program is going to take over for the TRSP. Our plan is we're hoping that it takes over so that we can wind down our TRSP program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure that I got an answer to the functional part of this question, which is why the program wasn't fully subscribed and what the lessons are going forward with the new Canada Housing Benefit. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have Mr. Carpenter elaborate further. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We really don't have a clear understanding, as well, why the program wasn't fully subscribed. We spent a lot of time and effort contacting private landlords, promoting the program as much as we could. We advertised it in the public and the communities. Despite all those efforts, though, we didn't get the levels of participation that we wanted out of the program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. This program would have been prime for an evaluation to really get even more detail about why it didn't take off, given, on the face of it, it looks like it's much-needed. Can the Minister say whether the Canada program is going to be a one-size-fits-all program, or will there be a unique set of criteria that apply to the NWT? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see the importance of this program going forward, and I would like to elaborate on it going forward and looking at a lot of advertisement that could take this to another level. I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Canada Housing Benefit was anticipated or scheduled by Canada to be developed and rolled out on April 1. That's not going to happen, we were advised. We're not clear on when that program is being rolled out. It's still under development, so we don't know any of the details. We do participate in some working groups on that program, but we just don't have any details to release on that at this point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister elaborate a bit on the federal and territorial funding, the operating agreements, and just explain to me, I guess, what they are and who they're with, and if it's basically more suited for Yellowknife? Yes, is it in Yellowknife or is it in something that affects the whole NWT? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The federal agreements that we do have in place, they are for the whole of the Northwest Territories, and not just one area to be fully experiencing the funding and the benefits that the programs have to offer. I'm going to have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the agreements that we have in place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister pretty much captured it. We mentioned our unit inventory earlier; that's the operating funding for that portfolio, all over the territories. We do have the unilateral operating agreements. Those are agreements that, when we signed our agreement with Canada back in the mid-1990s, I believe, we picked up some of their programming. One that stands out for those of you from Yellowknife is the North Slave Housing Corporation. We picked up

operating money for them that we flow through to them, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to hear that we're discussing homelessness today, and the need for emergency shelters, but I guess I'm kind of perplexed on exactly what an emergency shelter is. Because I look in the communities, and you've got people living on the street when it's minus 40, and the government, the department wants plans provided to them saying that they need assistance. The problem is that a lot of the non-profit groups that usually look after social issues and social concerns and homelessness are taxed as it is, and they don't have the people in place to sit down and do that work, or they don't have the money to pay somebody to do it. So I'm just wondering: what role does the NWT Housing Corporation play in homelessness? I'll use Hay River as an example, because we went through the winter just looking after ourselves. I've reached out to the Housing Corporation numerous times, so I'd just like to hear the comment from the Minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to elaborate that the homelessness issue throughout the Northwest Territories is quite significant, and I do identify it, and I see that the numbers are growing. We, as the Housing Corporation, do have several initiatives going forward and looking at how we deal with the homelessness issue throughout the territory. First of all, I would need to hear which areas are experiencing the homelessness and looking at the community plans that we are developing, and looking at the studies that we have developed going forward, that it feeds off it. It gives us that information of what clearly needs to be established. The Housing Corporation, you know, we could initiate in building the facilities, but then the other thing I'm concerned about is: who is going to carry over the program? Looking at the number of stocks that we do have in the community, we do have aging inventory, and they would be available if we were approached by organizations and communities that, if the communities wanted to take our old stock over.

One of the things that I want to elaborate on is we do have the Northern Pathways program; I'm going to emphasize that it has been established in Fort Simpson, Aklavik, Behchoko, and Fort Good Hope, and it does come with a wraparound service. So the

clients who are actually in the facility have quick access to Income Support and addiction treatments, and whatever. We do hire somebody who effectively works with the clients. So, going forward, those community plans are very significant and very important because it really identifies the need in each of the regions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Earlier today, the Minister responsible for homelessness had mentioned that, under that portfolio, there are a couple of staff allocated to it, but there are no funds. Then I look at the housing, and the housing does have an assisted fund, there. Are they two separate things? How do you reconcile your duties as the Minister responsible for homelessness and the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is an area that we have had to slowly take responsibility for, which is fine, it's good, but, because we are the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, we're looking at every avenue; home ownership, public housing, homelessness, and the need that is required in the North. So we have developed a number of programs where we would be able to address this issue. Earlier, I had said that we did not have money that was set aside, but we do have money that is sitting there. It's quite a confusing initiative for me to try to display and to try to speak of, but, going forward, during my term, I am wanting to construct a homeless shelter in each of the regions to deal with this issue and to try to elaborate on it a little bit more, that we'd be able to enhance the service that the Housing Corporation could participate in. Not only that, but to also lobby on behalf of the Housing Corporation that this is something that we need, that we require additional and more money to be working with this initiative throughout the territory. I hope that answers the Member's questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: That answers the question. The other thing is that I want to tell you right now, you wanted to hear it, Hay River needs a shelter, an emergency shelter for men during the winter. So you heard it from me, and I hear it from the people in town. So now you know, and hopefully we'll get somebody to approach you; we

already did once, and hopefully we'll hear back. I just wanted to make that point.

The next thing here is, I guess, as Regular MLAs here, most issues we hear about have to deal with either housing or health. Those are the complaints we get. So, with the number of complaints, do you guys track the number of complaints that you get with respect to housing in all areas? If you do, can you give me an idea, a breakdown of what those complaints are? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Those numbers are quite significant; they are huge. They could come from, you know, the concerns that are out there from maintenance issues to non-payment of rent. The numbers are quite large. Or else just not finding a place to stay. There are people who are couch-surfing. There are people who have just had children or they've been incarcerated, they're trying to return back to their community, or treatment centre, and they don't have the support returning back to their community. So looking at housing, it comes with such a significant dynamic; it's so large that, since I've held the portfolio, according to our stats and our questions, like, I'm right on top of there and I can see the drastic need for improvement; not improvement, more an enhancement of what we have and working with what we've got. I want to really emphasize, really put out there, that the community plans, the housing plans, this is what would identify for us and enable for us to start budgeting what each region is wanting to establish in their area. I hope I was able to answer your question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. She, I guess, kind of answered the question, but I know where her office is, so I know how to get hold of her, and I can do that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Moving on, we will move on to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I'm just going to talk a little bit about homelessness, as well. I, too, in my riding, in Deninu Kue, we have a homelessness issue, and there is already infrastructure in place. I think we're already in discussion with the Minister on that, so hopefully we can see some progress on that. I'm just looking at page 370, here. I'm just looking at some trends, things like the Homelessness Assistance Fund

staying put but items like the Small Community Homelessness Fund going down, the Shelter Enhancement Fund is going down. I'm just getting a sense of why that is the way it is. My question to the Minister is: is the intention here to rely on the co-investment fund to get some help from the feds? What is the intention here, and why are these line items trending the way they are? Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to have Mr. Martin respond to this question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. With regard to the Shelter Enhancement Fund, Victims of Family Violence line item, we did have a fair amount of extra spending in 2018-2019 compared to the base budget of \$100,000 for 2020-2021. The reason for that additional spending is the fact that the Housing Corporation, under budget 2016, secured additional funding through that budget, the federal budget, and was able to invest additional dollars into Victims of Family Violence shelters. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair, and thank you for that response. I had a loaded question, there, but I guess I'm going to ask it again. I'm going to ask the Minister again: is there an intention here to lean on the co-investment fund to kind of offset some of these decreases? Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The co-investment fund is offered to the individuals and stakeholders, Indigenous governments, that are wanting to pursue housing initiatives, but I'm going to have Jim elaborate on this a little bit more; sorry, Mr. Martin, a little bit more. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the co-investment fund, there would certainly be opportunities working with our partners, Indigenous governments, and other partners to hopefully see some further investment in supporting homelessness, in all communities. So we certainly

look forward to those opportunities, and we will continue to work with our partners in that regard. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I think I got a swing and a miss there. Okay. I am trying to ask this in another way, then. Those three items I mentioned earlier, they are decreasing. Does the Minister feel this will be enough to help some of the homelessness issues we are having in the small communities because I really feel like we are not addressing that?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: We would have to continue looking for federal opportunities to increase these dollar amounts here. I just wanted to comment to the Member when he was asking about the co-investment fund. The co-investment fund is 75/25, so just as an example, it is offered out to the interested groups that are out there, not only just the Indigenous groups. We would work in partnership with them if we have the opportunity and if we were invited to be a part of the process and a part of their project. That is how that part would work. The co-investment fund doesn't go directly to the Housing Corporation. Thank you, Madam Chair. [Microphone turned off] ...I will have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe I understand where the Member is going. I think we are getting mixed up a bit in actuals versus what our budget it is. As you'll notice, our actuals overall were \$2.4 million whereas we budget nearly \$3 million. Our intent is to leave that \$3 million. You'll see, in some cases, we actually overspend when we have some unforeseen issues going forward. The goal is to keep those budgets in place and address extra spending requirements as they arise. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I think I went down the rabbit hole. I am going to ask a little easier question here. Some of my constituents, in dealing with that, use Hope's Haven here in town. I just want to see here: does that fall under the emergency shelters? Does emergency shelters fund that? That is a question to the Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get the Member to repeat his question? We fund what organization? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Can you repeat your question, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh?

MR. NORN: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I will repeat that. Under the line item emergency shelters, does the Hope's Haven program here in Yellowknife access that program?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. According to what we have, I don't see that we fund the Hope program for Yellowknife. I will follow up with the Member in case I might be incorrect. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a single question in regard to the Transitional Rent Supplement Program. Firstly, I recognize that this wasn't subscribed before, but previous Minister said that it was largely due to lack of advertising. I think when we have to constantly ask the Housing Corporation to put their policies on a website, let alone make an application available online, it's understandable that programs aren't subscribed to. My issue with this line item is that it is actually not correct because this program is sunseting this fiscal and then we are going to have the Canada Housing Benefit come in. Obviously, if it is a different program, we will have some different qualifiers. I understand all people in this program will automatically be applied to the new one but not necessarily meet the qualifications of the new program. My concern is that I have a number of constituents on this. If they don't meet those new qualifiers, I don't like passing a line item and saying that this program is going to go ahead when it is not.

What I am looking for: is the Minister willing to commit that -- there is going to be that small portion of people who are on this program presently, maybe have a year of the two years left, don't meet the new program. Are we willing to continue to fund them until they have gone on to finish their two years? I really just don't want people who are expecting this program to continue to have their applications denied under the new one and then all of a sudden they have no rent supplement program. Are we willing to have those people who fall

through the cracks finish their Transitional Rent Supplement Program?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. With this program sun-setting, I would like to work with the clients to make sure that they don't feel the significant changes of the transition into the new program. I will work with the Member as we identify these clients in making sure that they don't end up in a situation, but we will try our best to find the support to help them. I will have Mr. Carpenter elaborate on the comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. That is our hope is that current clients of the Transitional Rent Supplement Program move over to the Canada Housing Benefit. However, we have to set up the budget for the 2020-2021 year. I think I will probably go out on a limb a bit with the Minister that we are going to support them for at least that fiscal year if there are issues going onto the Canada Housing Benefit.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: I am happy to hear that. Yes. My understanding is that there will be a lot of program overlap, but there are going to be a few people who fall through the cracks. It just doesn't make sense to me to not fund them for the year and make the transition between programs smooth. I don't want to be asking questions on behalf of my constituents. For the few that didn't make it, let's fund them for the year and make this a smooth transition. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. I will take that as a comment. Are there any further questions on the finance and infrastructure services? Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 369. NWT Housing Corporation, finance and infrastructure services, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$14,399,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Madam Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress. Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, will you please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber?

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

Report of the Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion

16. Motions

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 3-19(2), An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act

19. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021
- Tabled Document 43-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

