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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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Mr. Rocky Simpson

(Hay River South)

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Minister of Environment and Climate Change
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, May 30, 2023****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Ms. Semmler, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon Armstrong

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Colleagues, before we begin, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize an important visitor to the gallery today. As you can see, our table officers are wearing something a bit different than their normal barrister's robes.

Ms. Ann Firth-Jones, who is originally from Fort McPherson created these Gwich'in-style parkie covers representative of the Mackenzie Delta. These garments are a reflection of the Legislative Assembly's shared commitment to diversity and reconciliation.

It's important for me, as a Speaker of this House, to work towards changing the status quo and to incorporate our northern cultures and traditions in the work we do as elected officials. Thank you for attending today's proceedings and for creating these beautiful garments for our tables' officers. It is a pleasure to have you here. Please join me in welcoming Ms. Ann Firth-Jones to the House today. Thank you.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 362-19(2):
2023 EMERGENCY RESPONSE:
K'ATLODEECHE FIRST NATION AND HAY
RIVER

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide an update on the territorial emergency response that is underway to support K'atloodéeché First Nation and the Town of Hay River as some residents of these communities return home following a second year in a row of evacuations caused by natural disasters.

On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I offer my sympathies to everyone impacted by this year's wildfire. I am personally familiar with this experience having been forced to evacuate my own home in 2021 due to severe flooding that year. I know what many of you are experiencing now as well as the path you are now on to repair damage and help rebuild your community.

I want to provide assurance that the GNWT is actively supporting community governments in their response to this wildfire while also continuing to monitor for potential flooding in other communities during this high-risk season.

It was a relief to residents of Hay River when they learned that they could return home last week. However, it must be stated that the town remains on evacuation alert and residents must be prepared to evacuate again on short notice. Unfortunately, evacuees from K'atloodéeché First Nation are still under an active evacuation order and cannot return home until it is safe to do so.

The evacuation centre in Yellowknife and all associated supports remain active until the evacuation order is lifted. A Pathfinder also remains in place to provide information and assistance to evacuees.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is aware that other community governments have provided support to evacuees who choose not to go to the evacuation centre. I would like to thank all the community governments for the assistance they have provided and recognize that this help has come at a cost to you. To this end, the department has introduced the Community Government Hosting Evacuation Grant to provide financial support. I wrote to all community governments last week to advise them of this grant, and I encourage applications once community governments have had some time to rest and regroup.

There has been a tremendous amount of work undertaken in the past few weeks. While I do not have the time to mention everything now, I

do want to highlight some of the key activities that have taken place. Municipal and Community Affairs and K'atloodeeche First Nation completed an initial assessment of the damages to the community last week. This assessment will inform the next steps in recovery planning and confirm how many homes have been destroyed, what homes have sustained damage, and what homes are fit for residents to return to. Work to provide detailed damage assessments started this week, and the results will provide information on the nature and extent of the repair work needed. Municipal and Community Affairs is also proceeding with an environmental review of the affected area on the reserve to identify where any spills may have occurred.

Discussions have taken place between Municipal and Community Affairs, K'atloodeeche First Nation, and Housing NWT to coordinate long-term accommodations for displaced residents. Housing NWT has already started work to replace their assets destroyed by the fire, including housing units and the Judith Fabien Group Home.

As the Department of Infrastructure makes repairs to the community access road, Municipal and Community Affairs will continue to support the K'atloodeeche First Nation and the Town of Hay River and meet regularly with administration and leadership from both communities.

As Northerners, we know all too well the devastating impact of natural disasters and the threat they pose to our communities and residents. I want to acknowledge and thank everyone on the front lines who have helped during this evacuation period and continue to lend their support. I also want to acknowledge the resilience of all those displaced by this wildfire. We know this is a challenging time and we are working with community governments' leadership to provide much-needed assistance.

Lastly, I want to thank the GNWT departments and external partners and agencies who continue to offer their support. The response to a disaster of this magnitude involves many people from multiple departments and agencies, and we could not do this work to help the NWT residents without you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 363-19(2):
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
REVIEW UPDATE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, three years ago I was mandated to initiate a review of our government's Student Financial Assistance Program with the goal of improving access to post-secondary education for all Northwest Territories residents by reducing barriers and ensuring benefit levels are meeting the needs of students. I am happy to say that we have completed our review and are now taking steps towards implementing necessary, significant changes to the program to better meet the needs of students.

The review examined the Student Financial Assistance Program's alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, the final report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and analyzed feedback received through a client satisfaction survey. Based on the findings of the review, the department is proposing significant enhancements to the program.

Mr. Speaker, to improve affordability and accessibility to post-secondary education, the department is increasing the benefit levels for tuition, books, and monthly living allowances. To better assist students with disabilities, we are increasing the grants for students with disabilities to align with the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program and expanding supports to students with persistent or prolonged disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that Indigenous students in the NWT may face additional barriers with accessing post-secondary education. To alleviate some of these challenges, the department is proposing to remove the semester limit for eligible Indigenous students to access the SFA program. This will better support Indigenous students with pursuing their post-secondary studies by increasing the flexibility to complete their post-secondary education without concern of maxing out on the number of semesters for which they can receive student financial assistance. This change will also encourage Indigenous students to pursue post-secondary education beyond undergraduate degrees, such as master's.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to ensure consistency on how living costs are determined, the department is aligning the monthly living allowance with the Canada Market Basket Measure and will continue to calculate rates based on family size. The department is also increasing living allowance rates for all NWT students, removing the semester limit for remissible loans and expanding remissible

loans to all NWT residents regardless of any years of schooling completed in the territory. This change will improve accessibility and affordability of post-secondary education, allowing NWT residents to obtain the education to help them succeed and build the NWT workforce.

Mr. Speaker, this government is mindful that students may face unexpected challenges throughout an academic year, which could result in their withdrawal or failure from a course or program. The department recognizes that suspending students from receiving student financial assistance may add additional barriers in their ability to successfully complete their post-secondary education. So, we are proposing to remove financial assistance suspensions for failing or withdrawing courses. This will ensure that students continue to be able to access the SFA for the duration of a student's academic career, regardless of any setbacks they face.

Mr. Speaker, the department has been working diligently to ensure regulations and policies are amended along with developing a performance and measurement plan to evaluate the performance of the program. The regulations are currently posted for public review with feedback due to the department by May 31. I am pleased to advise that we are well on our way to having these proposed changes ready for students who are want to attend post-secondary studies this fall. I would encourage any students considering attending post-secondary schooling to complete an application prior to June 30th. A student does not need to be accepted into a program to apply for SFA.

Mr. Speaker, these changes will ensure that the Student Financial Assistance Program continues to be one of the best, if not the best, student financial aid programs in the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 364-19(2):
WATER MONITORING

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, water is life, and our government is committed to ensuring we always have an abundant supply of clean and safe water. This year has been challenging to say the least. Earlier this spring, we learned of a large wastewater spill and seepage that had occurred in the Alberta Oil Sands. To our dismay, these spills had not been

communicated to the GNWT or Indigenous governments in the territories. The NWT is downstream from the oil sands and water flows here so we need to know when these incidents occur.

Mr. Speaker, these events hurt the trust built between the Government of Alberta and the Government of the Northwest Territories. But most importantly, communities downstream now have less trust that the right steps are being taken to ensure the safety of their communities, including water, fish, and other wildlife they depend on.

Today, I would like to provide an update on the work being done to monitor the Slave River.

We will ensure that waters that are downstream from the oil sands are safe and will continue to share what our government does on an ongoing basis to monitor water across our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that our government acted quickly when we were informed of these incidents. We worked with the Town of Fort Smith, the Fort Smith Metis Council, and the Smith Landing First Nation to develop an enhanced monitoring program for the Slave River at the border with Alberta. This increased monitoring was conducted to ensure that there was nothing from the Kearl mine incident that could cause harm to people, wildlife, or environment. We continue to work with our partners to review and assess results of this enhanced monitoring. To date, nothing troubling has been found in our water.

Mr. Speaker, our government always continues to monitor water quality beyond the Slave River. We have over 50 water quality monitoring sites across the NWT, collecting samples and interpreting results, to better understand the quality of our waters. Through the Community-Based Monitoring Program, we work with partners from 21 communities to train local water monitors who then share what they have learnt with us to enhance our understanding of water quality across the territory. These monitoring efforts span every water basin in the NWT. They help us spot potential problems, understand them, and act when necessary to address them.

Mr. Speaker, our government is also working to ensure that Northerners have a voice at the table related to oil sands. After extensive lobbying, we have secured Indigenous representation from the NWT on the oil sands oversight committee struck by the federal and provincial governments. Going forward, we will continue to ensure our voices are heard in

discussions about releasing treated oil sands tailings.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to highlight what our government is doing to monitor and evaluate water levels and climate conditions prior to and during spring breakup to help inform the level of risk for flooding. The Department of Environment and Climate Change is a partner in the NWT Hydrometric Network, a group that measures water level and water flow. This network consists of 106 monitoring stations across the NWT, and all of its data is publicly available.

Data from this network was used by to issue a special NWT water monitoring bulletin on May 5. This bulletin notified the communities and the public of potential for high water levels and flow rates on the Peel and Arctic Red Rivers during breakup. The Department of Environment and Climate Change commends the community of Fort McPherson, and other communities at-risk of flooding, for their work preparing for the spring breakup.

Our government will continue to work with emergency management officials at all levels to ensure they have the latest data on water levels and encourage the sharing of community information and photos related to current water level and ice conditions. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to keeping our territorial waters clean and safe now and forever. The actions we do every day will reflect that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 365-19(2):
MADE-IN-THE-NORTH SOLUTION FOR
ELECTRONIC LOGGING DEVICES

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, enhancing road safety is a priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories. We all want our highways to be as safe as possible for everyone who uses them. To support this effort, I would like to announce that as of June 1, 2023, the hours of service regulation will be amended to make electronic logging devices mandatory for commercial vehicles weighing 4,500 kilograms or more.

This is a made-in-the-North solution that balances driver safety, the needs of our local industry, and compliance with federal requirements.

An electronic logging device, or ELD, is a device that tracks a driver's hours of service instead of using a paper logbook. Hours of

service are the maximum amount of time commercial drivers can be on duty, including driver time.

Government of Canada has mandated the use of ELDs, and all jurisdictions will implement and enforce this mandate in 2023. Commercial and regulated vehicle operators that require a logbook, as well as National Safety Code vehicles that cross provincial-territorial lines, are required to use ELDs.

Mr. Speaker, some may ask why ELDs have been made mandatory. This is about making our roads and highways safer. Because ELDs are a more effective and accurate way for drivers to log working hours. They can help reduce driver fatigue and with fewer tired drivers on our roads, we will prevent accidents and save lives.

ELDs automate the tracking, making it easier for drivers and commercial carriers to comply with the hours of service regulations under the NWT Motor Vehicles Act. It also allows territorial drivers to operate in other jurisdictions and earn a living while outside the territory.

Mr. Speaker, when making a major change to how an industry operates, it is important to engage with that industry. The GNWT held three stakeholder information sessions with the trucking industry to discuss the impacts of ELDs and address any concerns they may have. These sessions took place in August and November 2022, with a final session held in March 2023. The draft regulations were also posted for public comment from March 13 to April 13 on the GNWT's "have your say" public engagement portal.

The stakeholder sessions showed that there is support for the use of ELDs in the Northwest Territories and started a discussion around the unique elements of the territory's commercial trucking industry. As a result, the ELD regulations include exemptions specific to drivers in the NWT. If a driver operates within 160-kilometers of their home terminal and return each day to that home terminal, they are not required to complete a logbook entry and therefore do not require an ELD. Instead, carriers or owners must keep track of driver hours while working within the 160-kilometre radius. If a driver leaves the 160-kilometre radius at any time, they will require an ELD. Additionally, commercial vehicles registered in the NWT that weigh under 11,795 kilograms and operate strictly within the territory are also ELD exempt. Drivers must still produce a logbook entry on request.

Any exemption that is given through the federal Act is also included in the territorial regulations.

Other vehicles that do not require ELDs include school buses however they will be required to use paper logs when the vehicle exits its 160-kilometre zone. Emergency vehicles such as police, ambulances, fire trucks and utility service vehicles for power and telecommunication companies.

Mr. Speaker, this made-in-the-North approach to implementing the mandatory use of ELDs has allowed the trucking industry to provide its valuable input and make this transition easier for those directly impacted by this change. Road safety is an issue that affects all Northerners. By implementing the Government of Canada's requirement for the electronic logging device in commercial vehicles, the GNWT is contributing to enhanced road safety in the NWT and across Canada. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1537-19(2): EVACUEE COMPENSATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we now have a picture of the devastation the fire caused to structures and homes on K'atlodeeche First Nation lands. This event follows in the footsteps of major flooding last year from which residents of K'atlodeeche and Hay River are still feeling the financial impact and are once again having to dip into what savings they may have to cover evacuation costs.

The current financial support of \$750 per person offered up by this government, although welcomed, does not go far enough for those already dealing with the high cost of living. It excludes many and leaves many without. Residents are looking to the compensation package Alberta provided to evacuees, and our residents were expecting the same.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this event the questions on the minds of evacuees were:

- Are family and homes safe?
- When can we return home? And,
- Beyond what has already been provided, what financial support is available?

The first two questions have been answered, and now the focus is on the financial support promised. Some residents have been notified to access personal insurance coverage to help

offset costs. While income assistance clients were provided support, there are many outside that group who have limited support or no support at all.

Mr. Speaker, I have been receiving numerous calls from residents who are looking for the financial support payments promised. This government must inform those as to how and when financial payments will be made. It is a week since Hay River residents returned home and while K'atlodeeche residents are still waiting to return, both are saying although applications have been submitted, payments have not been received. Residents need financial support as soon as possible just to put food on the table, make rent or mortgage payments, and meet day-to-day expenses.

Mr. Speaker, we also have the communities of Yellowknife, Enterprise, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, and others, who all welcomed evacuees with open arms and supplied services prior to any financial commitment from this government. Why did they do this? Because they knew it was the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this government made a financial commitment to those communities who have supported evacuees. I will expect compensation for each of those communities to be equitable and timely. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, our failure to act quickly with adequate financial support will make people think twice about leaving their community next time an evacuation order is made which may result in loss of human life. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1538-19(2): TRAILCROSS CENTRE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak again about the need for more aftercare and detox services within the NWT. This is an issue that I've spoken about several times throughout the 19th Assembly because this is an issue that touches everyone in the NWT in some way.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to the subject without also bringing into the conversation the old Trailcross Treatment Centre for youth that recently closed in Fort Smith last October. As I've said previously that building is well-suited

to be converted and repurposed to be used as some other wellness-based facility. We all agree that there needs to be more aftercare and detox services made available in the NWT, right? So given the strong necessity for that, why not consider the availability of that building as an opportunity to fulfill some work on the aftercare front as well?

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is in the best interest of all the people of the NWT for that facility to continue to be used as some sort of health-based or aftercare and detox facility. Overall, it's a great location and there's nothing physically wrong with that building that's preventing it from being used further.

I know that back in March the Minister of health said her department has done a preliminary assessment of Trailcross which, she said, had determined it did have some viable some life in it. I have yet to hear more details from the Minister about that.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister and I can agree on the fact that more needs to be done in providing additional supports to vulnerable residents in the NWT. And I know that there are many options that can be done with the old Trailcross Treatment Centre to ensure its continued use by the Government of the Northwest Territories within the community of Fort Smith. I know there's great potential to convert that building into a territorial aftercare facility. I still believe that is a good idea for all of us to consider because, once again, given the way that building was structured, it makes an ideal location to house both men and women clients separately under one roof. I will have questions for the Minister of health later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1539-19(2):
SPORT NWT

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken many times throughout this Assembly about the importance of sports and recreation in the lives of youth, especially in small communities. Today I want to continue speaking on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, according to a recent article from CKLB News, there were 101 athletes from the NWT who attended the Canada Winter Games in PEI between February and March. And of those athletes whose home communities are publicly available, 71 percent of them are from Yellowknife.

Now in a territory with 33 communities, does that situation seem fair to you, Mr. Speaker?

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there was a different article from Cabin Radio who interviewed the executive director of Sport North, which is the organization that oversees Team NWT at the games. And Cabin Radio asked about the number of Indigenous athletes on Team NWT. The answer to that question was that they do not track their athletes' ethnicities so therefore they did not know the number of Indigenous athletes.

In the territory that's half Indigenous, does that situation seem fair to you, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I'm pointing out these inequities because there is a clear disparity of opportunity here between athletes from small communities versus athletes from Yellowknife, particularly for Indigenous youth. As someone who's been involved in sports and recreation for quite some time, the state of sport is very poor right now.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to comment on the prospect of Yellowknife hosting the 2026 Arctic Winter Games.

First of all, I think that is a very good idea, and I had hope that the City of Yellowknife and the GNWT would accept and take on this major international sporting event. Yellowknife has hosted the Arctic Winter Games four times now, with the last time being in 2008. So it's already proven that it's more than capable of hosting these games. The NWT last hosted the games in 2018, which Hay River and Fort Smith co-hosted very successfully. I don't understand what the hesitation now is to host the games in 2026. This type of event is a huge opportunity for young athletes to participate in, and since it would be taking place within the NWT it would be easier for athletes from the small communities to participate as well. I could go on, Mr. Speaker, but I will leave it there. I will have questions for the MACA Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1540-19(2):
LUTSEL K'E DENE FIRST NATION
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT ACTION

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise before you to express my grave concerns and utter disappointment with the lack of response to the unlawful raid conducted by the GNWT officers in Lutselk'e Dene First Nation Culture Camp at Timber Bay on September 13, 2022.

The failure to acknowledge this injustice is not only distressing but also raises serious concerns and questions about the actions and accountability of our government. The United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples stands as a beacon of hope and justice for Indigenous communities across the globe. It affirms the inherent rights of Indigenous people to their lands and resources, culture, and self-determination.

The declaration emphasizes the importance of obtaining free and prior-informed consent before undertaking any activities that may affect Indigenous communities. Regrettably, the raid of the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation Culture Camp stands in stark contradiction to the principles enshrined in this international agreement. We cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that this incident is not an isolated incident but rather a continuation of a pattern of disregard for the rights and well-being of Indigenous people in our territory. We have witnessed similar acts that were met with rightful criticism and condemnation from both within and outside of our jurisdiction. Yet, here we stand witnesses another violation of rights of our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly, we have a solemn duty to uphold the principles of justice, fairness, and quality. It's incumbent upon us to ensure that this action of our government reflects these fundamental values. The unlawful raid of Lutselk'e Dene First Nation Culture Camp undermines the trust and relationship between the GNWT and Indigenous communities, making it even more challenging to forge new paths of reconciliation and meaningful partnership. We must recognize the strengths of our territory lies in our rich diversity of people and culture.

Our Indigenous communities have deep roots in their traditional lands and their knowledge and traditions are invaluable treasures that must be respected, protected, and celebrated. It is our responsibility to create an environment where Indigenous voices are heard, where their rights are safeguarded, and where their contributions are valued. I implore the Government of the Northwest Territories to take immediate action to rectify this grave injustice. We must hold these responsible for the unlawful raid accountable, ensure that reparation are made to the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation, and most important, to take concrete steps to prevent such violations from occurring in the future. We must work together in establishing a robust mechanism that prioritize free and prior-informed consent and empower Indigenous communities to shape their own

future. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. Let us not merely pay lip service to the principles of reconciliation and the right offence Indigenous people. Let us act with integrity, empathy, and humility, acknowledging the mistakes of the past and committing ourselves to the future built on mutual respect, understanding, and justice. Mr. Speaker, I would have the questions for the appropriate Minister of ENR, Environment and Climate Change. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1541-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES COMMITMENT TO
IMPLEMENT THE UNITED NATIONS
DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In March, the government introduced legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The declaration sets minimum standards to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and to contribute to their survival, dignity, and well-being. The government says it wants to affirm the declaration as a universal human rights instrument that applies in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, there truly isn't more important work for this government to do but I question this government's commitment to truly implementing the declaration. Recent government action makes the government's commitment seem more like symbolism. The gap between words and actions has been jarring. First, what my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Willideh just mentioned. Also In December, while EIA was finalizing the MOU to implement the declaration and inviting Indigenous governments to sign on, the Department of Justice intervened at the Supreme Court to dispute whether the Inuvialuit child and family services law should bind the government. And, in March, on the same day the Premier introduced Bill 85 to legislate the declaration, the Premier tabled a draft homelessness strategy that made zero mention of the declaration or the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Mr. Speaker, how can this government say it will implement the declaration while at the same

time pursuing policies and actions that ignore or outright reject the principles of the declaration? This type of behaviour erodes trust - a trust that is already fragile and tenuous at best.

The Government has received only partial support in its approach to the declaration. Five of fifteen Indigenous governments and organizations have not signed the MOU, including:

- The Akaitcho territory government;
- Deh Cho First Nation;
- The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation;
- Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated; and,
- Salt River First Nation.

And even if the legislation is passed, the work of implementation will have to wait. The legislation would allow the government two more years to develop a plan for implementation without requiring any concrete actions beforehand.

Mr. Speaker, true implementation cannot wait. It means respecting the rights, dignity, and self-determination of Indigenous peoples now. As a white settler, I acknowledge the privilege I hold in not being subjected to the historical and present-day injustices that deny Indigenous peoples their inherent rights. And I lend my support, as an ally, in advocating for true rights-implementation in everything this government says and does. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1542-19(2):
FRANK CHANNEL BRIDGE

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Dehk'e, or Frank Channel Bridge, is critical infrastructure linking Yellowknife and Behchoko. In October 2020, the replacement Dehk'e Bridge was included in the 2021-2022 capital estimates with a bridge to be completed no later than March 31st, 2024. In October 2021, the replacement Dehk'e Bridge was included in the 2022 and 2023 to be completed no later than March 31st, 2026. In October 2022, the replacement Dehk'e Bridge was included in the 2023 and 2024 to be completed no later than March 31st, 2027.

In other words, this critical infrastructure project has been delayed in every capital budget projection. Can we place any confidence in the government's projections? By the government's

own admission, the project has been delayed by three years. Hopefully, there will be no critical failure of the bridge resulting from this delayed rebuild.

The Government of the Northwest Territories started making plans to replace the bridge in 2018. If the current trend of delays continues, the bridge will have taken ten years from the start of its planning to its completion. Mr. Speaker, this is way too long.

In February of this year, I emphasized that this project needs to be kept on track. It is clear I need to keep the pressure on. I recognize that when a project is significantly delayed, inflation and market increases impact the cost. The Dehk'e Bridge projection is no exception.

In March of this year, the federal government pledged another \$15 million and the GNWT another \$5 million to the project. The federal government, again, comes to the rescue of the GNWT. Does the department accept this failure to manage this critical infrastructure project?

Luckily, the feds are throwing in more money to salvage the situation. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to fast-track the project to prevent additional budget increases and further delays to the completion of Dehk'e Bridge. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1543-19(2):
UNITED STATES EMBASSY MEETING
REGARDING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
NUNAVUT HIGHWAY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. It seems to happen more often lately by this Cabinet that Regular MLAs learn about events and meetings through the media rather than directly from our colleagues across the floor. Scooped by Cabin Radio again, the Minister of Infrastructure seems to have been summoned by the United States Embassy for a meeting that was to have taken place on May the 4th, 2023. As Regular MLAs, we received nothing, either before or after this meeting. The Cabin Radio story was rather sketchy about the purpose of this meeting. It appears that there was some sort of discussion or presentations on the failed Grays Bay Road and Port Project and possibly the Tibbitt to Contwoyto All-Weather Road on this side of the boundary. Of course, this is a road where GNWT continues to bulldoze ahead with regulatory

applications while ignoring the plans for a regional study as requested by the Tlicho government and approved by the federal minister of northern affairs. I will ask the Minister of Infrastructure why she went to Ottawa, who was there, whether she can give us some kind of report, and why the United States hosted such an event. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1544-19(2):
LAND CLAIMS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee has recently been travelling on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People legislation, and we've been getting a lot of feedback, a lot of feedback that I think many people in this territory have heard for years. But I have a growing concern that this government is kind of blurring the lines of truth and adopting symbolic statements that perhaps they don't fully need.

In that legislation, for example, it says the GNWT rejects all form of colonialism. Certainly a lofty goal but we heard that the GNWT is a colonial government; it is not a valid government. We heard that not one single inch of Dene land should ever go to the GNWT. I don't think the GNWT believes those positions and certainly some people would give us feedback that that is colonialism. In fact, our own Aboriginal negotiation policy makes it quite clear that the GNWT's goal is to get a share of the land. We typically ask for about half of the subsurface and half of the surface land in this territory when negotiating agreements. We typically ask that the MVRMA apply and that ministerial responsibility apply. There are quite a few things that many people would say are modern colonialism that the GNWT is not willing to budge on, and an honest debate has to occur about those matters.

Similarly, in the UN Declaration, the GNWT says that Aboriginal rights are not frozen in time and they are capable of evolution and growth, but this government has long taken a position not to reopen existing land claims, that land claims have cede and surrender language in them, language that once that agreement is done it is done, those rights are not growing any further. Perhaps the government's position is shifting on this but if we're going to go out and properly implement UNDRIP, we need to be able to give answers to citizens when they ask these questions what are we doing, where is our position? We don't have those answers.

Yesterday in the House, I heard the Premier speak to a number of agreements. In our mandate, they committed to completing two agreements. Unfortunately, I heard the word "draft" in front of all those agreements. They're trying to stretch the definition of "complete." None of those are public documents, none of them have been signed. We don't know what's in them. We don't know if we're actually making progress on this. I'll note we have a number of agreements-in-principle that are over 20 years old. I don't want to belittle the step of getting there, but it doesn't mean final. It doesn't mean done. And I'm concerned that we are simply not living up to this mandate commitment, and we're not being honest with our citizens about what we are willing to negotiate and what we are not leading to more broken promises, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1545-19(2):
CHILDCARE

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, to anyone helping to raise a child in this today's society, let's collectively take a deep breath. It's hard. From SnapChat to substance use, learning boundaries to learning algebra, and navigating the costs today while preparing them for tomorrow, and somehow in the middle of all that, trying to take moments of magic in their every day. It is hard.

My heart goes out to today's parents who have the added challenge of finding childcare and, in some cases, choosing between their career goals and their family goals. Accessible and affordable childcare is paying an oversized role in determining whether parents can return to their pre-COVID employment and wage paths.

Under the guise of universal childcare, Canada is evolving the childcare industry into a sector similar to our education system, and there is much to be gained from that. But this transition is reliant on the buy in and support of the people who have built and sustained our existing childcare sector. For NWT day cares, the sustainability concerns center on covering unexpected operating costs while working with a capped revenue increase. You cannot have sustainability without certainty, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, low wages is one of the biggest barriers to recruiting and retaining workers, and the GNWT is working to establish a wage grid but advocates say childcare wages have to hit \$30 an hour, average, across Canada to meet

demand for the service. For the day homes, independent business owners are slowly losing their business autonomy without gaining the working conditions and benefits like pensions, paid time off, and a living wage afforded to their counterparts in education. This is driving qualified childcare workers out of day cares and day homes and into the classrooms as teaching assistants. But sustainability is one side of this council. Accessibility is the other.

Mr. Speaker, we need infrastructure and the land to put it on. We have seen other industries use innovative shared equity mortgage programs with success. This is a potential option to provide a much-needed boost to the childcare sector that stands to reduce the cost or barriers of providers looking to rent or purchase the physical space required to provide early learning and childcare. Mr. Speaker, advocates say the shortage of both childcare spaces and workers is creating a bottleneck that will take time to unclog, but parents can't afford that time. We need active solutions to tackle this challenge that prioritizes both the sustainability and accessibility of the NWT childcare sector. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1546-19(2):
YOUTH PARLIAMENT

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to rise in the House to talk about the Youth Parliament that was held April 17th to 20th here in Yellowknife. I appreciate the Legislative Assembly staff and the Speaker for putting on this amazing event.

As you are aware, the Youth Parliament provides our youth a unique opportunity to travel to Yellowknife to take on the role of an elected Member and participate in the daily workings of consensus government at the Legislative Assembly. What is impressive about this opportunity is for students in grades 9 and 10 from across the Northwest Territories.

The young lady that representing the Nahendeh constituency was Dejah Horassi from Fort Simpson. I have had the opportunity to know this young lady since she was a baby. Her dad and I have played hockey together for several years (wink wink) as defense partners. Because of each other's busy schedule, we had to move our meeting time to Tuesday at 12 noon. As she walked into the office, I asked her to take my chair behind the desk to get the full experience. To start the meeting off, she was a

bit shy but as we talked, she had some amazing questions, such as:

- What was your most challenging thing to do as an MLA?
- Do I have challenges being a Minister and MLA at the same time?
- How do you do public speaking, and do you get nervous?
- We discussed the morning meeting and what motions would be coming into the House on Thursday.
- Some of the tips on writing her Member's statement and how to present it in the House.

On Thursday, upon my return trip with Minister Savage, I had the opportunity to watch her do her Member's statement. She was a natural and did an amazing job.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have Dejah's Member statement be deemed as read.

The other thing I witnessed and enjoyed watching was the youth passing notes between one another. They kept their Members, who were pages, very busy for the whole session.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like again to thank you and the Legislative Assembly staff for providing this opportunity for our youth. Mashi cho.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to make a Member statement on the Fort Simpson schooling system. In my community, both of the schools have the same issues, but I will be focusing on the Liidlii Kue Regional High School and not the Liidlii Kue Elementary School.

Three years ago now, before we all went into quarantine, I was a full-time student at the high school. During my time there I was met with an unorganized agenda, disrespect between students and teachers, and being given the wrong work for my grade. I had to leave for a better education. And while I've been away from the school, I'm afraid that it hasn't gotten any better and in fact has only gotten worse. Students are reportedly walking in the halls in an attempt to not go to class, not listening to teachers when told to go to class and messing around going on to disturb their classmates. There is also clear activity of students needing to upgrade after graduation to get into post-secondary education.

Constant disorganization for example: Is not having control over the classroom, giving students work meant for a grade under them,

and teachers not showing up on time to their classroom. These characteristics feed into a cycle of disrespect. I believe that not taking control of your classroom has something to do with how you want your self-image to look. I saw many teachers not correcting a student's behaviour and, in my eyes, it was because they wanted to seem cool.

Mr. Speaker, not giving students the correct work for their grade simply to "get them used to the content" further states that you are not confident in your own course work. And not showing up on time to class as a teacher disrespects students' time and shows that they are not as valued as you want them to think they are. I should mention that the classroom doors are locked in the morning and after lunch. Leaving students to have to wait for the teacher in the halls. Bad behaviour stems from these issues. As students think that is the school won't support them in the way they need, then what's the point of even participating in it. Disrespect from students comes from a cycle of toleration. I asked a current student "How would you describe the school system here?" And all they said was "unfulfilling."

When I was attending the high school, one of my teachers (they don't work there anymore) suggested that I work through online school instead. They said that I would go further in my academic achievements if I did. And so I listened to them and now I attend school through long distance, and it was the best solution for me. But not everyone has the same option I took.

As an Indigenous community I feel that the youth deserve a better education system. I believe that fixing these problems can lead to a better future with our schooling. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Iris Catholique, member from my constituency of Lutselk'e. She is the manager of the Thaidene Nene office in Lutselk'e. She is here for visits, so I want to welcome her in Yellowknife. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the page for Range Lake this week, Kaylee Alacida; excuse me if I pronounce the last name wrong. And welcome to all pages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my nephew Brody Alexie-Benoit who is the page here in the Assembly with us. Also, my brother Desmond was just sitting up in the gallery. It's always nice to have family here to support you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize two pages from the Nahendeh, Addyson Erasmus, daughter of Alison Skinner and James Erasmus; and Sahtle Tsetso, son of Dottie and Joseph Tsetso. As well as I witnessed the chaperone Teena Lafferty and her daughter Mikayla here. So, again, I'd like to thank them. As well as our interpreter Mary Jane Cazon, and I appreciate all the work she's done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 72: OPIOID DAMAGES AND HEALTH CARE COSTS RECOVERY ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 72, Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act.

Bill 72 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on March 2nd, 2023, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. The standing committee held a public hearing on May 19th, 2023, and completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister of Justice on May 29th, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 72, Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, is ready for consideration in

Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Hay River South.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 52-19(2): STANDING COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES: REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its report on the review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures (committee) is pleased to report on its review of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

The current Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (the Rules) were adopted December 7, 2021. At that time the rules were revised and reorganized into chapters to allow for revisions without having to repeal and replace the rules. If carried by this Assembly, the recommendations of this report will be the first rules changes under this new structure.

In 2022 Speaker Frederick Blake twice wrote to committee regarding the Rules; these letters are available in Appendix A.

In January 2022, the Speaker asked committee to consider various matters including: Regular Member participation on Standing and Special Committees; Membership on the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight; dissenting opinions in committee Reports; care of infants in the Chamber; the Rule of Anticipation; loss of quorum; petitions; and committee reporting on the review of bills.

In September of 2022, Speaker Frederick Blake wrote the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures (the committee) regarding changes to the release of reports from statutory officers, like the Ombud and Languages Commissioner. In addition, committee considered changes identified by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), the committee, and Office of the Clerk staff.

The Legislative Assembly Officers Standardization Act received Assent on October 27, 2020. Under this Act, all statutory officers' annual reports are due to the Speaker on July 1st each year. However, under the current rules, these reports are not released publicly until the Speaker tables them in the Assembly. This means these reports aren't normally released until October, more than three months after they are received.

At a meeting of the Board of Management in June 2022, an MLA requested to have statutory officers' reports tabled in the May/June sitting. The MLA believed that the earlier tabling and release of the reports would facilitate quicker review by Committees. The Speaker asked committee to determine the best approach to make statutory officers' annual reports available to the public and standing committees earlier. I will now pass this on to the Member for Frame Lake. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Member for Range Lake -- Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd be worried there, Mr. Speaker.

Statutory officers' annual reporting

Committee recognises the importance of statutory officers' annual reports to public and standing committees. Committee also recognizes that timely release of information is a key component of transparency and accountability.

Committee considered the four options identified by the Speaker. Given the importance of these reports and the request made to the Board of Management, committee does not believe the status quo is a viable option. Requiring statutory officers to produce their reports for tabling in the May/June session represents an additional burden, as their reporting year ends March 31, 2023. Committee felt it was unnecessary to amend legislation when the matter could be addressed through amendments to the Rules. Therefore, committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the following be added after Rule 4.5:

4.6 A statutory officers' annual report received by the Speaker shall be communicated to Members and made publicly available within seven calendar days when the House is not sitting. The Speaker will table the report in the House at the earliest opportunity.

Other changes to the rules

Regular Member Committee Membership

Standing committees are established each Assembly and conduct important work on behalf of the Assembly. Other than this committee, which includes membership from the Executive Council, standing committees only include Regular Members. The Board of Management, while not a standing committee, also conducts important work on behalf of the Assembly and has membership from both the Regular Members and Executive Council. To ensure an equitable distribution of work among Regular Members, committee recommends:

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the following be added after Rule 9.2(5):

9.2(5.1) Each Regular Member shall sit on a minimum of two committees, in addition to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. This includes standing committees and the Board of Management.

Removal of a Member from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight

Members are appointed to standing and special committees by way of motion, on notice. Changes to membership on these committees must be made by way of a motion, on notice. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is an exception to this practice. Rule 9.2(2) provides that the Assembly shall appoint the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight all Members except those Members appointed to the Executive Council and the Speaker.

Recognizing that whether by the Rules or by motion, membership on AOC is established by the House, it would be inappropriate for AOC to have the ability to remove a Member. This authority rests solely with the House. However, Members of AOC have highlighted there needs to be some way of controlling or disciplining AOC Members who are disruptive, particularly when the House is not sitting. Committee is recommending the Rules be amended to provided AOC with the authority to suspend a Member for up to three meetings in certain situations. This would mirror an authority the Board of Management currently has with its Members.

If AOC exercises this authority, by a majority vote of its Members, they must report any suspension to the House, at the first available opportunity during Reports of Standing and Special Committees. This would bring public

attention to the Member's conduct which would be a public sanction.

Ultimately if suspension does not address the issue, a motion could be brought forward to remove a Member from AOC. Once removed, a Member could only be reappointed to AOC by a motion of the House.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the following be added after Rule 9.3(9):

(9.1) If a Member of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight acts in a manner that warrants discipline, which includes but is not limited to:

- (a) Violating any provision of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and its regulations that deal with conduct and responsibilities of committee members;
- (b) Disclosing confidential committee information without committee approval;
- (c) Attending a meeting under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other mind-altering substance; and
- (d) Being repeatedly absent from meetings without a valid excuse.

The committee may, by majority vote, suspend the Member from the committee for a period of up to three meetings in duration.

(9.2) If a Member has been suspended from the committee for a period of time, the chair of the committee will report the suspension to the House under Reports of Standing and Special Committees.

(9.3) The committee may, at any time, recommend to the House that a Member be removed from or reappointed to the committee.

I will now turn the report over to the Member for Nahendeh. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Reports – Opinions of dissenting Members

During both the 18th and 19th Assemblies, some committee Reports have included dissenting opinions. The Rules don't address dissenting opinions and how they can or should

be incorporated into committee Reports. Committee recommends:

Recommendation 4:

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the following be added after Rule 9.4(1):

(1.1) One or more Members of the committee may indicate that they dissent from a particular recommendation or comment.

(1.2) A Member or Members who wish to express the reasons for their dissent may do so in an appendix to the report.

(1.3) The Chair of a committee will establish a reasonable deadline for any dissenting opinions to be shared with committee members before the report is presented to the House.

Committee Review of a Bill – Not Ready to Proceed

The Rules provide that bills reported from a committee shall be received by the Assembly and ordered into Committee of the Whole. This applies even when a committee reports that a bill should not proceed. As a result, where a committee recommends that a bill should not proceed, there is no procedural significance to the Assembly.

If a standing committee reports to the House that a bill "should not proceed", this committee believes the bill's sponsor should be required to move a motion to consider the bill in Committee of the Whole. Committee believes this strikes a balance between the views of a standing committee and the bill sponsor's desire to advance their legislation. Committee recommends:

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends the following be added after Rule 8.3(8):

(9) A Bill reported by a Standing or Special committee as "should not proceed" shall require a motion be adopted by the House to consider the bill in Committee of the Whole.

Committee Reports

The existing rules contain a typographical error in Rule 9.4(4). Committee recommends:

Recommendation 6:

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Rule 9.4 (4) be amended by adding the word "not" after the words "Committee of the Whole shall..."

Petitions

Petitions are a way the public can communicate directly with elected officials. Rule 4.4(8) requires that signatures on a petition be handwritten, or electronic signatures obtained from the Legislative Assembly e-petitions site. However, the e-petition option was removed from the Assembly website as the previous provider ceased operations.

Our territory is vast, and our communities are widespread. Organizing petitions across multiple communities can prove difficult; however, this difficulty can be reduced with the use of electronic petitions.

As written, our Rules prevent the use of e-petitions from websites other than the Assembly's own platform, which is no longer available. To ensure that electronic petitions remain a meaningful way for residents to communicate with this Assembly, committee recommends:

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Rule 4.4 (8) be amended by: deleting the words "the Legislative Assembly e-petitions site" and replacing them with the words "an electronic petition site approved by the Speaker."

Loss of Quorum

If quorum is lost during a sitting, the Rules require the Speaker to adjourn the Assembly until the next sitting. The Rules do not address whether all remaining business stands over to the next day. Committee recommends the following recommendation:

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Rule 2.3(4) be amended by adding "All remaining business shall stand over until the next Sitting day" to the end of the existing rule.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, I wish to pass this to the Member for Hay River South. Thank you.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Anticipation

The Rule of Anticipation prevents discussion on matters that are planned for another time on the Orders. While not previously stated in the

Rules; it has typically been respected by this Assembly and its Members. For example, the Rule of Anticipation would prevent a Member or Minister from making a statement directly related to a motion that is on the orders for debate. Applying the Rule of Anticipation prevents an item on the orders from being preempted by unscheduled debate, contributes to efficient use of time in the Assembly, and avoids repetition. Committee recommends:

Recommendation 9

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Rule 5.6(2) be amended by adding the following after Rule 5.6(2)(c): "(d) shall not refer to any matter on the Orders for that day."

Strangers

As a part of making Assemblies more family-friendly, some legislatures across Canada allow a parent to bring an infant into the Chamber. Committee believes the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly should continue to make efforts to make this institution more family-friendly and recommends:

Recommendation 10

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Rule 1.9(4) be amended by adding the words "A stranger does not include an infant being cared for by a Member" at the end of the Rule.

This concludes the Committees report on its review of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Member for Frame Lake, that Committee Report 52-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, be received and referred to Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any

abstentions? The motion is carried. The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole later today. Thank you.

---Carried.

Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1533-19(2):
EVACUEE COMPENSATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, evacuees see what Alberta evacuees received and are expecting no less. Alberta evacuees received \$1,250 per adult and \$550 per dependent child, and the payment was not income-based.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Finance what was the rationale for settling on a payment of \$750 per person, and why was it based on income disruption and not an actual cost incurred as this may exclude many evacuees? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a few issues in there. I think I've caught them all.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we're not Alberta. They were dealing with less than one percent of their population that was forced to be evacuated. We were looking at almost 10 percent of the population in the Northwest Territories being evacuated. And, Mr. Speaker, I know folks are looking at Alberta. I suspect folks in British Columbia were looking at Alberta, as were folks in Saskatchewan looking at Alberta, and even Nova Scotia might, frankly, be looking at us because they were offering, at last count, only \$500 per resident although under a certainly different system than what we were under.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have the fiscal capacity. We are running a deficit every year. We run less of a deficit when we have an operating surplus, but we do run a deficit, nonetheless. What we tried to do is to take our fiscal capacity and fill some gaps.

So, Mr. Speaker, looking at actual costs, our first priority was to minimize those costs. So that's where you have the EMO stepping in and providing transportation, food, shelter, you know, immediate toiletries, etcetera. I realize folks don't necessarily want to stay at the emergency evacuation shelters but they were

there, they were available in order to minimize costs and to fill those gaps for folks who needed it most.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, this is where we had the United Way offered \$150,000 to help encourage donations, and they were over \$500,000 earlier this week when last I checked. They too are helping to fill some of the gaps and to minimize the costs that residents are facing.

But what we then looked to is so knowing that some of the costs are being filled by these different sources, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at folks who had income disruptions. A lot of individuals still continue to receive their income. We did also ensure that public servants were receiving -- GNWT's public servants were receiving their income. But for those who face an income interruption, that's the group we wanted to try and target. We selected the \$750, again, Mr. Speaker, because we're trying to be fair. Income assistance already was providing a thousand dollars for someone with a dependent or \$500 to an adult. Putting it at \$750 tries to be fair within all of those parameters that I have described. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister explain to the evacuees what are the criteria for accessing the program, and is there some flexibility as not all persons evacuated but may nevertheless have experienced income loss? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so just briefly, firstly, this is all available online if anyone wants to have a look at it if they're in a capacity to do that. But in short, anyone over the age of 17 who's been subject to an evacuation order of seven days or more and who has had some sort of income disruption or income loss as a result of that, they can apply. You don't have to have been evacuated. We certainly want to encourage people when they're under an evacuation order to please evacuate. It's not there for anything less than necessity. But also didn't want to exclude the fact that some folks would have been emergency responders, may not have been able to evacuate initially. They might have been at the hospital, etcetera, or gone back early to help restart. So we didn't want to exclude anyone. It does apply to everyone. You don't have to have been actually evacuated although I don't want to take away, again, the importance of doing so when you're under one of those orders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm if any payments have been disbursed today?

How have they been disbursed. Is it by direct deposit, EMT, Canada Post? What is the timing between application and disbursement of payments, as there are many evacuees needing the funds now and asking when they should expect payment, and I just need to know what to tell them. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, a big part of what we tried to do with this program was to make it easy to apply and then easy to get the money out. So, again, that is another one of the reasons when you look at one of the forms online, it's online fillable, and it's looking for proof of income, income disruption, but we're not asking people to start going and tracking down documents that they might not have had, particularly if the evacuation had lasted longer. So there's provisions in there to speak to their income disruption but not asking for a lot of difficult paperwork. And once they can fill that form out, they can send it in by email. We've given this information to GNWT staff so they could help individuals, and funds can be disbursed through either direct deposit or by cheque. So it really is up to an individual what circumstance they may find easier for them. I can say, I think there was an ask about what kind of inquiries we're getting. We certainly are starting to see some applications come in and are immediately working right now to prioritize getting those approved and the money out the door. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we do get money out to the evacuees as soon as possible because there are many that are without right now and, you know, they're short on money and they need our support.

But, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if this program is to be used for future evacuations and will the amount distinguish between those evacuees from isolated and non-isolated communities? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This program is now a policy of the GNWT, Mr. Speaker. Really, the conversation here began because we're cognizant that this is a community -- these are communities that have been under an evacuation now two years in a row. But in any event, that it's going to be available going forward.

As far as a difference between isolated versus non-isolated, again, Mr. Speaker, the emergency management process involves

ensuring the availability of transport to any resident who is under an evacuation order. So just as there was busses available to support people who needed it coming out of Hay River, we would be working with communities if they're under an evacuation order to ensure that every resident is able to evacuate safely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1534-19(2):
LUTSEL K'E DENE FIRST NATION
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT ACTION

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, despite the high court -- the highest court in the land finding the actions of the GNWT unlawful on the raid of Timber Bay, the Minister has still refused to apologize and take steps to repair the relationships with Lutselk'e Dene First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, when will an internal review of the GNWT officers' conduct at Timber Bay be completed, and will the results be made public? This is the Minister of ENR. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have to thank the Member for the questions. But I have to thank him for his diligence in working with me to actually have the opportunity to speak with Chief Marlowe in a face-to-face meeting. So, again, I thank him for his work as a constituent MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

In regards to his question, after concerns were brought forth in the media in relationship to the officers' conduct, ECC committed to undertake an external review of the officers' conduct during the investigation. Once the investigation is completed, work is currently underway to be ready to start the officers' conduct review once the investigation is completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, I guess, if I could make this a two-part question, I guess, maybe. When would the review be complete and the other one is, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to meet me, with Chief Marlowe and the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation council and the elders, in the community of Lutselk'e to discuss a better collaborative relationship before the end of the term of this Legislative Assembly? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the report's done, we will make sure -- we'll get the report done when we get it done.

I have written to the leadership on several occasions regarding Timber Bay and offered to meet to discuss reconciliation efforts once the investigation is completed. ECC remains committed to our partnership with leadership. As previously stated, I will be happy to look at the community's event that would help foster reconciliation when the investigation is completed. This is related to an ongoing legal action. I'm unable to comment further on the search or the investigation to subjective illegal hunting and wastage in the mobile zone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister here today apologize for the unlawful actions of his officers during the Timber Bay raid? We've been waiting for an apology from the Minister as a result of this court being thrown out. Would he apologize to my constituents, the chief and council, and the people in my riding? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that the search at Timber Bay was very difficult for some of the people at the camp who were not harvesting wildlife or were harvesting wildlife in a respectful and lawful way. This was not the intent of the officers. At the time, our officers understood that they were carrying out a lawful search based on a warrant issued by the justice of the peace. As the investigation of this case is ongoing, I am unable to speak more on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it a little bit confusing. The judge has already made his decision. This case has already been thrown out. And because it's unlawful. So, again, Mr. Speaker, my constituents demand justice for the raid. I will ask again, will the Minister apologize here today for the unlawful action for his officers during the Timber Bay raid? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said previously I've acknowledged that the search at Timber Bay was very difficult for some of the people at the camp who were not harvesting wildlife or harvesting wildlife in a respectful and lawful way. This was not the intent of the officers. As the investigation of this case is ongoing, I will not be able to speak further on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1535-19(2):
LAND CLAIMS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As committee has been dealing with its UNDRIP legislation, I think it's fair to say there are some fairly high expectations about what the government is willing to change and there are some fairly tall asks being made of the government, and I think it is in everyone's interest that the GNWT be transparent about what it is and isn't willing to do. The GNWT, in that legislation, commits that Indigenous rights are not frozen in time; they are capable of evolution and growth. We have heard that if that is true, then cede and surrender language in agreements is not appropriate and that it should be removed.

My question is, is this the position of the GNWT, that if an Indigenous government wants that language removed from their agreement that we are willing to do that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT is being very transparent about how we feel about that issue. We publicly stated it's -- or interests parties. Mr. Speaker, I think that not all agreements have the cease and surrender. The ones that do, there are issues with it. I know that I get concerns on both sides. Sometimes Indigenous governments say, you know, you're taking too long, we want to have it general, and make it broader and we can look at it later.

But I've learned from reading agreements, and I've learned the problems that happen when you don't have clarity in agreements. So I've been a real stickler, Mr. Speaker, that to try to make the agreements as plain language as possible so that there aren't the misunderstandings that I've seen happen in previous agreements. So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I think that clause -- it's a federal government clause my understanding, the cease and surrender -- is not appropriate in this time and day. But I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that agreements need to be as clear as possible in as plain language as possible so that all parties, not just the lawyers, understand the meaning of these agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that. You know, I think we all know there's a lack of trust and there's still a narrative of the government going up and

down the valley, and you know, putting those cede and surrender clauses in, and I think it would be a symbolic win to get them out and to show that we are willing to move on.

We've also heard that for truly free and prior informed consent to exist, perhaps the current regulatory system, although, you know, a great made-in-the North solution, is not one truly built on consent. There is a number of things in agreements where GNWT or federal Ministers still have the last say. I'm wondering if the GNWT has a position on reopening existing agreements on some of those larger questions around consent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, like I said earlier, all agreements are a little bit different in terminology. Some of the agreements actually have it that they can be opened at any time. I do think that if agreements -- I think that an agreement that's signed at any time should actually be looked into it. It should not be something that is one time, if you made a mistake you're stuck with it forever. However, in saying that, Mr. Speaker, I'm also very conscious of the amount of agreements that we want to get across the table and so, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I've been really focusing on getting the unsigned agreements done but still being flexible and working as much as possible with the existing agreements and the Indigenous governments applicable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in this House, the Premier referred to a number of agreements that I believe they were in draft stage and going out for consultation. I'm just wondering when and if, at all, those will be available for the public to see or myself to see? You know, it's been about 20 years, I think, since you can see whether the GNWT's negotiating position has changed on these matters. There's not a lot of documents out there that shows where we are currently where we have been negotiating for decades. So I'd be very interested to see where we're at and what's changed in the last couple decades. Are any of those going to be public any time soon? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think in this term of this government we've done a lot in regards to land claims, self-government agreements. In fact, we had two years of COVID that people don't -- would rather not remember, including myself, and that often I've said you can't talk about that. But the amount of work that this government has done in the two years after COVID with these agreements has been

phenomenal, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday, we have three agreements in draft. They're not called draft because they're not done or proposed. They're called draft, Mr. Speaker, because part of the process of actually doing agreements is that we have to consult with all the other Indigenous governments to make sure that they don't have concerns, that we're not impeding on their rights. So they're called draft, Mr. Speaker, because once we get that consultation process done, which usually takes between four months to eight months, then we have a final agreement. But in that time, if an Indigenous government says, whoa, you're stepping on my rights, I'm not okay with this, then we may have to change that agreement and that's why they're called draft, Mr. Speaker. So I am hopeful that at least one of them -- the Norman Wells Self-Government Agreement -- I am hopeful that we'll be able to sign it off final agreement in this government. At that time, it would be public.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, if it's not done, all three in this government, I would say in very early in the next government that that agreement will be the first one to cross the line. And once they're done, I believe they're public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, unfortunately, this is an area where, you know, doing a lot doesn't really count until it's signed and the ink is dry. It's unfortunate. We've been doing a lot for 20 years. I know many negotiators who have poured their entire careers into this, and I'm not -- you know, I don't want to take away from their work. But it's tough work. I guess, you know, if this is the path we're on where we have three draft agreements, maybe one in the life of this Assembly. I'm wondering if the Premier has any kind of direction on how we can speed this up, or is it just the reality that we're -- every Assembly will maybe get one, and that's the pace we're on, in which case I think we have got another hundred years before we're done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As stated, right now all those agreements are in the final stage of them; they are in the consultation phase. I have sent letters to the Indigenous governments applicable saying here's the agreements. They are in confidence, let me know if you have concerns. I can't speed up -- I'm not willing to push them on that. But if the Member thinks that he should -- that we should, then I would invite the

Member. I'll give the list of the Indigenous governments. He's more than willing to write a letter to them and say he wants it done by this Assembly. But, Mr. Speaker, I've been firm all through this Assembly, and I've stated that with the United Nations Declaration, if we respect Indigenous governments, then it cannot be on the timeline of this Assembly so that Members here can take glory. It has to be done right. And that means that the Indigenous governments have to be ready to sign on. I'm ready to sign today. But I respect them, and I will wait until they have done their process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 1536-19(2):
DEHK'E/FRANK CHANNEL BRIDGE

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up from my Member's statement, it appears that the Dehk'e Bridge is not a priority of this government. Will the Minister of Infrastructure commit to being firm and not accepting any further delays on the Dehk'e Bridge? It is it my hope to see it constructed within -- not the lifetime of this government but, you know, like any time soon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Dehk'e Frank Channel Bridge is a priority of this government. It's a priority because I went to Ottawa asking for more money to get this bridge completed. So, I mean, if that doesn't show priority, I don't know what does.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with the Tlicho partnership to be able to look -- you know, I just want to say it takes about three years, Mr. Speaker, from award of the design-build contract to obtaining permits, to carrying out some of the design work, complete the construction. Then that bridge will be ready for traffic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to giving an update every three months with specific details of action, sequencing, and project timelines so that we know the department is being diligent and that progress is being made.

Mr. Speaker, the inability to meet past projection makes the current projection suspect. It lacks credibility. Again, I ask that the Department of Infrastructure does all that it can

to advance the critical infrastructure project. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can absolutely work with the Tlicho government and the Member to be able to give updates, you know, when there are updates available. I just want to note that, you know, we are expecting a proposal from the Tlicho-Kiewit partnership by the end of June to be able to look at the design, and then we can start the aggregate production. So, I mean, that's where we're at right now, Mr. Speaker. And I'd be willing at any time there are updates to be able to share. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, I also asked the Department of Infrastructure ensure the safety of the current bridge seeing that a replacement is not around the corner. Can the Minister commit to reviewing inspection reports and updating the inspection frequency by bridge experts should the situation require it? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last Assembly, the -- or in the last sitting, the Member had asked to be a part of the bridge inspection. I'm now in the process of finalizing a letter that will go out to the leadership as well as the Member for Monfwi to be able to invite the membership -- the Member and the leadership to come to one of our bridge inspections. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Infrastructure has claimed that the new bridge will be wider and higher than the current bridge that was built in 1960. Could the Minister tell this Assembly details of the new design? Will there be walkways, a viewing platform; how is traditional knowledge and signs being incorporated? Let us see the design. Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, you know, it's going to take three years to award this contract and some of the things that we're still working on now is getting our permits, carrying out the design, so we're not there yet, Mr. Speaker, to be able to complete construction. So I mean, there is no design as of yet but, you know, our department would be willing to have

a look at -- look at some of our work going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1537-19(2):
SPORT NORTH

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I referenced a news article which found that 71 percent of athletes were from Yellowknife alone. Does the Minister find that statistic concerning given that the NWT is home to 33 communities in total? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Canada Games are a unique multi-sport competition that brings together the very talented athletes in the country, and many of which go on to represent Canada at the national and international level. There is more to be developed where athletes and coaches in all 33 communities, and I agree with the Member on that. But this is more than just funding; it's also about developing coaches, officials, and organization, and it's about communities and schools keeping facilities open so that our athletes have a place to train and develop. With Canada Games, it is one opportunity for northern athletes.

I can confirm that Team NWT is attending the North American Indigenous Games this summer, and I can also confirm that 100 percent of these athletes from the NWT attending this event are Indigenous. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi to the Minister for that. In my statement, I also referenced another article. The executive director of Sport North was interviewed and stated that they didn't track the athletes' ethnicities so therefore, they did not know the number of Indigenous athletes. Does the Minister find that concerning given that the NWT is home to about 50 percent of Indigenous peoples? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year MACA undertook engagement with many stakeholders on a renewed sport and recreation and physical activity framework. Engagement included sessions with many partners, such as sport and recreation organizations, Indigenous governments and organizations, diverse and inclusive organizations, community representatives including coaches and athletes

in territorial sport organizations. But also we worked with the Aboriginal Sports Circle as part of their work with the national framework that they're working on. As part of this engagement, we also work on the development of an evaluation framework which may include both performance indicators, monitoring as well as potential for evaluation of different programs and services. MACA is interested in tracking different performance measures such as gender equity, community participation and Indigenous participation, and we will be tracking this data in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. That's twice now that the Minister had made reference that Indigenous athletes, you know, aren't very welcomed into the Canada games fold since he's deferred them over to NAG and the Aboriginal Sports Circle.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain what the GNWT is doing to increase both the Indigenous participation in small community athlete participation when it comes to major sporting events, such as the Canada Winter Games and the Canada Summer Games? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to correct the Member. I did not say our Indigenous athletes cannot go to the Canada games, Arctic Winter Games. I'm just telling you this is where our athletes go or where they're able to go. So I respectfully disagree with the Member.

In regards to his question, in the NWT we continue to see that smaller communities continue to face challenges and barriers with capacity building at the community level to have more sports development locally and the number of volunteers and sports leaders in every community needs to increase to young athletes to develop.

Municipal and Community Affairs is providing funding to the Sport North Federation to sport coaching development and to the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the NWT for leadership development. All community governments are funded to support recreation programs and the sport and recreation infrastructure development. Municipal and Community Affairs and the sport rec partners continue to invest in training and development of local recreation leaders. Combine all of these investments support athletes and support development in the Northwest Territories, and government must continue to work with stakeholders so that we are using this investment as strategically as possible to support athletes in all our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that answer. Numerous times I've asked the department to send their expertise, their staff into the communities and, you know, to get out of Yellowknife, not just sitting on their thrones here. And you know, they really need to get out there because we get changeover in rec directors in our small communities and they've got limited training and everything. So they really need that extra assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon seems to host large events such as the Canada Winter Games, the world men's fastball and world junior men's fastball tournaments. Of course, they may have engaged many major sponsors, including the Yukon government. I understand it takes a lot of effort to host a major event, gather and organize the volunteer base. Hay River and Fort Smith co-hosted in 2018 so it can be done by putting on the thinking caps.

Mr. Speaker, I understand Yellowknife turned down the offer to host the next Arctic Winter Games. Can the Minister provide some details as to why and what could the department have done to entice the offer? Mahsi.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the 2026 Arctic Winter Games, because of the situation in Ukraine, Yamale wasn't going to be hosting the games. So the international committee came to the Northwest Territories to see if we could move up our request. We're supposed to be doing the 2028 games.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct that the NWT has considered hosting these games in Yellowknife, and I can confirm that the GNWT has communicated to the Arctic Winter Games International Committee that it's not proceeding with hosting the Arctic Winter Games in 2026. We're not moving up in the schedule. MACA has provided information to the city about the benefits of hosting, including the budget from previous host societies and economic and social benefit studies that the Arctic Winter Games International Committee has commissioned over the years. Ultimately, the decision was the City of Yellowknife's to make, and I respect their decision. While this is a difficult decision, no successful Arctic Winter Games has ever happened without enthusiastic and committed community governments. While we were not successful with the 2026 Arctic Winter Games, I remain supportive of these games, and I know that the Arctic Winter Games International Committee has continued to clarify the future hosting rotation of the Arctic

Winter Games, including when the NWT next to be considered.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we're working together on it. They asked us to move it up. We worked with the City of Yellowknife to see if we can host it. They came back and said they couldn't with the parameters that we were asking for. So 2028 Arctic Winter Games is supposed to be scheduled for the Northwest Territories, and that's what we're looking forward to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1538-19(2):
UNITED STATES EMBASSY MEETING
REGARDING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES-
NUNAVUT HIGHWAY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure about her recent trip to the US Embassy. Can the Minister tell us the purpose of this meeting and who else was there? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, on May the 4th, I attended a meeting hosted by the US Commercial Service of the Embassy of the United States of America. I was joined by two officials from the Department of Infrastructure and one official from the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, who was already in Ottawa. The purpose of the meeting was a briefing by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association on the development of a road and a port in western Nunavut. While I don't recall seeing the final attendee list, in attendance there were representatives from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, the government of Nunavut including the Premier, the Deputy Premier, and the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, MP Lori Idlout from Nunavut was also there, Senator Dennis Patterson from Nunavut, along with officials from a variety of Government of Canada departments, as well as the representatives from the US Embassy, US Coast Guard, as well as Price Waterhouse Coopers Limited Canada, Jacobs Engineering limited. Mr. Speaker, these are the list of attendees that I recall being at the meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Wow, that sounds like quite the meeting. These large boondoggle infrastructure projects with dubious northern benefits come and go but take away from what should be serious efforts to diversify our economy. So can the Minister tell

us what the interest of the United States is in hosting such a meeting and was there any discussion of alternatives to large infrastructure development? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, this meeting was a briefing by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association specific to the development of a road and port in western Nunavut. The concept of a deep water port and all-season road project in western Nunavut, it's not new, has potential to help transform the economy from the North as well as connect to the national transportation system through Yellowknife, also help bridge the current infrastructure gap here in the Arctic. Such infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, would help advance interests of both Canada and the US, including the domestic supply of critical metals, Arctic sovereignty, Arctic security. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Of course, these projects also have the potential to destroy the Bathurst caribou herd. So I'm well on record as opposing any large infrastructure that will have irreversible effects on the Bathurst caribou herd, especially at a time when the numbers are critically low and without a balanced management response, and that's precisely where we are, Mr. Speaker, because there's been no efforts towards permanent protection of key habitat.

So can the Minister tell us whether there was any discussion of the impacts to caribou or other environmental matters during this recent meeting? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the presentations that was put on by KIA and the Nunavut representatives was more of a high overview of some of the local, regional, national, international, benefits of such a project like this. While there's no clear recognition on the importance of caribou in the environment and doing things right -- I'm sorry, there was a clear -- and let me just take that back, Mr. Speaker.

There was very clear recognition on the importance of caribou and the environment and doing things right. But this meeting didn't go into any of the level of detail regarding more of the impacts on caribou. It was more of the specific engineering and environmental considerations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course,

people on our side tend to be more concerned with caribou because where the people on this side of the boundary are the ones that actually tend to use them more often. But I mentioned in my statement that I love Cabin Radio because it so often scoops any effort by our Cabinet to communicate with the public and Regular MLAs, and this meeting at the US Embassy is just one more example. So can the Minister explain why there was no communication with Regular MLAs about this event before or after this meeting? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I note that my attendance at this meeting was through the publicity by the press secretary through our weekly ministerial activities notice. That's where I provided notice, Mr. Speaker, that I will be attending this meeting. The government has established the advancement of the Slave Geological Province Corridor project as one of our three major strategic initiatives in our mandate, as there are potential linkages to these Slave Geological Province Corridor Project, and any potential for an all-season road and a deep water port in the western Nunavut. So attendance at the meeting at a political level in this regard is nothing out of the ordinary, Mr. Speaker, within the scope of my mandate as the Minister of Infrastructure. That said, I hear a distinct interest from the Member on this meeting in particular. Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to share a copy of the presentation, any of the materials that we have, to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1539-19(2):
TRAILCROSS TREATMENT CENTRE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister consider using the Trailcross building as a territorial aftercare and detox centre for the people of the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Trailcross home for teenagers closed in October of last year because there was a very low attendance rate, and it was no longer worth having an entire building. So the youth were accommodated in therapeutic foster homes and the building since has been evaluated as suitable for use. The system that the Department of Health and Social Services uses is that they go over their programming and

decide whether there's programming for the building, and if there is no programming that fits within the building then they will surplus it to infrastructure.

So the next thing that's going to happen in that building is it will be part of a pilot land-based treatment program, which is happening in three communities, one of them is Fort Smith, and there's a need for the kind of infrastructure that the old Trailcross centre has. And so this pilot project will be the next thing that happens in there.

In the meantime, I have continued to talk to the NWT Council of Leaders about addictions treatment and aftercare and to understand from them what their priorities are for establishing those services and what kind of infrastructure they would need to support them. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This facility can easily be converted into a facility used by all genders for an aftercare and detox facility. Does the Minister agree with that idea? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the question. We, as you know, have been working to strengthen both addictions aftercare and detox as to weak links in our continuum of care for people with addictions, and we are less focused at this point on where that's going to take place than what it is we're going to offer. And I think I may have mentioned in the House before that I don't think a single centre will serve the needs of the entire NWT. So Trailcross may end up being part of the solution but I don't think it'll be the whole solution. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the location of the Trailcross building is ideal for detox and aftercare because of the location. It's away from the larger city. It's in pristine surroundings. There are no buildings surrounding it and near a park. Does the Minister agree that a location that would be ideal for -- this is an ideal location for aftercare and detox facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Without knowing what the programming looks like, it's hard for me to comment on what an ideal location would be. Thank you.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister consider a territorial aftercare facility in the old Trailcross building because of the drastic needs that are required in addressing the state of mental health and wellness in the

NWT right now because the building is sitting empty right now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Trailcross was used for youth and it will continue to be used for youth in the new pilot program. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1540-19(2):
INUVIK WIND PROJECT

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure, and if she can let us know when the Inuvik Wind Project will finally be completed and running? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work is underway right now with Inuvik Wind Project. We are looking at getting it commissioned by third week in August. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wow, I hope I could cut the ribbon with her. Can the Minister give us an estimate of what her department is thinking the final costs are, because I think the last cost we got was about \$60, \$70 million, and I'm just wondering if you're still on track with that number? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the cost of the project, the total project was about \$60 to \$70 million, and I just want to note of that cost, Mr. Speaker, \$39.9 million was secured through Investment Canada Investment Infrastructure Program, the ICIP program. You know, it's a little -- not too early, but I mean we will be able to have a better indication once we get closer to cutting this ribbon together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I just heard the Minister. My next question was going to be I know that the federal government committed \$30 million, and I think she said \$39.9 million. So with it being \$60 to \$70 million, we initially budgeted \$10 million as a government so are we going to be expected to now offset by the government, or is there more money going back -- are you going back for more money from the feds to do this project? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's a really good question from the Member and, you know, I just want to make sure that I have a proper answer to the Member, and I just -- I need to go get back and have a look at a number and be able to get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister and, yeah, it would be good to have an actual number for us to know.

My last question is this project, I know I've raised it many times in this House, it's been ongoing, it was even before I was a Member of this House there was kind of issues, so I'm just wondering if the Minister's department is going to do a lessons learned on any recommendations on this project in case we decide as a government to ever do any more wind turbines in the territory? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I wear both hats on as Minister of Infrastructure as well as Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation. So, you know, on major projects like this, we do have a debrief at the end for some of our lessons learned. So I hear the Member's concerns, you know, going forward on some of these infrastructure projects, that we need to have these lessons learned, talk about some of the ways that we can improve major infrastructure projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1541-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES COMMITMENT TO UNITED
NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS
OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
IMPLEMENTATION

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. The government has said it will not withdraw its Supreme Court challenge that affects Inuvialuit child and family services law. It's actually my understanding it's too late for them to do so. Their choice is puzzling and profoundly disappointing.

My question is if the government will not withdraw, what concrete steps will the Premier take after the Supreme Court renders its decision to restore the eroded trust with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I won't speak about the court process. That's still in the process so I'll wait to see what happens. But I am a bit puzzled actually. I was just talking to the chair, Duane Smith yesterday, and I thought we had a good relationship. So I'm not sure about the eroded trust. I know that health has been working closely with their departments. I know I get along really well with the president. But I will make a point, Mr. Speaker, because I am meeting with him coming up here in the next few days that I'll actually sit down and talk to him. If there's an eroded trust, then I don't want to wait until after this. I want to address it now. When this first got brought to as a concern, I did meet with the president of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and shared my concerns. I thought we had a good understanding. But I guess the Member has different information, and I'll find out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then the Premier is not aware or did not watch our meeting with the IRC in which we discussed this on the social development committee, which was a public meeting, and I would have hoped that her staff and staff at Justice had been listening. It was clear to us in that meeting that the IRC was very unhappy about what was going on but I don't want to make that my question.

The Premier's mandate includes leading efforts to ensure voices in all regions are heard in decision-making but five of 15 were Indigenous governments and organizations have not signed on to the GNWT's approach to UNDRIP. I'd like to know whether the Premier is personally engaging leaders in each of the five Indigenous governments and organizations to understand and address their concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it all depends on semantics, how you phrase things. So you can say five out of 15 never signed, or you can say ten out of 15 have signed. And there was a protocol, Mr. Speaker, that within the Council of Leaders we knew that we wouldn't have 100 percent, and Indigenous governments said we want to have majority. They defined what it would look like because that was the principles we're working on. So as we're working with the ones that haven't, there was various reasons. Even some that think that the GNWT aren't a public government, I won't name, I have had meetings with. I have meetings all the time. But as for the act itself, Mr. Speaker, there is a protocol now

that is being read into the House. The committee is doing their work. I am not trying to under step committee. I am waiting until the committee is finished their work and brings back the recommendations because it would be inappropriate, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, to be trying to get them to sign onto something when committee is out there doing their work at this point.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have very open-door relationships with the Indigenous governments, and at any time -- in fact, every chief has my phone number. They phone me day and night. I'm always willing to meet with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Mr. Speaker, respectfully, an open line means nothing if you don't listen to what the people are saying on it. Ten out of 15 is 67 percent. 67 percent, I'm sure most of the parents in the room would not be happy with their child coming home with a 67 percent report card. So to me, not having all of these people, all these 15 groups sign on, just speaks volumes about where UNDRIP's legislation is going and really what this is. To me, it does seem like a passing just to have some checkmark before the end of this Assembly.

The government says an action plan to implement and it is still two years away when -- while new laws will have statements of consistency. It is unclear whether the government will do anything else to implement the declaration before 2025. Can the government commit to making specific high priority policies and programs consistent with the declaration before 2025? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually agree with the Member a hundred percent, so. I heard from -- and I will use an example on that. The previous grand chief of the Tlicho government said that too many times politicians listen, but they don't hear. But that same grand chief, before the election came, said to all of his council this Premier not only listens, she hears. So I just want to say that, that's important that we all not only listen, that we hear what they're saying.

As for the ongoing implementation plan, yes, there will be some work on that. Mr. Speaker, this -- these -- this work is not going to happen overnight. This work is going to take decades and decades, years and years, to get through. And so that is a commitment that other legislations are going to have to do. But we're not waiting for it.

Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot with the -- around the United Nations Declaration, and not

with -- without even hearing the words, we've done a lot because it's the right thing to do, to work in partnership with Indigenous governments. As a Metis woman, I hold that to heart. And, I mean, the Member can make faces at me, whatever she wants, but I do know that it is important to me as an Indigenous woman.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just ignore that that she's making faces but I'll ignore that. So in this -- in this government, we're not waiting --

MR. SPEAKER: The Member's called a Point of Order. We'll take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Great Slave called a Point of Order but it wasn't caught on the audio. So let the Member go again to call the Point of Order. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Rules of Debate, 3.2 (3)(h) states that you cannot make allegations against another Member, a House officer, a witness or a member of the public, or impute false or hidden motives to another Member; or, (k) use abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder. I believe that in the Premier's response to me, she did these things. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. I'll allow the Premier to speak to the Point of Order.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not mean to imply any negative. It was an observation. When I was talking, I looked at the Member and the Member was -- had some very serious facial expressions. It was an observation. I perhaps inappropriately spoken out. So I will take whatever consequences that the Speaker feels justified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Colleagues, I will make a ruling later today. Thank you, we'll continue. And I remind Members to please conduct yourselves thoroughly, both sides of the House, keep your gestures and facial expressions, everything -- you know, because I remember when, you know, when I -- back, way back when I used to be a Regular Member -- no, just kidding. But I know how frustrating sometimes it could be, especially during question period, sometimes we don't hear the answers that we like, and I know a few times myself I got very -- the blood got hot listening to some of the answers. But I know how you're feeling but let's be respectful of one another in this House and

the people we represent. With that, we will continue. Final short supplementary. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a final supplemental. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1542-19(2):
TERRITORIAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

In February, the federal government announced investment of \$198.6 billion over ten years for provinces and territories to improve health care services for Canadians focused on shared priorities. To access this funding, the government needs to develop action plans to describe how funds will be spent and how progress will be measured. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister, to start us off with, can provide us -- or provide this House with an update of where this is at? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. The total increase in health spending for this year from the Government of Canada was \$12 million. \$12 million. Our budget in the Department of Health and Social Services is \$610 million for this year. You can appreciate we were a little underwhelmed. So after being offered \$7 million a year for ten years for tailored bilaterals, \$2 million for the Canada health transfer one time top up for emergency room and pediatric hospitals, and \$2.9 million of incremental funding for the territorial health investment fund, the Premier had started negotiations with the support of the other territorial Premiers who were in a similar disappointed position with Canada's offer to try to increase the territorial health investment fund. Unfortunately, they were not successful with that. What we did get was a ten-year agreement rather than a five-year agreement but we didn't end up with more money. So we are now in a position to sign the MOU. In the meantime, department staff have been working on an action plan which is due on July 1st and will be delivered by then. Thank you

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really feel for the Department of Health and Social

Services and also for the people of the Northwest Territories for, you know, to have to take the time to do an action plan for less than probably what is forced growth for the entire Department of Health and Social Services. Seems kind of crazy that the federal government is screaming from the rooftops that they're doing all these favours for health care across the country. So I appreciate the Minister's acknowledgement that the department is doing an action plan for the federal government for this \$12 million increase and that will be delivered on July 1st. But can the Minister share -- sorry, the specific programs that this invest into? Sorry, I'm readjusting my questions as I go here, Mr. Speaker, rather ineffectively at the moment but can the Minister speak to what programs that will be directly impacted by these dollars? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not program specific funding. There are four areas that the tailored bilaterals cover, and the spending has to be tied to health outcomes that are measured by the Canadian Institute for Health Information. There's some work going on now trying to standardize that reporting because not all jurisdictions collect the same information, and in some cases the collecting of the information is more onerous than the value of the contribution. So there's -- there's some work going on in that. But generally, what I recall is there is a home and community care section, there's a mental health and substance use section, and there are two more. I'm sorry, I don't remember off the top of my head what they are. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I got them open now here of what the expectation was from the federal government. And the Minister's right, there's home care, there's improving access to mental health, there's supporting health workers and reducing backlogs, and I just don't understand the position that health is being put in by the federal government to accomplish this with a \$12 million increase. And so I'm wondering when the Minister speaks to that, this is really based on outcomes, health outcomes, and that this needs to be measured and reported to the federal government, how does the federal government have expectations that there is going to actually be improved health outcomes for the territory through an investment that really is not an investment in our health care system? And so I'm wondering what -- how does health intend to report on these outcomes and are they self-funding for these programs as well in order to focus more dollars on these

programs as dictated by the federal government. Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we will be doing is to minimize the amount of administration that goes with this money, since it is such a small amount, that we don't want to turn ourselves inside out for it, we already report a number of important statistics to CIHI, which are readily available to the public, on things like wait times, life expectancy, emergency room visits, and so on and so forth. So the amount of money we're receiving is going to not address any of the big problems that our health system faces but rather addresses some incremental problems. And it certainly is my intention in the time that I am in this role to continue arguing with Ottawa about the need to increase the amount of health funding that is coming to the NWT to meet our needs and make a real difference. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister's comments about not turning themselves inside out in order to meet the reporting requirements of this. But it seems like almost in some way, shape, or form by doing this funding agreement that the federal government is actually dictating how and where the GNWT will be spending its health care dollars in exchange for such a small portion of money for that. And so I really appreciate that the health minister is, in fact, continuing to draw more money out of the federal government. One of the things that's interesting about this and where the federal government is working hard to kind of force the hand into these four or five focused areas of priorities that it sees as all of the provinces and territories having, where is the NWT and the residents of the Northwest Territories in that conversation? And so I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not there is an intent to involve the residents of the Northwest Territories in a conversation about where they want to see health care dollars focused? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for that. Each region has a regional wellness council with seven members, and they meet every other month or four times a year, and they provide direct feedback to the leadership council of the NTHSSA on what the health needs, gaps, and priorities are in their regions. So that organization, the leadership council, meets four times a year with the chairs of each of the regional wellness councils, and I meet with

them every time they meet in order to hear directly from them about what their needs and priorities are. So that's our method for staying in touch with what people expect and want from the health system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Relies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 940-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2023-2024

TABLED DOCUMENT 941-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2023-2024

TABLED DOCUMENT 942-19(2):
2022 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENT
REPORT FOR MINES OPERATING IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 943-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OIL AND GAS
ANNUAL REPORT 2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents: Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2023-2024; Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024; 2022 Socio-Economic Agreement Report; and, Northwest Territories Oil and Gas Annual Report 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Honourable Premier.

TABLED DOCUMENT 944-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1487-19(2): PUBLIC
INQUIRY INTO COSMOS 954 CRASH

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1487-19(2): Public Inquiry into Kosmos 954 Crash. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 945-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY PENSION ADMINISTRATION
REPORT – RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT
AND SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING
ALLOWANCES ACT

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Tabling of documents. Colleagues, in accordance with section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act, section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I hereby table the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Pension Administration Report - Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, at March 31st, 2022.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills

BILL 93:
PRACTICE OF ENGINEERING,
GEOSCIENCE AND APPLIED SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY ACT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June the 1st, 2023, I will present Bill 93, Practice of Engineering, Geoscience and Applied Science Technology Act, to be read for the first time. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 94:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2023

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 1st, 2023, I will present Bill 94, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 90:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
ACT, NO. 5,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 90, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 5, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to adjust the allowance in part 5 of Schedule C annually using the average change in the consumer price index over the past five years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 90 has had second reading.

---Carried.

Second reading of bills. Member for Frame Lake.

BILL 91:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM
PRODUCTS AND CARBON TAX ACT, NO. 2,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move, seconded by the Member for Thebacha, that Bill 91, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, No. 2, be read for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act to establish an annual report with respect to the administration of carbon tax under the act. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to make some remarks at second reading of this bill. It's a short bill and it follows up on a committee recommendation from the last Assembly on the original legislation, and I would just like to read this from the August 13th, 2019, report from Standing Committee on Government Operations, Recommendation 3:

Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Finance table an annual report in the Legislative Assembly on the carbon tax that provides details on:

- Total carbon taxes collected;
- Carbon taxes collected from large emitters;
- Total rebates provided;
- Number and nature of grants provided;
- Costs of administering the carbon tax;
- Reinvestment of carbon tax revenues;
- Projected tax revenues for coming year; and,
- An annual plan for future year reinvestment of carbon tax revenues.

So, Mr. Speaker, that was the recommendation from 2019, and I believe that this bill is a direct response to that.

I would note that we had further debate about this issue when we considered Bill 60 in this Assembly and, at that point, the Minister did indicate that she was considering bringing forward a bill that would at least address municipal grants and possibly other matters. It would be narrow in scope and, of course, we'll have further discussion on this moving forward.

But so my Private Member's bill, Mr. Speaker, focuses solely on annual public reporting by the finance minister of the money in/the money out on the carbon tax. It would also require an estimate of the cost of all of this, anticipated greenhouse gas reductions, and the effectiveness of the -- a description of the effectiveness of the carbon tax in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

I acknowledge that there is already a voluntary reporting that does some of this, but I just would like to make sure that it continues as part of the legislation and that future finance Ministers would continue that practice under the legislation itself.

I want the public to know that I did try to work with Cabinet on this Private Member's bill. I provided a draft, sought their input, I did not get a response. There may be a couple of contentious items in the bill around whether there should be an estimate of greenhouse gas reductions and a description of the effectiveness of the carbon tax. But I believe that this is consistent with our open government policy, the government renewal initiative that's led by the Minister of Finance and, of course, the principles of sound program evaluation that have been raised in this House.

And I would like to just quote, Mr. Speaker, Hansard from May the 25th where the Finance Minister did confirm that, of course, the carbon

tax is meant to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and this is a quote from Hansard dated May the 25th.

Quote: The annual report that is put out by the Department of Finance on carbon tax, and the message from the Minister, it does quite clearly say from me the carbon tax is intended to encourage carbon conservation and the substitution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

So that's a quote from the Minister of Finance, and I think that's clearly links the issue of a carbon tax with greenhouse gas emissions and an attempt to reduce them. So I look forward to the review of the bill and further consideration of this bill by standing committee. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Government House Leader.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the spirit of consensus government, Cabinet has taken the approach that we are not going to stand in the way of bills presented by Members at second reading. We're not endorsing the bill but we're not standing in the way of it either. So for those reasons, we will be abstaining from this vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Government House Leader. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Bill 91 has had second reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive the rules and put Bill 90 directly into Committee of the Whole and not standing committee. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to move her motion to move Bill 90 into Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? Member for Kam Lake, Bill 90 has been moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, Bill 29, Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 940 and 941-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 941-19(2) and Tabled Document 940-19(2). Thank you. We'd like to consider the operations sup first and the infrastructure sup second. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with operations.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 941-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, I do. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair. I am here to present the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024.

The operations supplementary estimates propose a total increase of \$103.952 million of which \$21.6 million will be offset by revenues from the Government of Canada and \$48.4 million is offset by appropriations lapsed in 2022-2023.

The operations supplementary estimates propose the following expenditures:

- \$48.4 million to continue to undertake flood recovery activities across the NWT;
- \$15.2 million in subsidies to address electrical rate pressures for NWT residents;
- \$8.7 million for Technology Service Centre costs incurred by departments and in support of cyber-security enhancements for the GNWT;

- \$4.8 million for key activities identified by Members to finalize the 2023-2024 Main Estimates;
- \$2.2 million to support operations at the new Hay River Fish Plant;
- \$1.5 million for enhancements and extensions to the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program;
- \$762,000 for obstetrical services at the Stanton Territorial Hospital; and,
- \$653,000 for adult in-territory supported living services.

Additionally, I am proposing the following supplementary expenditures, which are supported by federally funded agreements, including:

- \$10.8 million to support environment and climate change, including agreements to monitor various NWT species, to undertake discussions to support protected areas across the NWT, and to support wildfire and forest management in the NWT;
- \$2.8 million to continue work on the Aurora College transformation;
- \$2 million in support of activities for the Department of Justice, including drug-impaired driving, the Indigenous justice program, the drug treatment court program, and increased funding for legal aid;
- \$1.6 million for advancing hydropower work in the Northwest Territories via the Northern Responsible Energy Approach for Community Heat and Electricity Program;
- \$394,000 for the bilateral agreement on sport participation; and,
- \$309,000 in support of Women in Leadership and made-in-the-North campaign schools.

This concludes my opening remarks, and I would be happy to answer any questions the Members may have.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber.

Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I have on my left Mr. Bill MacKay, deputy minister of Finance. And on my right, Terence Courtoreille, the deputy secretary to the financial management board.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I will now open the floor for general comments. Are there any general comments? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I'd like to find out what impact the supplementary spending will have on the supplementary reserve for operations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, we have -- no, not this one, Madam Chair. Just one moment, or actually perhaps I will see if deputy minister or Mr. Courtoreille has it up in front of them.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy minister.

MR. MACKAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the impact on the supplementary reserve of this will -- the total impact is \$32,890,000, and that is -- that's inclusive of federal contributions to the government, so the net impact is \$32.8 million. So we have a \$35 million reserve so there's \$2.1 million left in the reserve. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair; that's what I was worried about. So there's only \$2 million left in this supplementary reserve and we're, what, about maybe two months into the financial year, and there's probably likely to be maybe two, three more supplementary appropriations. What happens when that reserve is finished? Do we have to go short-term borrowing and pay increased borrowing costs and so on; what happens? Thank, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, so, Madam Chair, if we do exceed the amount that's available in the supplementary reserve, then that does potentially draw down on what would have

been in anticipated or projected to be as a surplus. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. And so the supplementary reserve two years ago was \$65 million, and I'm just wondering if someone can tell me why it was reduced to \$35 million in this year's budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is an amount that's more in line with what historical amounts for a supplementary reserve would have been, although I think even then still perhaps a bit enhanced. The \$65 million was a number that we added or increased supplementary reserve to during COVID when it was apparent that, and very obvious, all governments were facing significant and unexpected needs that were arising over the course of that period of time. Obviously with the end of COVID, it was hoped that we would not continue to require that level of increase to the supplementary reserve. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks for that. I guess given the experience with climate variability, or dare I say climate emergency, over the last couple of years with floods, fires, etcetera, I think we have to seriously look at revising that supplementary reserve so we don't have to resort to short-term debt and additional spending. What is the department going to do about this? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that's likely a question that requires not only the Department of Finance to be involved but also the Department of Infrastructure and ECC. So certainly can commit to taking that back to my colleagues and having that bigger conversation. It doesn't necessarily speak to the reason why we are seeing -- or certainly not the only reason why we're seeing this impacts here on this sup. A lot of our impacts -- some of the impacts are due to the floods last year but there's also some fairly significant amounts attached to health and social services here.

So one thing I would note, Madam Chair, we did -- we are seeing and you would see -- have seen it at the time of our main estimates that

ECC does have very a much more significant increased fire suppression budget now than what they had historically, and there is a small amount here to further enhance that. So, again, whether it needs to be the sup reserve or whether it should more appropriately be within the budgets of the departments that do that work, I think that's probably a bigger conversation to be had. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, and I appreciate the Minister's commitment to have that conversation. So I just want to confirm there's no money in this sup for the fire suppression and relief work that's going on for Hay River and K'atlodeeche, is that the case? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's nothing extra in this. There is just shy of \$19 million, though, in ECC's budget for fire suppression efforts this fiscal year. So obviously the efforts that have been undertaken already to fight that fire would have come out of that budget, and then with respect to the emergency evacuation and emergency response, I mean that, again, the EMO sits as well under MACA so certainly a lot of that would be expected at least to be fronted from there.

A large expense -- 90 percent of any Disaster Assistance Program monies would be refundable, but obviously that remains to be seen exactly how that comes out in the course of time. And the enhancements that we've made to support the communities to support the United Way and to support individuals with income disruptions, those are currently being funded from within. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I have a funny feeling, though, that there's going to be some more -- another supplementary appropriation that's going to contain money that's required to help people in Hay River, and I'll certainly support that, but I think we're going to be making a bigger hole in that supplementary reserve than we would have liked. But I guess I'd like to get an explanation from the Minister, even with this supplementary appropriation, how does this affect the operating surplus in compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, at this point, we're still certainly anticipating to have an operating surplus, and as such -- and a sufficient operating surplus to be above the amount we would require to avoid being noncompliant with the fiscal responsibility policy. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks. That's helpful for the Minister to say that. But would it be possible in future supplementary appropriations to actually have some sort of an appendix or, you know -- I see even with this one, there's a schedule. Would it be possible to have a schedule that sort of shows the compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy for each of the sups going forward just so that the public can have some assurance as well, and us as Regular MLAs, that we're remaining in compliance with it and following it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, you might recall there has been a revision to the fiscal responsibility policy where there is a commitment to indeed do more tracking and reporting throughout the course of the year with respect to where we're at on the fiscal responsibility policy. That right now will be expected to come out in the fall, which it normally hadn't been previously. So we can certainly look at if there's an opportunity to do that whenever there's an infrastructure sup. I don't think there's any barrier to doing so. But I will confirm and if I'm wrong in that, would advise the house. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, no. Thanks. I appreciate that commitment on the part of the Minister, and I think that should just become part of normal practice here, that when sups come forward that there is some statement and presentation of information about compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy. So I'll look forward to that. Maybe get another set in August. Thank you. That's all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further general comments? Seeing none. We will review the supplementary

estimates by department. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will begin on page 3. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$26,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$26,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Now turn to page 4. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$1,875,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, labour development and advanced education, not previously authorized, \$2,768,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,643,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Now turn to page 5. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$219,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, environment management, monitoring and climate change, not previously authorized, \$3,834,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, policy and strategic planning, not previously authorized, \$4,301,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Committee, we will now turn to page 6. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$3,688,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Environment and Climate Change, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$12,042,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Now turn to page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, directorate, not previously authorized, \$270,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, total department, not previously authorized, \$270,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Now turn to page 8. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024,

Department of Finance, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$17,834,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, I'm glad I caught that, Madam Chair. So one of the items here is the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to provide funding for NTPC rates stabilization, costs of additional diesel costs for customers of \$15 million. Can someone please explain this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So right now, Madam Chair, the rates that are built in were built at a time that reflect a much lower amount -- of price on diesel. So there's obviously a couple of drivers that are making that now no longer accurate. And what happens is there is a rate stabilization fund approach, which is a standard utility approach to help when there are costs overages of this nature. Of what that would do, it would create a rider and if there is a rider imposed, that would then of course raise the rates. Rather than have individual residents face increased rates at this time given, you know, the number of uncertainties and economic challenges around Canada for individuals over the last couple of years, we've proposed this solution here to have this one-time amount to help offset some of those costs and avoid the rider. And to be clear, Madam Chair, there's two main drivers here.

There's firstly, of course, the price of fuel, which I've mentioned. But also there's very low water levels in the Snare hydro system which I'm told does happen on a cyclical nature. But as a result of low water, of course we then have to burn more diesel to make up for that. So you're getting a double hit on the cost of fuel with that as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. So is this going to be required on an ongoing basis that the government is going to have to put \$15 million into rate stabilization going forward? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is one-time finding to solve the problem for now. Madam Chair, I'm not going to pretend that the challenges of high fuel costs and rates are necessarily going away

today, but there is another application in that is -- that is working its way through and that may help to provide some relief going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. I think the real relief here is for NTPC to get off diesel and this is part of a bigger discussion, I guess. But this same thing happened in 2014 and there had to be huge money put into NTPC for rate stabilization at that point. So this just continues to happen again and again and again. And it's because -- I don't know, I've just -- NTPC should be focusing on doing itself out of a job and building, you know, energy self-sufficiency for communities and for households, and that's not what they're doing. They're trying to build big projects and maintain systems that are just completely outdated. What are we doing -- what is NTPC doing to try to get us out of this cycle of having to continually do rate stabilization fund payments from this government? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it is challenging to be able to provide electricity to a very small number of ratepayers scattered across a very wide geographic region. Many, if not the vast majority, of which of those communities are not connected one to the other, let alone any of us, to any larger grid. So there certainly is -- we've heard announced today the Inuvik Wind Project is one project that is moving forward, that is looking for an alternative, to increase an alternative to diesel. And certainly to the extent that there might be some additional -- at some point we're going to hopefully get to a place with the Taltson hydro system and have that come forward. That would certainly provide the alternative to the Snare rather than having to burn diesel in what is otherwise supposed to be a hydro system. So there certainly are projects in the works. But there's, quite frankly I think, Madam Chair, a lot of work that needs to happen on every front looking for alternatives in every community but then the redundancy for projects, trying to link communities into these different systems, you know, trying to increase the number of corporate consumers and industrial consumers which really would drive rates down for the residential consumers, any one of a number of solutions, Madam Chair, this is -- this is a problem that is a large one. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, okay, thanks. I think part of the issue here, too, is as Regular MLAs we just really don't have enough information and oversight on NTPC. You know, we don't get capital budgets from them. We don't get O and M budgets. All of that -- part of that is dealt with through the public utilities board but we have a board that is deputy ministers now for too long, and I go back to Hansard from May the 28th, and I'm quoting the Finance Minister:

Madam Chair, an options paper is currently under development by Executive and Indigenous Affairs that proposes to amend composition of the NWT Power Corporation board of directors. This will include an examination of the implications of appointing a board of independent professionals. This options paper will be provided to standing committee by the May/June 2023 session. Madam Chair, we still don't have this discussion paper. Can the Minister tell us what is going on? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I can say that there should be an options paper available in some -- I mean, I don't -- yeah, I'm calling it an options paper. There will be something available to committee by tomorrow, which is indeed the deadline that was set. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Well, we can quibble over deadlines, but the Minister's words were by the May/June 2023 sitting. We've got, what, three days left, so I would appreciate getting it with enough time to actually look at it and raise any issues that need to be followed up on hopefully in the House. So I appreciate that we may get this tomorrow. But I don't think this is going to solve the rates stabilization fund problem which seems to be ongoing and structural with NTPC. And, you know, I worry that the next Assembly's going to be faced with the same issue again and again and again until we come up with a real energy plan, and I haven't seen it so far. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Did you have further questions, Member for Frame Lake?

MR. O'REILLY: No, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions under this section? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, can I just get the numbers again on what the power corp applied to be the rate of diesel on the rate application and what the price of diesel is and -- I believe it's like a dollar and a dollar 50, and those numbers are -- they have their own kind of prices because they're exempt from carbon tax and some other things; can I just get those numbers? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the price of fuel that was in the rate is \$1. It is now market price, of course much higher at \$1.50, which is roughly a 40 percent increase. And power generation for communities is exempt from the carbon tax application. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: No further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Finance, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$17,834,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Finance, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$17,834,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We can now turn to page 9. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$4,101,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates, (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$3,187,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So one of the line items here is to provide funding for

obstetrical services at Stanton Territorial Hospital, \$762,000. Can someone just explain to me what period of time this covers and what this funding is going to be used for? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is for the current fiscal year 2023-2024, and it is intended to help support the funding of an additional five positions as well as some additional -- actually 6.25 positions, if you will, is how it's termed, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. And when we had the period, I think it was last year where the obstetrics unit was closed, has anyone actually calculated how much that cost us in terms of medical travel and perhaps associated costs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know that I have that here right now. I can certainly make an inquiry as to whether or not. But I -- yes, I think there's -- I think we probably have an estimate. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Chair, that has actually been in fact, calculated. Ask and you shall receive. \$1.1 million approximately in terms of the transportation and accommodations to accommodate the need for those who had to travel for birth. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, I'm glad we came to the same conclusion. That was the figure that I had as well so glad the Minister was able to find that.

So this money here, is that going to prevent this from happening again? Is that what the -- basically that's what the objective is? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the last four years

have had nothing but unexpected emergencies so I'm a bit hesitant to make that promise. That said, that is exactly why we are going to try and hire more individuals, so they don't wind up in this situation as they were at that time back a year or so ago where the disproportionate number of vacancy rates led to the need to reduce services.

Avoiding a need to reduce services is, I know, a priority and so there's been a lot of money, as you would have seen, coming through both in terms the main estimates and supplementary estimates to support our health system and specifically to support human resources within the health system. That said, of course, Madam Chair, there's a lot of need across the entire health services envelope right now. So I know I just add the note of caution that while adding six full-time positions more than that is significant, there's a lot of other needs throughout the system right now. So, again, priorities to avoid this -- the reduction in services but coming with the notation that there's a lot more work to be done. So thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, no, thanks for those comments. But I just am mindful of it cost us \$1.2 or \$1.1 million to close it and maybe to help keep it open, it's significantly less than that by hiring some more staff. So I think this one's kind of a no-brainer. And yeah, I guess we got to try to prevent this from happening again. And if means spending some more money and actually saving money in the long run, I think we need to do that. And that's all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask a little bit about the suicide prevention strategies funding and just can the Minister confirm that this was the money that came out of the negotiations of Regular Members? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just would be remiss if I let this opportunity go by without making the comment that I wish this number was a lot more. I don't hold it on this

Minister's head that it is not more. I do recognize where we're at from a fiscal standpoint as a government. However, I still want to make the point that I think we're paying more at the other end than we would be if we would just put the money upfront properly and into investing in our youth and ensuring that they all have places to go. It was really shocking to me as the deputy chair of social development that not every community even has a youth centre, and I think that right there in and of itself is a basic start. So I just wanted to make the comment that, you know, we need to be putting more money within funding for youth supports and suicide prevention. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions to -- okay.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$3,187,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, long-term and continuing care services, not previously authorized, \$2,243,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$9,531,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn to page 10. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$89,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, economic

diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$2,929,000. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. First off, I love fish and I'll eat it as often as I can get it. But in here there's \$2.2 million for operations of the Hay River Fish Plant, and just wondering is this going to be an ongoing expenditure over time or what's happening here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we are not expecting this to be an ongoing thing. This is really part of the transition now that there is -- well, hopefully soon to be the operational fish plant in Hay River, and over the next three years it will be transitioning to be a locally operated -- hopefully locally operated fish plant. But for now, we need to get it open and running. So unfortunately with the production in fish having gone down over the last five and so years, as a result of which there's a bit of a gap particularly in this first year in terms of what we're expecting in revenues versus the cost of running the plant. So we are expecting some revenues in and that will offset some of this amount, but certainly want to be able to ensure that we can run that plant, get it going, and support the revitalization of the industry, revitalization of having fish moving south and getting more money for those fish, which then, again, hopefully brings more fishers on, raises production, and gets us out of having to subsidize the plant. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, is anyone else putting money into the fish plant, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, the federal government, anyone else? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there's been significant contributions from the federal government overall to both the building of the fish plant and to the fishing industry. So I do want to acknowledge that, actually quite a significant amount. I don't know that it's going anything to this specific item although I will note it's my recollection that CANNOR was quite heavily involved in procuring some of the equipment that's gone in. Again, so there's been a lot of supports, but just not perhaps on

this particular element of the fish strategy. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. So is it expected that the fish plant is going to generate any revenues, and how would that offset this amount of money, and when would it kind of show up? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we're hoping on there being just over a million dollars this year, and then increasing next year to over a \$1.5 or \$1.6, again depending on and subject to the amount of production that is available. Those revenues then offset the costs of running the plant. Certainly if production is higher, then there is more revenue that offsets further. And really can be hopefully a snowball approach, Madam Chair. There's more production, more fish for sale, more revenues, more fishers interested, the cost will -- the price of fish will go up as we're able to provide that supply to southern markets. So a lot of things are coming together but this is an important element of that strategy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay, that's all good. Just in case anybody wonders, I do support this expenditure. I believe in economic diversification. As I've said, I love fish. I just hope that the price doesn't go up so much that I can't afford it. But I do support this. And I think it's good that we ask questions and maybe other Members may have some questions here as well. But I do support this funding. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also have questions about the fish plant. Can the Minister tell me whether or not the opening of the fish plant will mean that fishers will receive more money per fillet or whole fish that they bring in than they are currently getting under the previous agreement or arrangement? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, right now the Northwest Territories remains the sole

signatory to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act, a federal piece of legislation. That provides a floor. So it provides a guarantee where fishers are guaranteed a certain income amount that comes on a regular basis to them. Unfortunately what the offset of that is as well it's a guarantee and a floor, it also creates a bit of a ceiling. We aren't able to take advantage of the markets that we now believe to be available to the very good product that we have coming out of the freshwater here in the Northwest Territories. So part of having the plant is that we would be able to then be certified to sell directly to southern markets and make a higher cost -- higher price per fish. To get there, though, we do still need to extricate from the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act. So this is one step in that process, Madam Chair. But there's another step, and that's going to get out of the act or to have exemptions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. Why are we still the only ones in this arrangement that basically indentures our fishers to, you know, not paying them what their fish is worth? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, the federal government had indicated some -- you know, within -- for the last recent few years that they were going to be transitioning out of having the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and given that it is their act and their system, certainly seemed logical to anticipate and wait for them to indeed perform that -- to complete what they said they were going to do. I think they were hoping for some other solutions. I can't say as to why they haven't moved faster or what they've done or not done or why they have done or not done it.

What I can say is we are no longer going to be waiting for them, Madam Chair, and we are going to be looking for a path forward on that, whether it includes exemptions as a temporary measure to allow fishers to sell outside of the act's confines and/or, but probably and, crafting our own legislations so we can regulate our own sale of fish which would mean we would not be reliant on the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act. So could those things have happened a year or two years ago or three years ago, perhaps, but, again, waiting on the federal government, given that it is their act, was the path forward quite reasonably at the time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for the answer. I wish we had gotten out of it sooner from what I hear.

My next question would be that why would we not take part of this \$2.246 million and ensure that -- and use that money instead to pay the fishers more rather than operation of the fish plant because the operation costs will automatically start to be paid when more fish come through. So if we're not paying the fishers enough, we don't have enough coming into the plant, we operate at a deficit. We pay the fishers more to start with beginning this summer, then they bring more in, the fish plant has less operation costs to be borne by the government. I'm not understanding why this isn't what's happening. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, fishers do right now have the ability to apply through SEED force subsidies to support them with the cost of equipment. They are also being supported in terms of provided training, both in the winter and the summer fishery, and in the works right now is an effort to provide additional funding. Funding was already provided once last fiscal year and again this year to help support having mentors and trainees on the boats which would then support their labour needs. There is also -- has traditionally been and continues to be support -- subsidy support for freight, so freight is subsidized for fishers. And finally, Madam Chair, there is a subsidy supports for fish production in the Northwest Territories. We are looking at changing that and had sought the input of the Tu Cho, for one, in terms of what kind of subsidies might support and incentivize productions. So there's a balance to be struck between providing a subsidy direct to the fisher and wanting them to increase production and then also still wanting to get the plant opened so that it can provide that long-term solution that I was describing earlier of allowing fish to be sold directly. So we're trying to do all of the things with the fiscal capacity that we have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure that that totally answered my question. I get that there's a balance. However, the fishers themselves have been asking for an increased payment for their fish. So I'm not sure

how that then gets developed with cooperation of the Tu Cho themselves if the Tu Cho is telling me something different. Talking about subsidies and training and funding is great, but when we have an entire summer this summer where the fishers, there's only a dozen or so of them, make no money, we won't attract new people here, we can't afford even one season of more fishers leaving, so I really think this is a bad plan. Thank you, Madam Chair. Comment.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And, you know, I guess I kind of agree with the Member for Great Slave that this is a bad plan. And when you look at this, we're looking at a business model here. We're looking at an industry that pulls off, you know, maybe a million dollars a year, \$1.5. We're putting in two point -- we probably put \$20 million roughly into a building, we're putting another two point some million dollars into operations, and maybe this is for the first year. Like, it just gets to be -- it gets to be out of whack.

We don't have a lot of fishers out there. But what the fishermen want -- like, I'm from Hay River, I talk to the fishers. There's so many -- there's the number of fishers that are actually with Tu Cho. There's some that aren't, and so I try to talk to everybody there to get a sense of what they want. What do they want? More money. They want more money. If you get more money and then that's hopefully entice new entrance into the market -- I mean, into the industry. But, again, to do that, we need a market. We have to have somebody that's willing to pay more for the fish as well, because right now if -- you know, if we're paying -- like, I don't think we're going to be -- I'm hoping we're not going to be paying \$2.2 million a year to operate this thing when we're only pulling off a little over a million dollars of fish a year.

That leaves us very little room to, you know, to put back into it because a lot of that has to go back to the fishers. We've got a lot of work to do here. Like, I guess what we need to do is take a look exactly what the costs are. We need to look at what other costs -- what other funding that we are actually putting into the industry itself as well. Like, we know that there's other money going in from the GNWT. We know there's other money coming in from the federal government. You know, we got a lot of work to do in, you know, upgrading equipment. The winter fishery is very important. Like, without a winter fishery, you know, this plant is probably -- this plant is overkilled. So I guess I just want to make sure that, you know, when we approach and we're spending this type of

money that we're doing it right because if -- with the amount we spend, we might be better off just to take that money, divide it up, and just pay the fishermen to stay home each year, is really what it boils down to it. But we don't want to do that because we have a lake full of fish. We don't have to feed it. It's there waiting to be caught and sold. So, you know, we have to get it right.

But I think we need to take a look at all the costs, where the money's coming from, whether it's this -- you know, the different departments. We've got training dollars as well. And -- yeah, so my big thing for the fishers, and I've told them and in talking with them, is trying to maximize what they get per pound. And how do we do that? That's the question. And it's hopefully through marketing and getting the fish out there to somebody who is willing to pay a high price for it. Because if they're not willing to pay a high price for it, then, you know, we're just throwing good money after bad. And that industry is in my back yard and I don't want to lose it. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one of the other things done under the umbrella of the fish revitalization strategy was work on marketing, was work on understanding the market for fish, and consistently it has come back that there indeed is a very strong market for freshwater fish and for the kind of product that's available here in the Northwest Territories, that it is a distinct and unique product. Geopolitically with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, that price only increased and the demand only increased. So we're at a moment in time here right now that we very much would like to be able to capitalize on the markets that we know are available and on the price that we know can be higher if it was a product that wasn't the kind of thing that comes out of the Freshwater Fish Market Corporation in Manitoba because they're not there to maximize price; they're there to provide stability of price, which is a different goal. We want to maximize the price.

Madam Chair, we certainly found that, yeah, there needs to be increased production here, but straight subsidies won't necessarily do that. Handing money -- you know, again, paying people to stay home doesn't increase production. Trying to support and incentivize is what we want to do to increase production. So we've had some conversations. I know I've just today received some details about ongoing conversations and engagements that are happening with fishers all around the lake to

see what can be done to continue to encourage and incentivize people to get out and increase their production. Part of that is by having the higher prices. We need the higher -- we need to have the market -- or to have the plant open to get the higher prices. We are in a bit of a tough spot with this, again, trying do all of the things at the same time with -- within fiscal capacities where we're at. So getting the plant open, running, and moving the fish out of it is one major step forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, you know, I understand there's, you know, there a lot of work to be done. There's a lot of moving parts here. And, you know, we have -- we have the fish plant, which, you know, we need production. We need fishers out there who are really producing because we need to fill that plant. However, we don't have that right now. We have some fishers that are interested in -- you know, in taking their fish to the plant. We have others who are just interested in selling local -- and -- locally, and they get good money for that as well. So you know, when we talk about how much it's going to come off the lake and how much we're expecting the plant, well some of that's actually staying in the -- in the North already. It's sold privately. And, you know, then that's the other question that comes up. Is the plant going to compete against local producers who are -- or producers who are selling their product locally as well? So that -- you know, that could impact what they're bringing in. It impacts what the plant's going to be generating for revenue as well. So like I say, there's a lot of -- there's a lot of moving parts. And, you know, something that I guess I've always kind of wanted to see on this is that, you know, we have ITI, you know, talking with fishers, we have, you know, fishers maybe talking with me and talking with other people as well, we have Freshwater involved, we have the feds involved, but what I'd like to see is that -- and I have talked to Tu Cho before about that is to come up and have actually a conference for fishers. We haven't had one probably for 40 years.

Bring everybody to the table and everybody put what they have on the table, and come up with a plan that makes sense for the plant, for the fishers, and how do we, you know, entice more people to get into the market. So, you know, it would be nice to get a commitment from the Minister at some point that we could look at doing something like that. And this is kind of how this all started when we start talking about the plant, and that was probably about, you

know, 30 years ago, you know, it was -- it was through a -- it was exactly through that just a one day conference and, you know, we moved -- and there's two things that came out of that. That was one to get the small craft harbour for Hay River and the other was to look at a plant. But the plant that we were looking at that time was only -- was probably in the range of, you know, three -- \$3 million to \$4 million. And then it just skyrocket from there. So it's just something for the Minister to think about. She doesn't have to tell me today that she commits to pushing a conference, but she can think about it. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm happy to think about that. Madam Chair, when I first took on the responsibility here about two and a half years ago, I don't disagree with the idea of trying to get all fishers into some kind of -- whether it's a, you know, forum or conference, but into a place where everyone's receiving the information about the fish industry and fish revitalization at the same time so there can hopefully be not any misunderstandings about what's happening, why it's happening, who's doing the training, who's available for the training, who's interested in having training, who's ready for having people on their boats. That has been a challenge. I have been struck at how difficult it can be to get all of the parts and all of the individuals interested in having a conversation like that. I think the Member points out that fishers really want to be out fishing. So look, I don't disagree, though, that we want to generate interest here for fishers. We want to generate interest in the product but also interest in people coming here. We're nowhere near hitting our quota. There's lots of room in this industry for anyone that's interested in this lifestyle. So all points well taken, Madam Chair, I guess is all I need to say. And I will take that back to ITI. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Anything further, Member for Hay River South?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Just one quick point, and it's not that difficult to get people in the room. All somebody has to do is say that they're going to make it happen, and that's what we did before. We just said this is going to happen and we got everybody in the room, and -- and something came of it. That's it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, economic

diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$2,929,000. Does committee agree? Did you want -- Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. This to provide funding to enhance support for entrepreneur and economic development, that is a real good program because this -- for arts program, and that I know it's very important for many of our small communities because there's a lot of people in the small communities use this for economic development, and a lot of them are using arts program part of their healing, and it promotes culture, and then it's good for tourism as well. And when we met with the artists, I know a lot of them wanted -- the artists wanted to be independent. The art -- they wanted the art council to be independent. So that was expressed to us. And I just wanted to ask the Minister this number, 375, is that the number that was negotiated with the MLA?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's correct.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: (audio).

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Chair. It right now is -- if I'm -- it's allocated and designated for arts specifically under the SEED program, which is administered by ITI. I can't say that it's then further broken down as being for any particular region or community. I believe it is based on applications and, you know, again, I -- yes, I think it's application-based. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Anything further, Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: No, no. That's okay because, yeah, I thought that was intention and I just wanted to find out if it was the same, that's the number that we negotiated. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$2,929,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,018,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Turn to page 11. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$745,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$1,550,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Infrastructure, operation expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$2,295,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Please turn now to page 12. Supplementary estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, community justice, not previously authorized, \$656,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$300,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, legal aid services, not previously authorized, \$1,072,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024 Department of Justice, operations expenditures, policing services, not previously authorized, \$1,542,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, services to government, not previously authorized, \$979,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,549,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. Please now turn to page 13.

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$48,450,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, public safety, not previously authorized, \$400,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, sport, recreation, and youth, not previously authorized, \$894,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Supplementary estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$49,744,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 463-19(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 941-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2023-2024 – DEFERRAL OF ESTIMATES,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of Tabled Document 941-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, at this time. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Question has been called. All those in favour? Oh, yes. All those in favour? Please raise your hand. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Consideration of Tabled Document 941-19(2) will be deferred.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister. And Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. There's 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, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 941-19(2) and would like to report progress with one motion carried. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 79:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE JUDICATURE ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Judicature Act, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Nahendeh. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Sahtu, the Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

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

The results of the recorded vote: 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 79 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills.

Colleagues, before we finish for the today, I will do my ruling for the Point of Order.

The Member for Great Slave rose on a Point of Order stating that the Honourable Premier, when responding to a question, broke the rules of debate; specifically 3.2(3)(h),(i), and (k). The

Premier stated her comments were observations on the Member's behaviour.

As a camera is only on the person talking, I cannot go back and review what was happening in the Chamber at that time. I am unable to determine what may or may not have been happening; however, I note that the Premier did indicate that her comments may not have been appropriate in the context of her reply, and I wanted to address this point.

All Members are required to direct their questions and replies to me as Speaker. This allows me to control debate but, even more importantly, it removes the personal element from these exchanges particularly when things get heated. I remind all Members to direct all their remarks through the Speaker or the chair in Committee of the Whole. The easiest reminder to do this is to look at the Speaker or the chair when you are speaking. This will help ensure debate in the Chamber remains respectful. As what was happening is not a agreed upon and cannot be reviewed, I am unable to rule on this Point of Order. Thank you.

Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The board of management will be meeting at the rise of House.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, May 31st, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion

16. Motions

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 92, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Products and Carbon Tax Act, No. 2

19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3

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

- Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
- Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
- Bill 90, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 5
- Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
- Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
- Tabled Document 940-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 20230-2024
- Tabled Document 941-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 20230-2024

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 Wednesday, May 31st, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

