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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, June 2, 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, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Ms. Semmler, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon Armstong

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):
Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide a personal explanation to clarify why I, as Attorney General, made the decision to intervene in the Supreme Court case relating to Bill C-92, an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, Metis children, youth and families.

Yesterday, it was stated in this House that the intervention was an indication that the GNWT reversed its support for the law passed by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation pursuant to this federal Act. This is not accurate. The very first sentence of the oral submission to the Supreme Court of Canada was, quote, "Let me begin by saying that the Northwest Territories is supportive of the inherent right of self-government government, and we also support enabling Indigenous groups to create and operate child and family services."

The GNWT remains committed and is actively working with the IRC and the Government of Canada on finalizing the NWT's first coordination agreement under the federal act.

It was also stated in the House yesterday that the GNWT is putting its own interests to retain power and control above the interests of Inuvialuit children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, I assure you that these were not my motives. The NWT does not have the same constitutional protections as the provinces do, and it was critical for the Supreme Court of Canada to be aware of the potential impacts of the federal law. The decision to intervene was, in part, driven by the need to obtain judicial clarity now in order to avoid a separate court process in the future if disagreements arise regarding the ambiguities of the federal act.

I am hopeful that the submissions made to the SCC will prove helpful and will provide judicial guidance on the interaction between Indigenous laws and territorial laws, and later today I will be tabling a document with further explanation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 373-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA SUPPORT
FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
WILDFIRE RESPONSE**

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to share very good news out of Ottawa. On behalf of the Government of Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced they will be matching contributions made to the United Way NWT. This generosity will have a direct positive impact on people affected by wildfires in the Northwest Territories, and I am deeply grateful for Canada's support.

The Government of the Northwest Territories also recently signed an agreement with Natural Resources Canada under the new Natural Resources Canada's new Fighting and Managing Wildfires in a Changing Climate Program Equipment Fund. This fund, which allows provinces and territories to cost-share investments for equipment such as vehicles, enhanced communications gear, and repairs to aging equipment, will be used for the purchase of aircraft, vehicles, dispatch consoles, and dust suppressants. Our agreement with Natural Resources Canada directly enables our government to procure specialized firefighting equipment and strengthen our capacity to manage wildland fires that present a threat to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, it has been truly humbling to see our neighbours across the country step up to assist those affected by wildfire and flooding over the last month. Later today, Minister

Thompson and I will be releasing a statement outlining the incredibly generous support we have received from our neighbours in and out of the territory, but I want to take this opportunity to briefly highlight these good news stories out of Ottawa for my colleagues in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 374-19(2):
FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELEASE
OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL
INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the 4th Anniversary of the release of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The final report describes the dire situation faced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people as genocide. It also delivers 231 Calls for justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians to affect change.

Since the release of the final report, the Government of the Northwest Territories has taken steps to begin to affect change so that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples can feel valued, feel safe, and be honoured in the Northwest Territories.

We still have work to do, and new people have been lost. As I speak today, people are actively searching for Frank Gruben who went missing from Fort Smith earlier this month. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reinforce the call to encourage anyone with information that could help find Frank Gruben to please step forward.

In order to stop the cycles of violence and abuse in Northwest Territories' communities and institutions, we must recognize and acknowledge the devastating root causes of violence that continue to be experienced by our populations. I am pleased to advise that the Government of the Northwest Territories is working on implementing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Action Plan tabled in November 2022. An annual report on the implementation of the action plan is being prepared and will be posted to the MMIWG website later this month.

When responding to violence directed at Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, it is critical that partnerships be developed and allowed to grow so that trust can be fostered and solutions offered from various

perspectives. Recognizing that partnership is key, I am pleased to advise that following per Action 33 of the action plan, work is now currently underway to establish an MMIWG Advisory Committee. The purpose of this advisory committee is to provide advice and guidance to the GNWT on MMIWG-related matters.

With the cooperation of our community contacts, draft terms of reference were developed and will be shared with Indigenous governments, stakeholders, and other community partners for review and feedback. The intent is to have this advisory committee in place by fall. This committee will provide a pathway for communities to provide input into programs and services offered, incorporate changes to programs and services so that they reflect and address community needs and aspirations, and by being transparent and accountable in what we do.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has happened over the past four years since the release of the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Government of the Northwest Territories remains committed to ending violence directed at Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. We will do this by implementing the action plan and continuing to work with community partners to develop solutions that are effective and sustainable, always striving to do better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 375-19(2):
CHANGES TO THE EXTENDED HEALTH
BENEFIT POLICY TO ADDRESS GAPS AND
IMPROVE

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform this House and residents of the NWT about the upcoming changes to the Extended Health Benefits Policy. They will come into effect on April 1st next year. The Government of the Northwest Territories is dedicated to ensuring fair access to extended health benefits for all NWT residents, with a focus on people with low income who are not covered under the existing policy.

The existing Extended Health Benefits Policy has been in place for over 30 years without substantial change. The updated policy addresses gaps in coverage that have left some NWT residents without access to extended

health benefits. It will better position the GNWT to sustain the delivery of this benefit program for all residents in the years to come.

To ensure we created a robust new policy, we conducted a comprehensive review of coverage across various jurisdictions to align ourselves with provincial and territorial programs. In the fall of 2022, we asked for feedback from residents and stakeholders over a three-month period. We gained valuable insights by listening to the lived experience of people accessing extended health benefits. This feedback from more than 700 people shaped the final policy.

The new Extended Health Benefits Policy makes some key changes, including access to benefits which will be dependent upon an annual income assessment. Residents above the established low-income thresholds will need to contribute to the cost of their benefits to reasonable limits adjusted for family size and region where applicable. The new policy no longer requires residents to have a specified condition to access benefits. Instead, there are a suite of benefits available to all residents each with its own terms and conditions for eligibility and levels of coverage.

The changes we have made to the Extended Health Benefits Policy have nothing to do with seniors aged 60 and older. Their current benefit levels continue. There are no changes for residents who access the Non-Insured Health Benefits and Metis Health Benefits.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we are committed to careful planning and implementation of the changes to the policy. We will have information and staff available to support residents to access benefits and will plan to have this available well in advance of April 1st, 2024. We want to ensure a smooth transition for all residents because we understand the importance of stability and continuity to access benefits.

Mr. Speaker, these policy changes are a testament to our commitment to improve equitable access to health benefits and thereby health outcomes for all NWT residents. By addressing the gaps in our current policy, we strive to provide support to those who need it most while aligning with jurisdictions across Canada and working towards a sustainable health and social services system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 376-19(2):
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
RENEWAL UPDATE

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this sitting I was very pleased to update this House on the establishment of the Northwest Territories Housing Forum. The NWT Housing Forum is just one of 42 program and policy changes that Housing NWT staff have been working tirelessly on in collaboration with partners from across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will table a progress update on the 42 actions arising from the program and policy review. The update, which will be posted on Housing NWT's website, gives a snapshot of where we are in terms of implementing those actions, many of which are already being implemented with many more continuing a roll out. Accountability is one of Housing NWT's core values as is set out in our mandate. This progress update is an important aspect of Housing NWT's accountability to the public and to our partners.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT is making excellent progress on the implementation of these actions. Only five of the actions are subject to a moderate amount of delay based on the originally projected timelines. Many of these actions are already being implemented, and some will require further work with the NWT Housing Forum and other partners to finalize.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will also be tabling Housing NWT's Energy Strategy and Energy Blueprint, along with a "what we heard" report. The energy plans are another action reinforced in the strategy which benefits from the input of the Council of Leaders working group and other partners.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of these changes and proud of how the NWT staff and partners were making these possible. Every day, I am looking for more progress, more steps forward, to be made. Despite these changes though I want to make one thing perfectly clear. Housing NWT's renewal process is not yet complete. This process is embedded in Housing NWT's mandate and its approaches by promoting a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. Renewal will have a lifetime beyond this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by thanking Housing NWT's many partners and staff for making these changes possible, and I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes in the years to come. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1568-19(2): THANK-YOU TO FORT SMITH

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to end this session on a positive note. First, I want to wish all the Indigenous leaders across the NWT a safe and wonderful summer. As a former chief, I want to wish my former colleagues well and hope they, along with their constituents, all have great summer assemblies this year. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish all my colleagues here in this House, including you, Mr. Speaker, a good and restful summer. I'd also like to thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly for always helping to ensure we're on track and following all protocols and for the continued support in our work for the people of the NWT.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention some of the activities that will be happening in Fort Smith over the summer. First of all in June, there will be the Aurora College Thebacha Campus graduation followed by the opening of the Fort Smith Metis Day Care, and then the Treaty Land Entitlement Days that are hosted by the Salt River First Nation. Next, the Smith Landing First Nation will be hosting the Dene Assembly in July in Fort Fitzgerald. And then in August, the annual Dark Sky Festival.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish all the amazing constituents of Thebacha a happy summer season as well. And I'd also like to extend this message to all the leadership of Fort Smith which includes Salt River First Nation, the Fort Smith Metis Council, and the Town of Fort Smith. Thank you to all the leadership and to my constituents for your continued support as MLA for Thebacha.

Thank you as well to my community team for always supporting me and for the people that I serve in our community. You know who you are. And also, I want to once again thank my family for their steadfast support. I truly could not do this work without you by my side, which includes my husband Peter, my sons Jerry and Mickey and, as always, my dog Rambo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1569-19(2): CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this school year ends, I would like to recognize and congratulate all those students from Hay River, Enterprise, West Point First Nation, and K'atlodeeche First Nation, who are graduating from Ecole Boreale, Diamond Jenness Secondary School, Chief Sunrise Education Centre, and Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, we can all appreciate and acknowledge the commitment and sacrifice these students put in to achieve their status as graduates. That chapter has now closed, and it is time to take that next step, whether it is to further their education, join the workforce, or travel the world. It is only the beginning of their new journey.

Mr. Speaker, for each to achieve the status of graduate, we must also recognize the parents, caregivers, family, friends, and those teachers who, throughout the years, supported and encouraged each of them to succeed. I know that each graduate will look back and understand the importance of this achievement and, in turn, convey the importance of education to their children and others as they move forward in life.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I congratulate the graduates of 2023 and wish them all a bright, successful, and healthy future. And, lastly, I would like to congratulate my granddaughter Inaaya who will graduate from grade 9 and now soon to be a high school student and any black hair I have left, will now be gray. Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1570-19(2): TRANSITION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA CURRICULUM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In August 2023, grade 4 to 6 and grade 9 classes in all NWT schools will be transitioning from the Alberta curriculum of studies to the BC system. All other school grades will transition in subsequent years.

While ECE officials have been working on this for years, teachers working directly with students have not. The word I've received is that teachers are not ready to make this transition because the basic groundwork has not been done. I've been told that ECE put together a number of working groups to adapt the BC curriculum to an NWT perspective, and that is very important work. However, most of

these groups have not yet finished their work and teachers have had no updates on their progress. The assessment working group did not even start meeting until February and to date, there has been no communication on its recommendations.

The South Slave actually hired an outside consultant to create a new reporting system but in Yellowknife, there has been no such guidance. It's not the content of the new curriculum that is a source of stress, Mr. Speaker. The problems arise with assessment, reporting, and changing classroom practices to address competencies rather than outcomes.

Our teachers pride themselves on being well informed, ready to teach, and able to deliver their programs and communicate confidently with students and parents. While teachers are working to prepare for the fall, they have been allowed little time to prepare and adjust to the new curriculum which isn't even finished yet. I am told that minimal time for the transition has been granted, largely at the expense of other important initiatives within schools and the department.

We need to trust our professional frontline educators when they tell us that what can be a good idea is being rolled out badly or too quickly. The department has asserted the need to shift to a different curriculum to give NWT students a better and more relevant education, and I agree with that, but let's get it right. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the transition to the BC school curriculum later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1571-19(2):
SPRING STATEMENT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to just wish everybody a good and safe summer, all my colleagues, and remember a little bit of family time is always good, and time at home. And I can't wait to get home tomorrow, so. So to my constituents, to my graduates across Nunakput, congratulations on your big step of achievement, and I thank them and thank their parents for getting them to where they're at wish them all the best, and we're always here for you in regards for support and stuff like that. And I'm really excited for them on their future steps.

Also, Mr. Speaker, another big one, I really want to thank our frontline staff across the

territories and my home community and riding of Nunakput is, you know, the health centre, all the nursing stations and stuff like that, all the work that they're doing. It doesn't go unseen. We're so blessed to have good staff in the communities. Our RCMP, I thank them for what they're doing. Especially our school staff, the teachers and the staff at the hamlet office, and, you know, our leadership back home, our mayors and staff, community corps, our grads, again. And June 5th is Happy Inuvialuit Day so Happy Inuvialuit Day early for a few days. So I am looking forward to being home and celebrating that. And I remember a long time ago when that was signed, I think 41 years ago; I was sitting there waiting for a piece of cake. So as an 11-year-old kid watching it happen and, you know, seeing something like that to seeing where we are at today and what our claim group has done, and the successes we have as Inuvialuit people as a whole. I am really proud of that and the heritage. But, Mr. Speaker, to all my colleagues have a good, safe summer. Everybody out back home in the Delta and Nunakput, I know geese hunting is still happening so be safe while you are geese hunting. Be safe while you're going to be whaling here in another couple of weeks, and we're looking forward to that. And just like I said to all my colleagues, again just have a good summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1572-19(2):
HOUSING STABILITY WORKER

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2018, Housing NWT had conducted a pilot project to help provide better wraparound supports for tenants living in public housing. That pilot project was conducted in Behchoko, and it created a new position within housing titled "housing stability worker" who's job was to work with housing tenants to support them in various ways to keep their housing and stabilize their living situation.

Mr. Speaker, according to the NWT Housing Corporation's annual report for 2019, 2022, it's the job of the housing stability worker to work with vulnerable tenants to develop housing plans that addresses aspects of everyday life such as financial literacy, housing arrears, employment, health and wellness, and food security. The position was created as a navigator that did home visits to help residents enhance their knowledge of existing government supports and to address a range of social issues that affects housing instability.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes this government's pilots are very great ideas but then they are short-lived. And I think positions like this, and this pilot project, was a very interesting concept, and I believe it should be continued and expanded upon to other regions and communities, including my own riding of Inuvik. I know that this position and the work that they do would be well suited and welcomed in Inuvik. However it appears that this pilot project may be over now since it was only scheduled to be active for two years in Behchoko.

Mr. Speaker, it is innovative programs and services such as that of the housing stability worker that needs to be conducted on a broader basis within the Northwest Territories because all communities and regions face similar social issues. So therefore they would all benefit from this type of position being offered across the board in all regions. And I will have questions for the Minister of Housing NWT at the appropriate time.

And, Mr. Speaker, because I have 30 seconds left, I would just like to congratulate all of the Inuvik graduates that are going to be graduating this Saturday and to all the post-secondary graduates that are finishing college and to Chelsea Jerome who is just graduating from her nursing degree program, and it's very exciting to have another Inuvialuit nurse come in the region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1573-19(2):
WITHDRAWAL FROM CO-MANAGEMENT
AGREEMENT

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as a voice of concern and frustration regarding the recent press release issued by the deputy mayor of Fort Resolution. It is disheartening to witness the lack of accountability and transparency alleged against the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs in his dealing with the community.

The concern raised in the press release demanded immediate attention and action. The withdrawal from the co-management arrangement, despite the struggling accumulated deficit and projected deficit, is simply unacceptable. The financial position of the Hamlet of Fort Resolution is in dire strait and MACA's failure to provide full disclosure and communicate with the elected council, it is

dereliction of duty. The community deserves better.

The absence of MACA representatives during the community meeting on May 10th, 2023, and the lack of updates on the administration of the hamlet, can only be interpreted as disregard for the concerns of my constituents. How can MACA claim to represent the community's best interests when they don't even show up to address their legitimate concerns? This level of empathy is simply unbelievable given the seriousness of the situation. It is right for the residents of Fort Resolution to deserve answers, deserves transparency, and deserve undivided attention of the department in this mess as soon as possible.

The decision of the elected council not to voluntarily resign is commendable. Continued continuity and accountability are crucial during these times of crisis. However, it is deeply troubling that our community has had to endure such challenges without the support of, and is repeatedly requested, from MACA. Their voices has fallen on deaf ears, and it's high time that they receive support and assistance they deserve.

The issue faced by the elected council during their tenure, including the significant financial challenges, internal control issues, human resources concerns, must be addressed urgently. The hamlet needs comprehensive feedback from MACA and action to rectify the multiple issues plagued in our community.

Rest assured, as your elected representative I will tirelessly advocate for our resources' assistance and support for what the solution requires. I will not rest until MACA steps up and our community concerns are addressed.

Mr. Speaker, no one is happy with the situation, and it's time to move forward in an open transparent collaborative approach between all levels of government for the betterment of Fort Resolution. I will have questions for the Minister of MACA at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1574-19(2):
HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, June is National Indigenous History Month. Throughout the month Canadians will be acknowledging Indigenous Peoples, First Nations, the Inuit, and the Metis.

As settlers, my ancestors were welcomed to these lands by Indigenous people. They were taught how to survive and how to navigate through the untouched regions of what we now call the provinces and territories of Canada. They built relationships with nations and shared with each other the teachings, knowledge, and skills of their cultures in an effort to form community. However, there is a dark side - the true collective history that was not taught until recently: A history of colonial, genocidal policies and doctrines that threaten to destroy all Indigenous people and their ways, to assimilate them into a dominant European structure.

I say we were taught about this "recently" because Indigenous people have lived on these lands since time immemorial. Longer than the explorations of 1492, older than America, older than the 156 years of Canada, so yes, the 21st Century is "recent" to learn the truth about the first peoples of this land.

The Government of Canada's website acknowledges National Indigenous History Month and provides some ideas how to acknowledge the month. However, we must take it further than listening to music, watching a movie, or reading a book. We can learn by participating and taking the initiative to go to celebrations and gatherings in our community and initiate conversations with Indigenous people, to not take over the conversation or to rush through a conversation, but to help create respectful spaces to intentionally listen to what is being shared with us. It is only when we make the journey from our intellect to our heart can we hear each other's truth and to know the person better.

My CA shared a teaching her elder taught her, and I quote. "Indigenous people seek to build relationships first, then do the work afterwards. It is to get to know each other better, to learn about each other, to celebrate and mourn with each other, to care for each other. When you connect in this way you want each other to succeed, you become allies and helpers in the face of threats and, more importantly, you become genuine friends. Non-Indigenous cultures seek to do the opposite - work first and succeed at all costs; power and control is the foundation and relationships are fine but not a priority." I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

I want to say that I acknowledge, support, and appreciate the true history of Indigenous peoples, not just for the month of June, but all year long, and I will seek to build relationships first. And now that I have a little bit more time, I

would also like to wish all the graduates across the territory a good celebration, a safe celebration, and to not drink and drive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1575-19(2): YELLOWKNIFE STREETS

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I remember these sunny days as a child. The anticipation of after school shenanigans, bike rides, and dock jumping in back bay and, of course, counting down the days to Raven Mad Daze. But Yellowknife streets have changed. Today the challenges that plague the halls of apartment buildings all winter have spilled into the streets for summer.

This isn't an easy issue to tackle in two minutes. It's layered in both history, root causes, tried band-aid solutions, and potential long-term solutions. This town has cycled through responses to escalated public intoxication-fueled violence from arrests to ambulance calls to ill-equipped underfunded organizations to relying on our ER staff. The RCMP has stopped what they call arrests for addiction. And where once people spent time sobering up in cells, they continue to use substance to numb pain in a town without easily accessible culturally appropriate supports. In turn, ambulances show up for callouts they don't have the resources to even band-aid, and nurses find themselves in unsafe workspaces being asked to solve long-term issues with short-term solutions.

In my lifetime, our streets have reached a boiling point as they are speckled with alcohol-fueled fights, very public crack use, and residents, including children, being caught in the middle. People are hurting themselves and others as their trauma reaches levels they cannot manage, and Yellowknife residents are concerned about the safety of street-involved people, the safety of children, and the safety of residents.

Mr. Speaker, removing band-aids, without the resources and supports to care for the wound, doesn't work. The state of our downtown and the absence of adequate short-term supports is having a ripple effect, and this town needs support resources to hit the streets today:

- Funded foot patrol teams that pair enforcement with health professionals bringing presence, resources, and relationships.

- Relationships to our streets need to happen now.
- Supports for business owners legally required to provide safe workplaces but are putting themselves between residents and violence on our streets needs to start now.
- Situational tables to handle specific case-by-case supports need to get back on track.

Mr. Speaker, people want to feel safe. Kids need to be able to walk home from school, women need to be able to walk without being harassed, touched, and threatened, and all residents deserve safety. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1576-19(2):
CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATES

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My summer message:

Mr. Speaker, summer is upon us, and many of the young people will be on their well-deserved summer break. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all the graduates from Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, from Menzi Community School in Whati, and Jean Wetrade School in Gameti, and Alexis Arrowmaker School in Wekweeti.

I want to thank all the students, parents, guardians, teachers, support staff, principals, and many more who worked hard supporting, working with our young people in the communities to complete the school year. For many it was not easy. There were challenges. But people coming together, working together, helped to move forward. There are still a lot of family and friends are still grieving for loss of loved ones. But I would say to all the people who helped, be proud of the accomplishment that they have made.

As I have said many times to our young people, Mr. Speaker, some of the young people will go to post-secondary, some will work, some will go in training, some will choose to travel, but you do need money to go places or live life off the grid. As we go through life, sometimes things can get in our way, difficulty in our families, with our friends, or maybe in school, a subject we find hard to understand. It is easy to just give up or quit. And this is not moving forward in life. As a young person, you have to keep pushing

yourself forward, don't give up, and you can accomplish anything.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend congratulations to all the post-secondary graduates from Tlicho region. A job well done, now the world is their oyster.

Further, I would also like to acknowledge, honour, the family members and friends that we have lost in the communities: elders like Elizabeth Michel, 99 years old. In Tlicho we call her Moma Cho. And elder Philip Dryneck, 94; my God-sister Mary Ann Football; former Grand Chief Eddy Erasmus; and others who are no longer with us. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mr. Speaker, we have lost too many young people. Their lives are priceless. They are our future. I encourage anyone struggling to reach out for help. Indigenous people are resilient; we have said that, and it's been known. We will continue to support one another to heal and move forward. Please don't drink and drive. Listen to your parents, parent, parents, grandparents, guardians and elders. You can have fun without drugs and alcohol in your life. There is more to life and living.

Mr. Speaker, I wish all the people in Tlicho region and leaders a happy and safe summer. I know many of them will be travelling. May God bless them, keep them and their families safe on their journey. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1577-19(2):
YOUTH PARLIAMENT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, back in April, the Legislative Assembly was host to 19 youth from across the Northwest Territories for our Annual Youth Parliament. There is starting to be a trend amongst the youth who have represented Yellowknife South. When they are given the opportunity to speak in this House, to deliver their message to us as MLAs and to the people of the Northwest Territories, they have chosen to speak to the action plan to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGEBTQIA+ people.

Mr. Speaker, today is the 2nd Anniversary of the delivery of the final report of the national inquiry. So, Mr. Speaker, I have chosen to take this opportunity to share the words of the latest

youth to stand in this spot who spoke to the action plan.

The following words are those that were written and read in this legislature by Nico Morin, who represented Yellowknife South as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women in the 2023 Youth Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, for many years now, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people have been found victims of numerous violence and abuse cases around the North, but rarely is there enough support for the survivors or their families. Survivors are left with a great deal of trauma to work through which not only affects them but has repercussions on family members who are left with a deep-rooted fear of that certain event happening again. This is even more so for families of victims who did not make it, as they are left to deal with that grief as well. As we know, this trauma is especially hard for Indigenous people who are also still dealing with the intergenerational trauma of historical and modern colonial practices.

Missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+, Call to Action 81, calls on the government to enhance the holistic approach of support to survivors, their families, and friends. This is important because it provides a diverse range of healing methods while also keeping a strong connection to Indigenous culture and medicinal practices.

Mr. Speaker, in the GNWT's action plan in response to the MMIWG Calls to Action, the government plans to provide the Indigenous governments, hamlets, councils, and local organizations, with funding to put in place a comprehensive community-based victim services program to help provide much-needed support to survivors of crime and their families. These services are being offered at a community level because communities are best able to identify the uniqueness of their residents.

Today I want to acknowledge that just because a person survives abuse or acts of violence does not mean that their pain is over and that they should be expected to return to a normal life. As the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, MMIWG is very relevant to my portfolio. Creating programs to help victims and their families heal from the traumatic events they had to endure will be greatly beneficial for women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize we need to move on many more calls to action. By addressing the actions one at a time, we can ensure a well thought out response and approach to the Calls

to Action and give them the much-needed attention they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to Ms. Morin for those words and for reminding me of some of reasons and motivations that lead me to run for office - the passion that we should never cease to bring to this job and to her courage to take on a topic, one that can seem overwhelming but which will only be solved by each of us giving voice to social change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1578-19(2):
SAMBAA K'E FIRE

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you all are aware the community of Sambaa K'e was the third community that had to evacuate this fire season. I can tell you that the community leadership and the band administration did a great job in following their community evacuation plan. I had the opportunity to speak with the band manager and she explain that the community was registering everybody evacuate at that time. As she and Chief Jumbo explained to me, they were being proactive as there was a potential for the fire to impact the communities based on anticipated smoke that could close the local airport.

Mr. Speaker, there is a likelihood of smoke closing the airport in a few days because of the planned ignition operation adjacent to the community. As well, they are having conversations with ECC and MACA and factored in the weather and wind for the next few days while they make this decision.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise you when the community did call the evacuation order, they asked that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs regional EMO not to sound the alert until they had the opportunity to tell the residents. They did not want to cause more stress with the evacuees. As you can imagine, this is a very scary thing to happen.

In speaking with the chief, he explained to me a part of the plan was to get 75 evacuees to Fort Simpson and this was done in a timely manner. I can also advise you that 13 residents stayed behind as essential staff. Evacuees were scheduled to stay in the Fort Simpson recreation centre in the gym and arena. The village had set up the evacuation centre full of cots. However, almost all evacuees have found other places to stay with family, friends, or other locations in the community.

Mr. Speaker, the village will be providing meals at the evacuation centre for the evacuees. There will be meals provided three times a day. As well, there are tables set up in case anybody wants to play cards, visit, and there's a projection screen where people can watch TV.

Mr. Speaker, residents and businesses of Fort Simpson have been amazing hosts. I have heard of businesses providing a pallet of water, another business going into the community to bring their pets out, and people donating baking goods and food. They are doing what they can to help out.

Mr. Speaker, I realize it is a scary time for the residents of Sambaa K'e, and I hope that they get home soon. As well as you imagine, we are hoping we see some rain soon. Mr. Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Sambaa K'e leadership, their staff, the regional EMO team and ECC staff on the work they are doing, as well to the people and businesses of Fort Simpson. Thank you for being caring neighbours.

And Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just close and encourage everybody to be very cautious about the fire season we're in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1579-19(2):
CONGRATULATIONS TO SAHTU
GRADUATES

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the grads in the Sahtu this morning. I am quite excited about this grad class as they started their education in grade 9, 2019, when we all got elected. They have too seen us through the pandemic. They have too seen us through the floods and the fires. They continued their education as well. I am proud to say that in the Sahtu, we've got 26 grads this year, and I'd like to name them off and congratulate:

For Norman Wells - Cameron Barney, Reece Harley, Briseis Kenny, Izac McKay, Summer Rose, Sommer Wiley, Airiyanna Kakfwi, Danielle Kochon.

And for Colville Lake - Jaylene Kochon, Adriana Stewart.

And for Deline - Madison Baton Beyonnie, Yehdza MacKeinzo, Tayla Tutcho, Nikki Tutcho, Darrian Tutcho, Isaiah Kelly, Corbin Takazo, Presley Tetso.

And for Fort Good Hope - Gwyneth Amos, Joy Kakfwi, Marcus Proctor, Marilyn McNeely, Mason Laffery, Tessa Grandjambe.

In Fort Tulita - Mason MacCauley-Bayha, and Makhla Antoine.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the former leadership in my riding and also the teachers who continue to provide opportunity in the Sahtu for the students to become successful. I would also like to highlight the achievements of my riding of Steve Kakfwi and Ethel Blondin who, through their legacy, inspired the Sahtu and the students to become high achievers.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have a story of how I got here to the North. I've been here all my life, and I'm with all of you here today and we continue that legacy in this House. We continue to inspire students coming forward. We inspire them together with their dreams, their ambitions, and their hearts, and soon they will be filling our seats here at the Legislative Assembly. Congratulations to the class of 2023. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nunakput.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not too many times I get to stand up and welcome people in the Assembly. But I'd like to welcome Manitoulin vice-president of operations, Mr. Kevin Ramsay, into the House today. And welcome, Kevin, and thank you for all the work that he is doing and all the donations that he does in the Beaufort Delta for all communities. And it doesn't go unnoticed. Thank you very much.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Quyananni. I'd like to recognize our interpreters from Inuvik, from the Inuvialuit interpreters, Lillian Elias and Valerie Steffanson. Quyananni for all the hard work that they do for us. And, you know, I often enjoy tuning into the channel and listening and just learning some of the words again. So I really appreciate that. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this whole session I've had two very hardworking pages from Yellowknife South, Mesha Leonce and Morgyn Martiniuk. I was hoping to catch a day when I knew they were both in the room, but I don't know I quite caught that. They're in the building, they've been doing this all week, and thank you very much for their hard work.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife South. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the interpreters as well too who have been with me since 2019. I appreciate their work, I appreciate their broadcasting and interpreting with our proceedings here in the North Slavey language, Ms. Sarah Cleary and Ms. Theresa Etchinelle. Your work is very much appreciated. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to acknowledge two Tlicho citizens attending school in Yellowknife, Mika McKenzie and Emily Bishop. I would also like to acknowledge and thank all the interpreters for a job well done, and especially to Tlicho interpreters Jonas Lafferty and Mary Rose Sundberg. And now I see Lena Drygeese. So I would like to say thank you to all of them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize a page from Hay River North who has been with us this week, Mr. Nicolas Graham. Right now he's a page, and you might see him sitting around the room but I'm confident that one day he will be sitting in one of our seats. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank all the translators, Jonas Lafferty, Lena Drygeese, Tom Unka, Mark Casaway. Also my CA, Shirley Tsetta. Also, I'd like to recognize and say thank you to all the clerks and the staff and the pages, and

especially the cooks that were providing meals. Mahsi.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to thank the interpreters, but I also want to apologize to them. I know that I am one of the ones that's all a repeat offender for speaking too quickly in the House, and I know they all bear with me and I appreciate it. I also want to thank the staff and advisors for our work; it's been a tough one scheduling the Regular Members with all of our interests and wants and they work really hard. And as well the pages, because they're always fun to have and I haven't looked once to see my water glass at a low state. And of course my constituency assistant Maggie who is always teaching me and I am learning from. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1563-19(2): EVACUEE COMPENSATION

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for those persons that made application for the Evacuee Income Distribution Support Program, can the Minister of Finance confirm if there is a telephone number, as of yet, that applicants can call to follow up on the status of their application? Or if not, is there another option for evacuees to confirm the status of those applications and payment? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can now confirm that indeed there is a phone number. The contact number is now noted online. The application form is actively being updated as I'd indicated it would be yesterday. The message has gone out to the MLAs of the ridings, or will this morning, with that information.

As I said yesterday, this is a role that public servants weren't occupying just a couple of weeks ago so, you know, I appreciate some patience from folks, but those numbers are there now directly so that people can contact. They'll be going to the manager of financial operations to help work through any details. But the form, you know, again, that's your first stop

is the web page with the form and that will have all that information available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, with the roll out of any type of funds, there's always a cutoff date and I just want to make sure that, you know, that any evacuees do not miss that cutoff date because there was some confusion as who may or may not be able to actually apply. So I'd ask the Minister is there a cutoff date for making applications under the Evacuee Income Distribution Support Program? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This program does have a start and end date to it. Applications are, again, for anyone who is under an order of seven days or more. Anyone that was under that order and had income disruption should be looking at the form and considering making the application. The end date for accepting those applications is 30 days after the evacuation order was issued. There's not a lot of paperwork involved. There's not a lot of supporting documents involved. That was done intentionally so that folks can get this done as a fairly quick process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'd like to say thank you to the United Way for all they've done throughout this event, you know, and the support they provided to KFN and Hay River residents. So, Mr. Speaker, the United Way now, I understand, is responsible of disbursing funds raised for evacuees of KFN and Hay River.

Can the Minister confirm how this will be achieved and will the Minister commit to provide a staff person to temporarily assist the United Way, if need be, because I understand, you know, they kind of run on limited staff and volunteers. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of good news for United Way today. Obviously, the announcement has gone out from the federal government that they'll be watching donations. We're likely looking at over a million dollars going into the United Way all in the space of less than a month. That is fantastic news. So folks are aware. The United Way works with communities, community governments, local organizations, non-profit organizations, and then disburses funds to them. So two parts to my message is, number one, if you have a cost and expense and need a concern, that you need some supports with, to reach out to your local organizations because they can work with the United Way to access those funds. But then, Mr. Speaker, since

almost the beginning of when the GNWT matched donations, we realized that that's a large influx of money going in. We immediately started to look at what we could do to help support the United Way. They do have some part-time staff I understand, but this is a lot of money and it's coming very quickly. So we are -- my understanding is that we have now been in touch with their staff, been in touch with their board. Their board chair is on the way back from being out of town, and we'll be working with them to ensure that whatever capacity they need, so letting them be the ones, the drivers of deciding what they need, but that we will be able to support them, whether that's with some staffing or some other mechanism to help them get 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. Mr. Speaker, a lot of work has been done on this, but the question is has any money been disbursed yet and, if not, when will it be disbursed? Because people are still calling, they're still waiting and, you know, hopefully within these next few days we'll hear some good news that -- or I'll hear some good news that somebody actually got something. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you might recall yesterday I think there were approximately 80 applications already in, and I can confirm that Department of Finance staff have been in direct contact with a number of those individuals to -- there was some -- I mean, the form is quite short but I gather there was some information still missing. So that first crop is going to be processed with either cheques or direct deposits to be issued by next week. And, again, you know, with the exchanges here hopefully more folks will be applying, and then those cheques again -- cheques or direct deposit, with that information now being on the form, we'll hopefully be able to issue even more quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1564-19(2):
HOUSING STABILITY WORKER

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Housing NT explain what the housing stability worker position is and tell us whether the pilot project in Behchoko was successful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you so much to the Member for addressing this issue here. The housing stability worker in Behchoko is very successful. It was actually introduced in the last government and also created by the Premier at that time who held the housing portfolio. We did address the housing evictions, we did address housing needs, wraparound services that may have been required. Since then, housing has created and worked with the Tlicho. We do have a housing working group right now. The decision of that working group is that the Tlicho had wanted to take the position. So we are now working side by side with the Tlicho and looking at how this position will be tailored and we look into the future as to filling of this position in the region. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that, Minister. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if there's any plans to expand the housing stability worker into other communities and regions beyond Behchoko. As in my Member's statement, you know, this is something that's happening in a lot of our -- especially in our regional centres, and I'm sure it's happening here in Yellowknife too, so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question, that this is one of the areas that I did highlight, homelessness and housing supports is crucially needed. Throughout the Northwest Territories, we have a variety of different situations that we need to address. Along with mortgages as well, we have units that we need to be transferring. For me, those were the two major highlights while working within this portfolio. I would like to see these positions in every region, to be honest, Mr. Speaker. It is quite needed. It is very much needed. We need to address housing in a different innovative collaborative way, and this is a key on how we should be doing things differently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, talking about this pilot project, it was a pilot project so it was scheduled for two years. The funding, I guess, was for two years. So is there still funding for this position for Tlicho and it's not been filled, or is there something that has to come back? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. The funding was a government position but we did end up providing a

community initiative project approach with the Tlicho housing working group. That is how the position is funded right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. You know, when we come in here we try to give our Ministers a little bit of an opportunity to come with the answers but sometimes our -- as we get our answers, things change. So I guess my last question to this Minister would be would this Minister commit to working with the Indigenous groups in Inuvik to try and create this position there to deal with some of the issues that are going on in housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I'm very passionate about this portfolio, and I'm quite excited but, you know, I just want to let the Member know is that I would like to see if there's any vacant positions that are not filled within housing and create a position that would soon be able to work side by side with the new housing position that we are creating that is addressing homelessness. I would like to be innovative.

I would like to see things change and address the issue in the Beaufort Delta differently. So I would like to follow up with the Member as well. We do have continuous conversations with the Indigenous governments but I would like to see what we do have available. If this position is able to be fulfilled on a term position, absolutely I would like to -- I would like to support that and follow up with the Member as well too. We do have a new position supposed to be housed in the northern part of the territory, housed in Inuvik, and if we can get a position to work side by side to address homelessness in the Member's riding, absolutely, I'll bring this back to my department and look for a vacant position to fill that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1565-19(2):
CHILD CARE

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my first questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Earlier this week I delivered a Member's statement about child care struggles in the Northwest Territories. It's one of the top things

that I'm hearing about right now from the people that I serve. I also tabled a document that day by the C.D. Howe that outlined potential solutions. One such solution pointed to shared equity mortgage program to increase child care space infrastructure. Is the GNWT or ECE willing to explore creative solutions like this to increase infrastructure specifically for child care spaces in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, of course we're willing to explore innovative solutions. I have not had a chance to look at the report the Member tabled. It seems like every week there is a report coming out on child care and I do get to them as they come out, but I haven't got to this one yet so I'll have a look at it and go from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, the other thing that is currently on the go right now with ECE in regards to child care is determining a wage grid for child care workers. I'm wondering what standards are being used to determine the child care wage grid and will the standards be based on minimum wage, living wage, salaries currently paid to similarly educated ELCC providers based in schools; where is the starting point for this conversation? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I believe just last week is when the department really went out and started working with child care providers to get a better understanding of the financial situation. Based on the feedback, the wage grid will be based on geographic location, current wages, roles, responsibilities, experience, post-secondary education, other education, and Indigenous knowledge. And as we develop it, there may be more factors to be taken into account. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, child care providers are concerned that given the GNWT cap adjustment in annual revenues that's in place and will also be -- and also -- sorry, that they're implementing these wage grids that they will not be able to meet the funding shortfalls that they might see, especially given the rising costs that we're seeing, whether it's through insurance, electricity, food costs. This has been highlighted multiple times in this House over the course of the implementation of the new child

care subsidy structures. So how will ECE ensure that funding shortfalls do not close day cares in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what the Member is talking about is an unacceptable situation where the, you know, implementation of a move towards universal child care will actually cause, you know, a collapse of the sector. So that is the primary thing that we don't want to happen and so we are working diligently to ensure that that doesn't happen. As part of the development of a new wage grid, we are also working on a new overall funding model. So as we work with centres, as we understand their revenues, their costs, their needs, we can put into place something that will ensure that the revenue they receive is more -- that allows them to be sustainable; it's more predictable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I'm hearing quite regularly is this concern over closed doors and there's such a struggle to get your name on a list, to get your child in a door to begin with, then to start potentially losing those spaces is very scary for parents. It means that they're not able to go to work, it means they're not able to pay their mortgage, it means they're not able to continue to live; they're not able to support themselves. And so in light of all these concerns and the threat of day cares potentially having to close their doors, what is ECE doing to communicate these viable solutions and the work that they're doing with both child care providers but also parents that are using this sector? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as I stated, the department has gone out and has been working directly with child care providers. There's always ongoing discussions with the Early Childhood Association. On the website there is a lot of information for parents. We are trying to determine what the wait lists are. You know, a number of parents will put their names on a number of different wait lists. We don't really have a sense of, you know, how many duplicates there are so it's very unclear at this point. So we're trying to get to the bottom of that as well because we want to make sure that we know what the demand is so that we're better able to support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1566-19(2):
INCOME ASSISTANCE PAYMENT DELAY

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ECE. As I've been sitting here this morning, I've been getting messages from residents that people on income assistance being -- with payments for disabilities have not received their payment yet this week. It's my understanding there's been changes to the process and the form submissions, etcetera, and that has delayed the payment. Can the Minister speak to what is going on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can look into this issue. I know just as MLA, I often get people in my office looking for their income assistance. We tell them to come to check at 1 o'clock. That's often when they come in, maybe a day later. But once the payments are issued, it can take one to three days for them to be processed by the bank. So it could be an issue with that but I will look into this immediately. And the department is listening right now as well, so I'm sure they're frantically looking into it and will send me some information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that, and I do appreciate that the Minister is responsive. However, it's my understanding that this delay has been caused by changes to the disability payment and as such, people were submitting documents early this week. And so my question is why would we make changes that are then being done right before the next payment as people don't have their money in their accounts as of Friday and that makes me worry that children aren't going to have food, rents aren't going to be paid. You know, I can survive if I don't have money in my bank account; I have credit cards, I can go into debt, but many others don't have that option, and so can the Minister speak to what's going on there? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I'm not aware of any changes that were made at that operational level, and the staff are getting ready to make changes to the system as a whole as we introduce the new income assistance stream for seniors and persons with disabilities so that change should be happening in the next couple of months, few months. But as for a change that happened in the last couple weeks, I'm not aware of that but, as I said, I will look into this. Thank you.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I literally have people telling me they were asked to submit new forms at the beginning of this week so I'm not sure what's going on here. And I do appreciate the Minister needs to look into this. Can the Minister tell us is this also affecting the seniors' payments? I know that sitting here a couple of my colleagues have also indicated to me they've had people reaching out they have not received their money this week. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, again, I have to look into it; I don't have that information. But what I will say is that persons with disabilities and seniors, so people who we don't expect to -- you know, to go back into the workforce, they are often what's called payrolled. So they only have to submit their financial information once every three months, six months, every year perhaps. And so when you don't have to submit, you know, monthly, when it's every 12 months, you know, that could cause issues. People might not be, you know, as familiar with the process if they've only done it, you know, one or two times. So there could be issues with that as well, but I will look into it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate that this could just be a one-off but given that I'm hearing from my colleagues they are also getting emails of the same, I think this is a glitch or something is happening in the payment system. Can the Minister commit to ensuring that that money for those people is in their bank accounts by the end of the business day today? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, if the money is issued, that's one thing, but I can't control when it's processed through the banks. So if I could will it to happen, I would, but the Minister of Finance has also informed me that she has her staff looking into this to make sure it's not an issue on their end. So we're taking an all-of-government approach to deal with this issue. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1567-19(2):
CO-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH
TOWN OF FORT RESOLUTION

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in my Member's statement I talked about what's going on in Fort Resolution, and it's a little bit disheartening to witness what's going on there and listen to the hamlet council and

also to the deputy mayor. And I also want to just apologize for not getting these questions to the Minister of MACA sooner, but I -- but anyway, I just wanted to ask the question. MACA, in regards to how did MACA work to assist the community through its challenges since 2019 to implement the work plan with MACA before pulling the trigger about a month ago? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for asking these questions. I can honestly say the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh has been in constant contact and doing his job as an MLA. In regards to his question, it's going to be a little bit longwinded, but I apologize now.

In March 2019, Municipal and Community Affairs entered into a co-management agreement with the hamlet that expired in 2020. MACA's regional superintendent remained in regular contact, almost often daily, with the mayor and SAO to provide ongoing support. In fall of 2022, the interim SAO provided quarterly reports showing a million-dollar deficit. Municipal and Community Affairs regional staff visited the community in 2022 and were able to assist with some financial reporting.

In a letter to the mayor on October 13th, 2022, MACA set out concerns and recommendations related to governance, financial reporting, and critical infrastructure, and SAO recruitment. The regional superintendent was in touch almost daily with the mayor and deputy mayor from September to January 2022, urging council to hire a SAO as it was a legislative requirement.

In February 2023, the regional superintendent and assistant superintendent met with the council to highlight some of MACA's concerns. Council members repeatedly asked for administration at that time and we were trying to work with them -- administration is our last step, and we were trying to work with them to come out there.

The school community government met with the council to discuss the custom training plan. MACA visited -- staff visited the community to meet with staff and council in March, April, and May of 2023 to discuss and assist with financial and governance issues. The regional office continues to provide ongoing advice and support to the mayor and deputy mayor after the mayor resigned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for your response. In your response, you talked about in 2020 the agreement -- co-management agreement expired. However, in the deputy minister's press release, it talked about MACA withdrew from the co-management agreement. And so my question is, Mr. Speaker, why did MACA withdraw from the co-management agreement despite that \$640,000 community deficit was not shared with the elected council? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. In March 2019, as part of the commitment to implement measures intended to improve accountability and efficiency of their programs and services, the hamlet did enter into a co-management agreement and work plan with Municipal and Community Affairs. The agreement and work plan included recommendation for operational review conducted in months leading up to the agreement. The agreement expired. Again, I wish to stress it expired March 31st, 2020. And while some of the objectives were not fully achieved, the hamlet was demonstrating a commitment to successfully accomplishing these objectives. It was therefore agreed that Municipal and Community Affairs would continue to work closely with the hamlet on the work plan action and planned action items without extending the co-management agreement. So that was an agreement with the department and the hamlet. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister, for that. Yeah, I guess the community's been wanting answers for some time, and we had a meeting in May, and we were -- I attended that meeting in that community and they were still asking the question, you know, where's the Minister, where's the MACA staff, and that kind of thing. So anyways, so Mr. Speaker, it's clear the residents of Fort Resolution are frustrated. Will the Minister go to Fort Resolution and consult with the community members and elected council before taking further action? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just need to clear the air. So mayor and the deputy mayor reached out to me. We had a conversation. They told me that they were going to be on -- and I believe it was May 10th they were going to have a meeting. I explained that I was travelling already attending an FPT meeting and that however our staff would be available. Our staff -- we did give them that information and staff was waiting the whole night to get the

phone call to be brought in. So we were making ourselves available. I can advise you that I ran into the deputy mayor this week and offered to go into Fort Res and speak to the community leadership as my schedule allows. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. I think now that, you know, it sounds like the administration's going to happen, and there are still concerns with the residents of Fort Resolution in regards to the water rates and sewer rates going up. Can the Minister assure the community that that doesn't happen right now until we have a better hand on what's going to happen in the administration work plan? And I'm hoping that the Minister could probably explain that as he goes into the community once he's notified on the date. Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have a timeline or implementation plan yet. The Minister hasn't even started the required work to address the deficit and outstanding issues. So that work needs to be done. There may likely be some changes required to the hamlet programs and services, including the water and sewer rates. However, we don't know that until we look at it. Municipal and Community Affairs is aware that several hamlet programs and services are not currently functioning at full capacity, and there will likely be changes needed to ensure that residents are receiving these municipal services.

Again, I would encourage the residents of Fort Res to provide support to the administrator as he undertakes the work required to help the hamlet to set work on a stable and financial path. This includes discussions, issues, and concerns with the administrator once he starts on March 5th.

But, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had an opportunity to talk to a former superintendent for Municipal and Community Affairs, and we were having a conversation about administration and what the role is and how it's going to be done. So we are working on that, and I will work with the Member to explain some of the ideas that we're looking at to make sure this administration is a short period of time. We, I, want to make sure we have an elected council in there as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1568-19(2):
TRANSITION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA
CURRICULUM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Teachers need time and training to roll out the new and adjusted BC curriculum here in the Northwest Territories. Teachers may be expected to complete five 2-hour courses over the summer. Apparently, these courses aren't ready yet. This information was found on social media, not in formal announcement from the department or their education authorities. So can the Minister tell us when the training materials will be ready and delivered to teachers? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This month, they'll be ready. There is a plan for the training. It was released on May 23rd and so the actual plan is out there. I understand what the Member is saying these materials are not immediately available. There's no expectation that teachers will have to work over the summer. You know, that's the benefit of being a teacher. You get that little bit of time off in the summer there so we're not trying to burden teachers with anything.

I will say that in the upcoming school year, there will be some teachers who will be trialing the new British Columbia curriculum. So teachers of grade 4 to 6 classes as well as grade 9 classes. Schools were given the option of trialing some or all of the curriculum in those years. So some schools are implementing the full curriculum for four to six and nine, and others are just doing certain parts of it. So this is not all teachers in the territory; I just want to make sure that people were aware of that. The information about, you know, the curriculum and the resources, we provide that to the superintendents who then disseminate that among their school staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. It's very helpful to get this information on the record and out there.

Another issue is that the department says transition must happen before the contract with Alberta Education ends for the administration of diploma exams. But, Mr. Speaker, this really shouldn't matter. Students did not write diploma exams while learning remotely during the

pandemic. So will the Minister look at revising the timeline for this exam's requirement or eliminate it? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think there might have been some miscommunication. There is no expectation that we need to fully transition to British Columbia's curriculum before the contract with Alberta Education ends. The contract ends in 2025-2026, marking the last year of diploma exams and the last year that students in grade 12 will use the Alberta curriculum. Implementation of the BC curriculum in all grades is anticipated for the 2027-2028 school year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister again for that. It's helpful to get this information out there. It's not clear, though, how colleges and universities that still base their entry requirements on percentage grades will treat NWT students applying for admission when we start to switch to a proficiency scale. So it's also not clear how this proficiency scale grading will impact scholarships and it's not clear how parents are going to be informed about the new assessment scale either.

So can the Minister tell us what implementation measures ECE has developed to make sure students can continue to apply and be competitive for entrance into colleges and universities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. One of the nice things about partnering with a large jurisdiction like British Columbia is that colleges and universities recognize that the way that BC does its curriculum and its grading, and so BC does use percentage grades for grades 10, 11, and 12. It's up to grade 9 where there is the proficiency scale that the Member is talking about. So there will be percentages for grades 10, 11, 12. As for grades 1 to 9, we're still working on what that might look like, whether or not we're going to fully adopt British Columbia's scale. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister again for that. It's really helpful to get this information out there because clearly there's different views out there or whatever. So professional teachers, though, on the frontline are telling me that they're not ready for this rollout and they're not prepared.

So how is the Minister going to act now to address these concerns and determine

whether an implementation delay on the new BC curriculum is needed? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I've heard these concerns directly from the teachers. I met with the NWT Teachers Association a few weeks ago, maybe a month ago now, and, you know, they were expressed directly to me, so I have been asking conversations with the department who was very alive to this. You know, most of them are teachers themselves so they understand this. We have been working on the online courses, which teachers will be able to access at their leisure.

There are professional development days. ECE is providing face-to-face seminars. So there's a number of ways that we are working with the education bodies and the teachers to ensure that teachers are prepared. I do understand the trepidation; it is a big change. I'll note that this has been delayed. You know, I believe the initial plan was to roll this out maybe last year, and we've been pushing it back and now it is a much longer roll out, understanding that there is the need for training.

And I will say that some teachers are already using this as well. You know, the Northern Studies 30 curriculum, which is being piloted this year, does use the BC curricular framework and some other teachers just like to use competency-based curriculum, and so they have been doing it on their own as well. So I understand there is -- I mean, there are some people who are very well prepared and excited, and there's others who feel like they need more training and time for training. And so we are working hard with the teachers' association and the education bodies to ensure that teachers do get that time they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1569-19(2):
RCMP SERVICES

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are 21 RCMP detachments in the NWT. And the smallest NWT community with a population of 104 has a RCMP detachment so therefore I have a question for the Minister. This week we have been reviewing the supplementary estimates. There is \$1.5 million to expand the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program. That's good. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to know does that funding

include any new officers for Gameti or Wekweeti? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've added quite a few new RCMP positions since I've become Minister. I sometimes have difficulty keeping them straight, which year we've added them, but I do know that we have added a number of positions in the Member's regions for those communities. And if not this year, the past couple years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Yes, I am aware of that but I'm just asking for Gameti or Wekweeti, and they were not included in there. So, Mr. Speaker, we really need a stronger police presence in Gameti and Wekweeti. There's no detachment or even permanent officers, only visiting officers from time to time. Can the Minister explore opportunities to increase the police presence in Gameti and Wekweeti? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, and I will amend what I said. Those officers are dedicated to those communities, but they are not stationed in those communities. As the Member points out, they don't have detachments. Like I said, we've added a number of positions. We're always working with the RCMP to enhance their ability to do their job, and we will continue to do that. We are exploring options through the First Nation and Inuit Policing Program with the federal government. So we recognize these concerns, and we are looking at ways to address them. There's also, you know, other ways to address some of these issues as well. Community safety officers are one option that we recently gotten into and perhaps that's a path forward to either, you know, put resources in communities where there are none or free up resources from other communities so we can distribute them other ways. So we are always looking at this. Thank you

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I believe year-round police presence in Gameti and Wekweeti is needed. Every time the visiting officers come, the community becomes quiet, and when they leave it becomes lively. The situation is especially hard on elders, you know. I just visited the community over there and the leaders have -- they expressed -- you know, they really want an RCMP station in Gameti and also the elders are having a hard time. It's having an impact on them. So therefore, can the Minister convey to the RCMP the desire for a stronger

police presence in the Tlicho communities? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I just mentioned with the population of 104 has a police station. So, Mr. Speaker, small communities should not be denied policing even if we are small, small community, we need law and order in order to keep our residents safe. I realize there are only so many resources but our small community need to be safe. Can the Minister encourage the RCMP to work more closely with leaders in Gameti and Wekweeti to meet their policing needs? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, every time I hear from Members in the House, I do ensure that information is conveyed to the RCMP, and the leadership in those communities have direct relationships with the RCMP as well so I'm sure they're also conveying that information. So, you know, between all of us, I'm sure the message will get out there. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1570-19(2):

YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HIGHWAY REPAIR

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Transportation in regards to the Dempster Highway from the corner to the NWT border. Is the Minister working with the Yukon government and the federal Minister to see if we could get any funding jointly to get the highway fixed because the wear and tear on everybody's vehicles is -- like, from the Delta, Mr. Speaker, is there any possible way to make agreement, I guess, with the federal Minister to get monies for that road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Quyananni. Yes, the Department of Infrastructure is working with the Yukon counterparts. I just want to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier Pillai was up in Inuvik for the northern Premiers meeting and, you know, we had discussions on putting a joint submission forward to Canada because the

Member is correct, you know, I get a number of concerns that the Dempster Highway is doing a lot of wear and tear. I mean, you know, we as the GNWT has done work from Inuvik's side. You know, we're not done yet but, I mean, we're working towards the border, Mr. Speaker. You're fully aware of the conditions once you pass the border going into the Yukon. You know, we as the northern residents up in the Beaufort Delta, we use the Dempster Highway all the time for our supplies. So, I mean, yes, we are working with the Yukon government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know when I hit the NWT side, that's a real highway right to Tsiigehtchic. That highway's really well maintained, and well done to the department. But, you know, soon as you hit the NWT border southbound, right to the corner, you're pounding out shocks, and the wear and tear on not only the regular community trucks but to all the trucking companies too because the upkeep on that highway's so bad.

But, Mr. Speaker, the question I have right now is when will the Minister be doing that joint submission with the Yukon, and is there a timeline on that to get it submitted to the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, I just -- I want to note that at the meeting, you know, we sat at the table. Premier Cochrane was there as well, grand chief for the Gwich'in Tribal Council was also at the table. We had really in-depth discussions. It's also a priority. And the grand chief had also mirrored some of my concerns as well. So, I mean, we are working together from the region to be able to further discuss. You know, it is important because it's a vital link standpoint for resupply but, you know, tourism opportunities as well that benefit both jurisdictions in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Arctic sovereignty, for example, is most importantly. Road safety for both territories. Mr. Speaker, we are working with the government. Premier Pillai had promised me that he would look into perhaps putting some money into the Yukon side. So I'm looking forward to furthering that discussion with him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah, thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. But when would we be able to get that joint submission in to get the monies to get that highway done, just the timeline? Is it this summer that they're going to do a joint submission, or is the Minister going to go to Whitehorse to get that done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the -- I just want to note, you know, yes we're pushing from the GNWT standpoint but realistically this has to be Yukon led. I mean, this is their part of the highway. We can't be submitting federal funding for another jurisdiction other than let's do this together. And, you know, in terms of timeline, I'm hoping by the summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I'm really happy to hear that the works going to be done by my Minister. And hopefully she could get into the Yukon into Whitehorse to go and meet with the appropriate Minister and to get this joint submission done and make them think it's their idea when it's actually ours. So I'm encouraging the Minister to get down to Whitehorse as soon as possible to get this done because it's just a little bit too much wear and tear on everybody's vehicles. And like I always said, you know, as the Beaufort Delta has more -- we do more of our shopping and everything like that in the Yukon so that road's really well in need of upkeep and care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's -- that's my -- you know, that's something I want to do. I've been having discussions with the Premier. And, you know, I continue to work with the Premier's office to be able to have a road trip from Dawson all the way to Inuvik and hit every pothole there is on that road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1571-19(2):
HOUSING STABILITY WORKER

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to -- for the record, to talk about the housing stability worker for Fort Smith and the South Slave. And I want to ask the Minister about this because I think the person has to have certain criteria. The criteria should be a person without judgement, a neutral person, a person who can navigate underprivileged clients in getting through the system for housing, and therefore it should not be -- it should not be a person who is part of the Housing NWT office in Hay River. It should have a separate office. And that's the way -- that's the only way we would solve the problems. I wonder if the Minister would agree with me on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier had just tabled a document in regards to homelessness as well too, and this is one of the actions through this strategy as well too. But looking at how we would be looking at a housing stability worker, that is a conversation that we are having throughout the territory as well. And I do agree with the Member that having this position not housed within housing and looking at further opportunities is what I would like to see. I like the innovative approach, and I would like to see the communities take more of a stronger partnership with us when we're addressing housing in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, strong leadership with such a need within the whole Northwest Territories for the underprivileged that do not have housing is a mandate of ours, and I want to make sure that the person that is allocated to these positions are completely neutral and without judgement and navigate the system. Strong leadership within leadership with elected officials is extremely important and must give direction. And I want to know if the Minister agrees with me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, I do agree with the Member with this approach as well. We've tried this in the Tlicho and looking at our successes and doing business differently and addressing housing differently as well. We've initiated this through the distinction-based funding and working with Indigenous governments. We've also done this with our community housing plans and identifying significant drastic needs at the community level, and I feel that this approach is where we need to start strategizing and start thinking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Only when we do these kind of changes will I regain my confidence in Housing NWT, because I feel that the underprivileged and some of the situations that I tried to navigate through in the last four years have not been dealt with, and I feel that change is with oversight, neutrality, no judgement, and making sure that the underprivileged are looked after. Would the Minister agree with me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, I do agree with the Member. I think we should have this approach

throughout the Northwest Territories. And within the four years, I know that it's been quite challenging for this government and for the communities to see a lot of progress within this portfolio, but we do have the renewal that has been brought forward as well too, and we do have the policy changes, the energy strategy has been brought forward. And with that approach, I'm looking to seeing housing approach and do things differently and recognizing work with the communities a lot more closely, and I would like to see decisions made at the local level and bringing those up to our table and right here into the Assembly for our discussion so we can make sure that we do work productively with our communities and within this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that this navigator -- housing navigator with a neutral approach would be the answer to some of the issues that many of us have been bringing forward. Especially myself, I felt that I didn't get -- this is the one file that I feel that many times that I failed on. As a very strong -- I feel like a strong MLA who navigates for people who have not been treated fairly within the system. And I still feel that way. And with the new policy that has come out for homelessness and all that, I hope that changes, and I look forward to change. And I think it should be a priority for us before we finish this session, this next session in August. Thank you. Would the Minister agree with me on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, I do agree with the Member, absolutely. And when I had this portfolio, I wanted to see significant changes. I do come from a smaller community. And I do come home, and I see these struggles right at the ground level, right from homelessness to outdated mortgages to mold in houses. And, you know, do we have the budget to address each and every one of these issues? This government and this portfolio has a hundred-unit rollout. And I know it doesn't seem as significant, but we -- Mr. Speaker, we haven't had a replenishment of units in the last four decades. And with the collaboration with the Indigenous governments, I brought forward the messaging from housing is that, you know, if you're not going to -- if the federal government is not going to fund the territorial government, then fund the Indigenous governments directly, recognize those federal agreements, recognize those negotiations that are going on. And with that, successfully we were able to see approximately \$650,000 coming to the Northwest Territories but directly going to the Indigenous governments, and we work with

them side by side, Mr. Speaker. But one thing I don't agree with is the Member did not fail with the approach and working with us. She has brought this portfolio to a different level where we are thinking differently. A lot of her advocacy has contributed to the policy changes, and I appreciate all of those comments coming forward. Thank you so much. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1572-19(2):
DREDGING

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was kind of worried there that I might not have time, but.

Mr. Speaker, from the start of this 19th Assembly, I have talked about dredging. People want to call it harbour remediation, they want to call it harbour restoration, whatever. But really it is removing the silt from the bottom of the channel in the harbour so that boats can come in and out. It's not just me that has talked about it. You know, the Member for Hay River North, when he was sitting on this side, he did the same thing. And, you know, Mr. Bouchard, when he was here, he did the same thing. But we haven't seen any of the infrastructure Ministers do anything in the last how many years with this. We haven't seen any dredging. People in Hay River have been asking for it. And I'm hoping that this Minister, you know, will be different. You know, we're giving her a chance to do something, like I said before, that the other ones haven't been able to do. So we are getting -- like, we are all aware that, you know, we are getting close to the shipping season here. We're getting close to, you know, the commercial fisheries. The other day I was at a meeting and the fishermen were concerned. You know, there's less than four feet of water in the channel so when the fishing boats and MTS barges are loaded, they need a little bit more than that. So I guess what I'd like to know, I guess, is, you know, after years of no dredging, can the Minister confirm if this summer will be different? Are we going to be dragging boats through the channel? Are we going to be having -- you know, making a few dollars for MTS by pulling coast guard boats off? I don't know. But I think that, you know, we don't want to be spending more money not getting freight up to the communities because they can't get through the channel at Hay River. So, again, will the Minister confirm if there will be anything going on this summer, and we need it done now. We don't need it done later in the summer. We need some type of action sooner than later. Thank you.

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I -- you know, I recognize the Member's concerns. You know, I've been to Hay River several times to have a community meeting and, you know, it is important to the Member's constituents that, you know, there's great concern that, you know, we're not getting our tugs out of Hay River on time and, you know, it reflects a lot of our disruption up the valley. So, you know, I think the Member's going to be really happy right now because we are getting this started. And I appreciate that, you know, we have talked about this and talked about this but, you know, we really seen -- you know, last year where we just had struggles getting our supplies into Sachs Harbour. That is still the point that we're at.

So Mr. Speaker, I want to let the Member know that we are just finalizing an RFP for the initial phase of the dredging. We want to call it harbour restoration, and it will be posted in the next couple days, Mr. Speaker; either today or Monday. And I will give a head's up notice to both the Members from Hay River on where we're at with the RFP process.

But I also want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank the Members for their patience as we worked through a number of things, such as the engineering permitting process to get the first phase underway, which will concentrate on the channel. And the fisheries, so that they can have access to the harbour, Mr. Speaker. I would be remiss if I didn't thank the federal government on their assistance in funding this phase of the harbour restoration.

Mr. Speaker, we need our tugs out there in order to keep schedule this year. We need them. It's, you know, very important to some of the Members. It's important to this government as well as the communities to get supplies and fuel up the valley. We've spent a lot of money in the last year from this government, and we can't afford to do that anymore. So I just want to thank the Member for the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was pretty well the only question I had. And I'd like to thank the Minister for the work that the department has done to make this happen. Like I say, you know, in the last probably 20 years we haven't seen anything happen with the channel, and I think people in Hay River will be pleased to hear, you know, the efforts that the department and this government

has made to make this happen this year. So more of a comment than anything. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Taken as a comment. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's Friday so I figured I'd seek unanimous consent to return to oral questions, number 7 on the orders of the day. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 7. Are there any nays?

---Unanimous consent denied

Sorry. Written questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 67-19(2): UNRESOLVED MATTER OF THE FEDERAL INDIAN DAY SCHOOLS

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Written questions I have is a document for unresolved matters of the federal Indian Day School. I'd like to table this document -- or sorry written question, I'd like to put this on the record. Thank you. I thought we were done. Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unresolved matters of the federal Indian Day School. My questions are to the Premier regarding the unresolved matter of the federal Indian Day School:

1. On April 1, 1969, the Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Church relinquished control of the federal Indian Day Schools and transferred the programs to the Northwest Territories. There were 29 federal Indian Day Schools in the NWT where Indigenous children and youth were subjected to physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and cultural genocide. Can the Premier provide in detail the steps the Government of the Northwest Territories has taken to formally acknowledge and document these abuses;
2. Survivors want an opportunity to share their experiences and stories and preserve these for historical records. Can the Premier describe in detail what the GNWT has done to set up a commission to listen to these experiences and stories and establish an archive for on-going learning and research

similar to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;

3. The Prime Minister of Canada and the Pope formally apologized to residential school survivors and acknowledges the intergenerational damages caused by residential schools. What is the rationale for the Premier not apologizing for the GNWT's role in its abuses and cultural genocide of Indigenous children and youth with federal Indian Day Schools; and,
4. What position would the GNWT take on a class action lawsuit brought forward by survivors of the federal Indian Day Schools?

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put this on the record. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nunakput.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 53-19(2): STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT: REPORT ON SUPPORTING NORTHERN BUSINESSES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment is pleased to provide a Report on Supporting Northern Businesses and commends it to the House, Mr. Speaker.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment made it a priority early in the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly to increase the northern responsiveness by government policies and services in an effort to stimulate diversity among northern businesses, particularly Indigenous businesses. To achieve this goal, committee reviewed Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) policies, programs, and legislation related to business development. Committee also conducted internal research and engaged with stakeholders and the public at large. Several Members of the 19th Assembly raised concerns with support for the private sector especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee has considered all this information

and used it to inform a range of recommendations to the GNWT with the intent and purpose of building and diversifying the NWT economy and improving business support services and programs.

Recommendation 1:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT increase transparency to all capital projects and especially public three-year capital plans of projects of small communities and regional centres so businesses can plan.

Recommendation 2:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT track and limit sole source contracts by creating a target to ensure:

1. No more than 15 percent of all contracts over \$25,000 are issued to sole source contracts;
2. Regular public reports and achievement target be provided within six months of the end of each fiscal year; and,
3. That these public reports outline sole source contracts given to non-NWT businesses as well as the departments using sole source methods most often.

Recommendation 3:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that contractual provisions limit change orders to no more than 15 percent of the original cost of the project and that be a regular review of change orders requiring ministerial oversight and no change orders greater than \$10,000.

Recommendation 4:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends to improve public reporting actual benefits achieved under negotiated contracts to better track the impact of this spending; and, further recommends that the GNWT's public reports on this spending indicate the local accommodations used and the number of jobs created.

Recommendation 5:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT review the U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) Program, which currently serves Indigenous businesses, such as those owned by the Alaska native corporations and

native Hawaiian organizations with the purpose of developing similar programs like this in the NWT.

Recommendation 6:

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT create and implement an Indigenous Procurement Policy that addresses economic gaps in the NWT by giving preference to Indigenous businesses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, second by the honourable Member from Deh Cho, that the Committee Report 53-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Supporting Northern Businesses deemed read and printed in Hansard.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Nunakput, we'll have to make a short correction here.

MR. JACOBSON: I'll start over again. I move, second by the honourable Member from Frame Lake, that the Committee Report 53-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report on Supporting Northern businesses be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. 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 deemed read and printed in Hansard.

Executive Summary

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment (Committee) made it a priority early in the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly to increase the responsiveness of government policies and services in an effort to stimulate diversity among northern businesses, and particularly Indigenous businesses. To achieve this goal, Committee reviewed Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) policies, programs, and legislation related to business development. Committee also conducted internal research and engaged with stakeholders and the public at large. Several

Members of the 19th Assembly raised concerns with support for the private sector especially in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Committee has considered all this information and used it to inform a range of recommendations to the GNWT with the intent and purpose of building and diversifying the NWT economy and improving business support services and programs.

Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT increase transparency for all capital projects and especially provide public Three-Year Capital Plans for projects in small communities and regional centres, so businesses can plan.

Recommendation 2: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT track and limit sole source contracts by creating a target to ensure:

no more than 15% of all contracts over \$25,000 are issued as sole source contracts,

regular public reports on the achievement of this target be provided within six months of the end of each fiscal year,

and that these public reports outline sole source contracts given to non-NWT businesses as well as the Departments using sole source methods most often.

Recommendation 3: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that contractual provisions limit change orders to no more than 15% of the original project cost and that there be a regular review of change orders requiring Ministerial oversight for change orders greater than \$10,000.

Recommendation 4: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT improve the public reporting of actual benefits achieved under Negotiated Contracts to better track the impact of this spending, and further recommends that the GNWT's public reports on this spending indicate the local accommodations used and the number of jobs created.

Recommendation 5: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT review the U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) program, which currently serves Indigenous businesses, such as those owned by the Alaska Native corporations and Native Hawaiian organizations, with the purpose of developing similar programs in the NWT.

Recommendation 6: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT create and implement an Indigenous Procurement Policy that addresses economic gaps in the NWT by giving preference to Indigenous businesses.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment (Committee) made it a priority early in the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly to increase the responsiveness of government policies and services in order to stimulate diversity among northern businesses and in particular Indigenous businesses.

To achieve this goal, Committee reviewed Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) policies, programs, and legislation related to business development. Committee also conducted internal research and engaged with stakeholders and the public at large. Several Members of the 19th Assembly raised concerns with support for the private sector most especially in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Committee has considered all this information and used it to inform a range of recommendations to the GNWT.

Why Does It Matter

A mandate item of the GNWT in the 19th Legislative Assembly is to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Committee recognizes this commitment and believes the recommendations provided in this report support the GNWT towards the implementation of UNDRIP.

To advance reconciliation, the implementation of the recommendations below should follow the priorities set out in the Articles. According to the UNDRIP, Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination and to freely pursue economic development in all their traditional and other economic activities (Articles 3, 5 and 20). The GNWT must take effective measures to ensure continuing improvement of economic conditions and Indigenous peoples have a right to be actively involved in administering economic programs affecting them (Article 21 and 23). They must also consult and cooperate in good faith when making decisions that impact Indigenous resources.

Several UNDRIP Articles address Indigenous people's right to lands and natural resources.

Article 32(2)

"States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned

through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.”

Engagement Process

Committee invited submissions or presentations from all Indigenous governments. Committee also solicited presentations from Indigenous economic development corporations and businesses across all regions of the Northwest Territories. Committee advertised its requests for public submissions and public presentations were live streamed. The following stakeholders presented to Committee. Recordings can be viewed in full on the NT Legislative Assembly YouTube channel,¹ and are included in the Appendix to this report:

Denendeh Investments

- Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce (Yukon Indigenous Procurement Policy)
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Tłıchǫ Investment Corporation
- Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce
- NWT Métis Nation
- Det'on Cho Corporation
- NWT Indigenous Leaders Economic Coalition
- Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

Several internal briefings were held with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment regarding the Procurement Review, mining, and the Mining Royalty Review, supports for businesses during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Knowledge Economy Action Plan, Regional Economic Development Plans as well as the Business Development Investment Corporation.

Internal briefings were also held with the Minister of Infrastructure regarding major infrastructure projects and support for regional economic development through GNWT infrastructure projects.

Recommendations to Government

Based on this engagement, Committee provides several recommendations to the GNWT around the following themes:

- Building the NWT economy,
- Building a diversified economy, and
- Improving business support services and programs.

Building The NWT Economy

The GNWT is a significant player in the NWT economy. The Bureau of Statistics reports in 2021, the GNWT created \$458.2 million dollars of value-added goods and services in the NWT economy. This represents 11% of the NWT's total GDP overall. The Bureau of Statistics also shows public administration was one of the fastest growing sectors in the NWT economy after Mining, Oil and Gas activities.

The impact of GNWT spending in the NWT economy, however, is significantly more than just the GNWT's impact on the territory's GDP. The GNWT's 2023-24 budget proposes spending \$2.206 billion dollars. The 2023-24 Main Estimate budget shows the GNWT plans to spend over \$1 billion dollars on grants, contributions, and transfers; \$432 million is to be spent on compensation and benefits; \$307 million on contract services and \$126 million on fees and payments.

Procurement

Early in its review of business supports, Committee recognized that GNWT procurement is a significant contributor to the economic health of the NWT overall, especially in the regional centres and small communities. Procurement was both a focal point for SCEDE discussions and a concern for many regular Members of the 19th Assembly. The topic of 'procurement' was discussed over 500 times in the 19th Assembly, far surpassing other Assembly discussions on this topic. Members advocated for a variety of changes related to improving administration, payment timelines, targeting procurement in small communities, etc.

A 2019-2023 Mandate of the GNWT is to “ensure government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and businesses.” The GNWT has set out to achieve this by:

- strengthening procurement policies and practices
- increase awareness of GNWT contracting opportunities, and

- improve NWT companies' participation in Business Incentive Policy (BIP)

Committee heard from stakeholders on this topic and received a variety of suggestions on how to improve procurement in the GNWT related to:

- planning and strategic administration of procurement
- improving payment timelines
- expanding the use of negotiated contracts
- improving vendor performance management
- increasing Indigenous business
- targeting procurement in small communities
- strategic procurement to build local business, especially indigenous businesses and businesses in remote communities

On November 4, 2021, the GNWT tabled a Report of the Procurement Review Panel. An independent panel reviewed GNWT procurement and issued over 50 recommendations. The GNWT responded to this panel's report, releasing an operational workplan on the Procurement Review September 2022.

On March 27, 2023, the Minister acknowledged this response was a summary of the work underway, but that the Government would be providing a more comprehensive response to the Panel's 50 recommendations later this summer.

While Committee supports the work of the GNWT to review procurement policies with independent experts, the public, and Indigenous governments, Committee believes more urgency is needed to affect meaningful change within the NWT's private sector and economic health overall.

Committee recognizes that the NWT economy is resource dependent and the current lifespan of diamond mining in the NWT is finite. And while efforts are underway to extend the life of diamond mines, expand critical mineral resource development, and diversify the economy, Committee also recognizes that none of these initiatives, at this point, will replace the economic value that diamond mining brings to the NWT. Other factors impact this sector of the economy as well:

Decades high inflation rates are impacting diamond mines operating costs, as well as labour, fuel, electricity, and equipment costs.

Diavik diamond mine is expected to end production in the first quarter of 2026.

Ekati (Arctic Canadian Diamond Company) may cease conventional mining in 2028.

Gahcho Kue (Mountain Province) has made positive steps in refinancing to reduce debt which "places the company in a position to pursue exciting growth opportunities in the Hearne discovery and Kennady North project".

With mines potentially closing, the GNWT is the largest employer in the territory; public administration is the fastest growing sector. This speaks to the urgency behind Committee's efforts to improve GNWT procurement, and therefore *how* the GNWT spends its money can significantly alter the health of the NWT economy.

Committee held a public hearing with the independent panel to discuss the findings and recommendations. The themes of recommendations from this Panel are listed below:

- Establish a strategic approach to procurement
- Increase procurement opportunities and impact
- Make it easier to do business with the GNWT
- Create greater capacity to support procurement.

Committee agrees with the recommendations of the panel. Committee also acknowledges that the GNWT has made progress on procurement and that the GNWT has had to respond to a global pandemic in which several new GNWT programs were rolled out. However, Committee felt the GNWT's urgency to re-shape programs to respond to COVID-19 is the same urgency needed today to ensure the economic health of the NWT in the future.

Strategic Procurement

Committee agrees with the independent panel that more planning and communication around government procurement could maximize benefits for northern businesses.

The independent panel recommended that procurement should be treated like a 'program' requiring things like objectives, targets, measurables, etc. By treating procurement as a

program, the GNWT would ensure more supports to each stage of the procurement process such as:

- identifying and planning for the contract,
- advertising, communicating and outreach of the contract,
- awarding the contract,
- monitoring the project, and
- evaluating value for money spent.

Improved communications and advance planning

In the NWT, while there are a few highly developed companies and corporations, much of the private sector is still developing. Committee remains concerned that a large portion of GNWT procurement is benefitting southern companies; and that within the NWT the smaller, more remote, or emerging businesses are unable to compete with established businesses.

Stakeholders expressed concern about procurement processes and viewed inclusion in procurement processes as part of reconciliation.

There was concern that businesses miss opportunities by not being aware of what projects are being advanced. For businesses in regional centres and more remote communities, advance notice is necessary to provide time for adequate preparation.

Committee analyzed the distribution of BIP'd businesses, GNWT grants, and contributions, by region and community. It is clear that capital and regional centres are driving business in the NWT.

The NWT economy is weakest in the remote communities.

Committee agreed that to support businesses locally, increased communications is key. But for businesses in regional centres and small communities, this advance notice and communication is essential to allow for fair competition.

Without advance notice and preparation time to secure partners or make business relationships, businesses in small communities will always be significantly disadvantaged.

Committee agreed that the GNWT should be able to increase transparency with the private sector regarding both upcoming capital projects and procurement plans that will be delivered in

small communities. Increasing local communications where a project is planned allows for local industry to respond and prepare for the work. For example, the Government of Yukon publishes a public Five-Year Capital Plan to provide a transparent view into the government's priorities. This report reviews how the government has delivered on its commitments, provides project budget updates, and discusses on-going capital projects.ⁱⁱ A model like this could serve the need to keep communities informed.

The Procurement Review Panel noted increased communications as an interim step to implementing an Indigenous Procurement Policy. This matter also relates to the implementation of economic measures under the Land and Resource Self Government Agreements which are discussed further below.

Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT increase transparency for all capital projects and especially provide public Three-Year Capital Plans for projects in small communities and regional centres, so businesses can plan.

Contract Services

Contract Services was a particular focus of Committee. How the GNWT administers contract services can directly impact the development and prosperity of the NWT business sector.

When looking at the value of business to BIP registered companies it varies between 75% to 25% of total GNWT contracts

Apart from 2019/20, the value of business with BIP registered companies has been growing. From \$168 million in 2018/19 to \$279 million in 2021/22. The value of contracts provided to NWT businesses over this time has increased from \$187 million (18/19) to \$334 million (21/22).

In 2019/2020, the GNWT awarded the highest value of contracts to non-NWT businesses valued at \$510 million overall (75%). While non-NWT businesses did receive substantial support in 2019/20, the GNWT procured 93% of contracts through the competitive process in 19/20

Of the competitive contracts issued in 2019/20, \$478 million was provided to non-NWT businesses. Of those non-NWT businesses, contracts of highest value were procured for construction and fuel services.

Members of the 19th Assembly voiced concerns about the value of contract services being administered by the GNWT, and that contract services were being over-used by GNWT staff, while simultaneously the size of the public sector itself was growing. Members negotiated with the GNWT through the budget planning process to reduce contract services across all Departments.

Committee wanted to see changes in the administration of Contract Services to ensure that NWT-based businesses were not losing business opportunities to southern companies.

Origination of Sole Source Contracts

Committee has been particularly focused on the use of sole source contracts in GNWT procurement. The sole source contracting process should occur when only one firm is available and capable of performing a contract, or the urgency of the situation determines that the competitive process cannot be used. An analysis of GNWT Contract Reports revealed that while negotiated contracts resemble sole source contracts, they are fundamentally different (this is discussed in more detail below), and the value of sole source contracts has grown over the life of the assembly while the total value of contracts has decreased overall.

Sole source contracts have risen from \$45 million (19/20) to \$83 million (21/22). However, the value of sole source contracts is still below 2018/19 at \$137 million. Total GNWT contracts have decreased over the same period from \$679 million (19/20) to \$444 million (21/22). Sole source contracts as a percentage of total GNWT contracts grew from 6.7% (19/20) to 18.8% (21/22).

The value of competitively obtained contracts peaked in 2019/20 at \$628 million. If you look at the trend from 2018/19 (\$192 million) to 2021/22 (\$291 million) competitive contracts are increasing, while the same period shows a decrease in overall contracts from \$628 million (2019/20) to \$291 million (2021/22). Year to year there does not appear to be consistency in the percentage of sole source contracts administered by the GNWT overall.

During the same period, the use of sole source contracts increased while the use of competitively obtained contracts decreased. However, setting aside the surge in competitive contracts in 2019/20, the value of competitively obtained contracts still increased over time from \$192 million (2018/19) to \$291 million (2021/22).

Of the \$45 million in sole source contracts the GNWT provided in 2019/20, \$32 million went to non-NWT businesses. Looking specifically at these sole source contracts to non-NWT businesses, the Department of Infrastructure and Finance were the largest administrators at \$15 million and \$10 million respectively. Health and Social Services was the next highest at \$2.5 million. Of these, contracts administered over 1 million were related to: computer software licencing and programming, barge design, legacy building design.

Committee recognizes that sole source contracts are a necessary form of procurement for the GNWT to conduct business, especially as it relates to contracts under \$25,000; however, Committee is concerned about the potential for the GNWT to use this form of procurement over competitive tenders to the detriment of NWT-based businesses.

Policy on Sole Source Limits

The GNWT's financial administration manual and interpretive bulletins explain the process and guidelines to procure goods and services. For goods and services under \$25,000 Departments can go direct to suppliers.

On April 1, 2021, media reports stated that the GNWT reduced the sole source contract limit for general goods and services from \$25,000 to \$10,000 on a short-term basis.ⁱⁱⁱ The reason cited for this change was to prevent people from "gaming the system." However, the current rules allow sole source contracts for goods and services up to \$25,000.

Under the Financial Administration Manual Policy, in order for the GNWT to procure a sole source contract over \$25,000 the following criteria would need to be met:

- contract is urgently required, and delay would be injurious
- only one party available and capable of performing the contract
- professional services between 25,000 – 50,000
- architectural or engineering services between 25,000 – 100,000
- only one manufacturer or an Approved NWT Manufactured Product

Committee recognizes the GNWT has had to weather a global pandemic, unprecedented flooding, wildfires, and public health restrictions over the life of the assembly, but Committee notes continued concerns about the rationale for using sole source contracts over \$25,000.

The government has stated publicly the use of sole source contracts is largely related to urgency.^{iv} Committee questions the use of urgency.

Committee also has concerns about the procurement of sole source contracts to non-NWT businesses. When looking at the value of sole source contracts provided to non-NWT businesses it varies between 42% – 80% of total sole source contracts administered by the GNWT between 2018/19 – 2021/22.

Although 80% of sole source contracts were provided to non-NWT business in 2018/19, that year Imperial Oil was provided \$56 million for barge re-supply, which is over half of the total amount of sole source contracts provided to non-NWT businesses. Excluding the Imperial Oil contract for barge re-supply, non-NWT businesses still accounts for 40% of all sole source contracts. Apart from \$110 million administered to non-NWT business in 2018/19, over the life of the 19th assembly contracts to non-NWT business has ranged between \$27 million to \$38 million.

The percentage of sole source contracts to non-NWT businesses (42%-80%) is slightly higher than the ratio of non-NWT businesses receiving GNWT contracts overall (25%-75%). Committee is concerned that it may be easier for the GNWT to conduct business with non-NWT companies when administering sole source contracts as opposed to through the competitive process.

Committee also notes there is no reporting mechanism to track which criteria are applied to administer a sole source contract over \$25,000.

Recommendation 2: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT track and limit sole source contracts by creating a target to ensure:

- no more than 15% of all contracts over \$25,000 are issued as sole source contracts,
- regular public reports on the achievement of this target be provided within six months of the end of each fiscal year,
- and that these public reports outline sole source contracts given to non-NWT businesses as well as the Departments using sole source methods most often.

Change Orders

Committee noted concerns about the use of change orders as a tool for contractors to obtain a bid, and then adjust the value of the total contract throughout the duration of the project.

When looking at the use of change orders over time, one correlation appears to be consistent: as the total value of GNWT contracts increases, the value of change orders also increases.

The percentage of the total GNWT contracts adjusted from change orders varied between 9.3% – 14.7% from 2018/19 to 2021/22 (see *Table 4: Sole Source Contract Change Orders*). The use of change orders on GNWT contracts has remained just below the typical percentage applied for contingency planning (15%), and sole source contracts also represent on average 17% of the total change orders.

To ensure the use of change orders does not become a tool to manipulate project overruns and total project costs, Committee suggests placing a limit on the percentage of total change that will be approved on change orders for across all projects.

Such a limit on change orders would be consistent with practices in other jurisdictions. For example, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) agreed to a provision determining contractor markup on change orders by percentage: “to the cost of the work performed by the contractor directly, the contractor may add a maximum of 20% markup for overhead and profit combined” with a provision for a maximum of 10% for subcontractors.^v For change orders in Alberta, contractors can receive 15% for actual direct costs related to changes in work for overhead costs and profit, and subcontractors are entitled to the same, provided the province and contractors agree to the written change order.^{vi}

Limiting change orders can help prevent low-bid contracts. Auditing of the GNWT’s change order policy, and Ministerial oversight for change orders greater than \$10,000, will also ensure transparency and public accountability.

Recommendation 3: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that contractual provisions limit change orders to no more than 15% of the original project cost and that there be a regular review of change orders requiring Ministerial oversight for change orders greater than \$10,000.

Business Incentive Policy

Committee acknowledges the intent behind the Business Incentive Policy and believes it is a tool that should be leveraged to build the NWT economy by increasing business with BIP’d companies.

Committee wants to see the policies of the GNWT result in increased business development and value of business captured by NWT companies.

GTC states the BIP has had limited effectiveness in relation to success and development of Gwich'in businesses.

Aside from the surge in non-NWT business in 2019/20, Table 1 demonstrates over the years BIP registered businesses have grown slightly from 48% in 2018/19 to capture the majority of GNWT contracts at 63% in 2021/22,

As noted earlier, 2019/20 appears to be an odd year where non-NWT business contracts (\$510 million) far exceeded NWT business contracts (\$168 million).

When looking at a longer timeframe, however, the benefits to northern business are decreasing. The Procurement Review Panel notes that although the number of contracts received by BIP businesses averages 65% the value of contracts has been lower in the past five years compared to the previous four years.

"BIP registered businesses have received a fairly consistent share of the overall number of contracts (averaging 65% annually), they have been receiving a decreasing proportion of the total value of contract expenditures (averaging 39% of expenditures over the past five years, compared to 64% during the preceding four years).

Over the life of the 19th Assembly, the value of business done with BIP companies has risen slightly, an analysis of a longer timeframe shows business with BIP companies is down.

Committee is concerned with the application of the policy specifically as it relates to:

- Grandfathered Companies under the Business Incentive Policy
 - International corporations, such as Walmart, that are grandfathered under the policy
- Definition of the Northern Resident/Northern Business
 - Committee has heard from residents and businesses about concerns regarding the definition of "northern resident" and "northern businesses." Committee wants to ensure that in the Business Incentive Policy review the GNWT.

- Vendor Performance Management
 - The procurement panel identified that increasing vendor compliance with BIP commitments would increase NWT supplier confidence and interest in working with the GNWT.
- BIP Evaluations
 - While BIP does award points for NWT and Local content, stakeholders felt this was still an area that could be improved, and that the BIP Policy may not fully recognize the higher cost of living, that local services are hard to obtain, as well as the added cost of managing a northern business.

All stakeholders identified the higher costs of doing business in the NWT as a challenge to business development. The purpose of BIP is to address the higher cost of business in the NWT, but Committee heard from stakeholders that the BIP policy is not effective with respect to contracts greater than \$1 million.

The Procurement Review Panel notes that the current caps render BIP meaningless on contracts over \$1 million, and this is something Members heard from their constituents as well. A review of the GNWT's Contract Reports shows that the majority of contracts over \$1 million are awarded to non-NWT businesses. Local businesses should be incentivized to take on contracts over \$1 million so they can compete with non-NWT businesses.

Negotiated Contracts

Committee supports the use of the negotiated contracts policy and believes this procurement tool should support the development and expansion of Indigenous business and corporations.

Under the Negotiated Contracts Policy, "*the GNWT may negotiate contracts outside the competitive contracting process when reasonably be expected to.... contribute to the creation, growth and competitive capacity of the NWT based businesses.*" The GNWT makes annual reports available on contracts administered under the Negotiated Contracts Policy.

The annual reports provided under the Negotiated Contracts Policy do not provide enough information to determine whether GNWT contracts are effectively contributing to the creation, growth, and competitive capacity of NWT-based businesses. It is also unclear how the GNWT determines when a negotiated contract should be undertaken.

Committee has concerns about the GNWT being perceived as giving preference to certain contractors. When the GNWT has scheduled projects in small communities, increased engagement with each community may allow the GNWT to tailor negotiated contracts to meet the size and scale of community-based businesses. This may in turn develop the economy and improve business opportunities in regional centres and small communities in the NWT. For example, GTC noted that the Negotiated Contracts Policy needs to be updated as there is currently not enough focus on Aboriginal or Indigenous business.

Committee is concerned that there are no clear requirements or targets for how negotiated contracts will generate local spending or job creation results. The Review Panel for Procurement also notes the need for meaningful performance targets that would address this issue.

The outcomes of negotiated contracts should be more transparent. Every year the GNWT publishes a report that identifies anticipated benefits for each project, but there is no actual reporting on the actual benefits achieved by each project. Without this reporting, it is difficult to see how Negotiated Contracts are contributing to the *“creation, growth and competitive capacity of NWT-based businesses.”*

Committee remains concerned that projects have not come in on budget and on time.

Recommendation 4: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT improve the public reporting of actual benefits achieved under Negotiated Contracts to better track the impact of this spending, and further recommends that the GNWT’s public reports on this spending indicate the local accommodations used and the number of jobs created.

Committee sees an opportunity under Negotiated Contracts to provide wraparound supports for Indigenous businesses across the NWT so they can develop and expand. The GNWT could use the Negotiated Contracts policy as a tool to provide direct contracts to Indigenous businesses, while at the same time supporting the development and growth of these companies through a range of other business support services (such as loans, and business advice).

Committee believes there is great value in applying a similar procurement model as the US Small Business Administration (SBA).

Under this program qualifying “socially and economically disadvantaged businesses” can become certified under the 8(a) business development program. Once in the program, over the course of nine years, qualifying businesses are eligible for direct contracts from the government. The government not only sets aside contracts for eligible businesses, it targets 5% of all contracts to be placed with socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

The SBA program over the course of nine years provides wraparound supports to businesses through loan programs, mentorship, advice, and direct contracts, including support to create joint ventures to obtain contracts. The result is that after nine years, these businesses have developed and expanded to a point where they no longer require the 8 (a) business development program to be competitive in the US economy.

The 8(a) Business Development program is intended to support Indigenous Business Development in the United States, particularly in Hawaii and Alaska, although the program uses the term “tribal economies,” noting that “when tribal economies flourish, the surrounding, non-tribal communities prosper as well.”

Other Canadian jurisdictions have developed similar approaches. The Social Procurement Brief for Alberta notes that by increasing participation from disadvantaged businesses owners, public institutions can improve economic and social outcomes for economically marginalized groups.^{vii}

Recommendation 5: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends that the GNWT review the U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) program which currently serves Indigenous businesses, such as those owned by the Alaska Native corporations and Native Hawaiian organizations, with the purpose of developing similar programs in the NWT.

Indigenous Business Development

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People affirms the right to self-determination and for Indigenous people to freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. Land and Resource Self-Government Agreements set out provisions to achieve full participation of Indigenous people in the NWT economy with the overarching principle that Indigenous people in the NWT should be self-sufficient.

The economic measures as set out in the Gwich'in,^{viii} Sahtu,^{ix} and Tłı̄cho^x land claim agreements all provide stipulations around GNWT using preferential contracting policies in settlement areas, with approaches intended to maximize local, regional, and northern business opportunities and employment. When there is activity on settlement land, beneficiaries shall be given first opportunity to negotiate contracts, and the GNWT shall consult with communities when there is opportunity for financial, training, or economic activity within that community. Notifications for preferential contracting policies shall be provided.

Yet despite these provisions, a review of the Indigenous economic measurements in the NWT demonstrates that this vision is not being achieved.

In the NWT, Indigenous people make up over half (50.7%) of the population at 20,860 people, yet income, employment rates, and education levels rank significantly lower than in the non-Indigenous population. According to the Indigenous Peoples 2016 Census, median income for NWT Indigenous people at \$29,747, was considerably lower than the NWT non-Indigenous median of \$71,400. Among the NWT Indigenous population, Metis people had a median income of \$56,502 almost double that of the median Inuit income of \$25,743.^{xi}

Economic Measures of Land and Resource Self Government Agreements

Committee recognizes that business and economic development is an important tool to improve socio economic indicators across the NWT. When businesses and individuals normally excluded from economy are included, economic prosperity benefits everyone.

GTC suggests updating the Economic Measures MOU with a more tangible document to meet the needs of the Gwich'in and follow the spirit and intent of Chapter 10 in the GCLCA. Committee supports the GNWT to advance work to implement the economic measures.

Indigenous procurement policy

Committee has supported an Indigenous procurement policy that will address the economic gaps in the NWT. The number of Indigenous businesses and the value of the Indigenous economy is not tracked by the Bureau of Statistics. However, the Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment tracks the number of BIP registered businesses.

Statistics Canada data indicates that Indigenous entrepreneurship is increasing relative to the rest of Canada. Yet, Indigenous people are still less likely than non-Indigenous people to be self-employed.^{xii} The same study notes that there are 54,255 Indigenous Canadians who were self-employed at the time of the report, and 375 self-employed Indigenous people in the NWT, and of those self-employed Metis comprised 53.2%, followed by 41.1% First Nation, and 1.8% Inuit.

Until Indigenous people have equal access to economic opportunities, the full potential of the Indigenous economy will remain unknown.

Levelling the competition for Indigenous Business

There are many ways that Indigenous businesses can be provided a more equitable and fair opportunity to grow their business through government contracts.

Specific suggestions to improve government process were identified in the *BC Indigenous Procurement Initiative, What We Heard Report*. In this report five key themes were identified as necessary to implement an indigenous procurement initiative:

- Valuing Indigenous culture and knowledge (culturally aware procurement staff)
- Enhancing procurement processes to be more accessible to Indigenous business and communities (bid requirements, language, scale and scope)
- Creating space in the procurement process for Indigenous businesses and communities (meaningful Indigenous participation and building effective partnerships and joint ventures)
- Strengthening relationships, open communication and transparency (Indigenous capacity development, transparency in evaluation process, feedback on unsuccessful proposals)
- Emphasizing local Indigenous procurement (notification process, consideration of indigenous knowledge, and communication).

The first step is that staff need to be culturally sensitive. Secondly, procurement staff need to design bids so that Indigenous businesses have the capacity to compete on them.

Committee also noted that increasing bid evaluation for majority-owned Indigenous businesses in the NWT, as well as those based in regional centres and small communities.

In addition to the tailoring the design of bids to match Indigenous businesses capacity, it is also identified that advance notice and communication be provided. This is necessary to allow Indigenous businesses the time to strategically organize their business to compete (through partnerships, joint ventures, etc.). This is also a point that stakeholders raised. More notice is required for upcoming construction projects, and better communication.

Stakeholders commented that Indigenous businesses need support to build ownership models to allow Indigenous businesses to invest in energy and infrastructure projects.

While implementing an Indigenous Procurement Policy in the NWT is one tool that will help bridge the economic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the *BC Indigenous Procurement Initiative* notes importantly that there are other barriers to Indigenous Business Development:

Many Indigenous people continue to endure racism along with the lasting impacts of colonialism and the dispossession of traditional territories, and the intergenerational impacts of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop. Discrimination creates barriers for Indigenous businesses and communities that are interested in doing business with government; therefore, different from other procurement approaches, Indigenous procurement requires government staff who are involved in each stage of the procurement process to incorporate a greater understanding of Indigenous culture, protocols, and values throughout.

Providing a range of other supports in addition to an Indigenous Procurement Policy is required to effectively increased Indigenous business development, especially to reach the small remote communities.

Recommendation 6: The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment recommends the GNWT create and implement an Indigenous Procurement Policy that addresses economic gaps in the NWT by giving preference to Indigenous businesses.

Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment's Report on Supporting Northern Businesses. Committee would like to thank all presenters who came before Committee, including several appearances by GNWT departments to inform Committee's review.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your hard working Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, I move, second by the honourable Member from Frame Lake, that the Committee Report 53-19(2), Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment Report in Supporting Northern Businesses be received today by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. 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. Committee Report 53-19(2) is referred to Committee of the Whole.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Environment and Climate Change.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 955-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE
REPORT 39-19(2): REPORT ON THE
PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF
CONTAMINATED SITES

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 39-19(2): Report on the Prevention and Management of Contaminated Sites. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 956-19(2):
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE CANADIAN
RADIO-TELEVISION AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
SUBMISSIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 957-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES 2023-2024 CONSOLIDATED
BUDGET

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Department of Finance Canadian

Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Submissions; and, 2023-2024 Consolidated Budget for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 958-19(2):
EMERGING STRONGER: PLANNING THE
NWT'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
RECOVERY TOGETHER – JUNE 2023
UPDATE

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Emerging Stronger: Planning the Northwest Territories Social and Economic Recovery Together - June 2023 Update. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

TABLED DOCUMENT 959-19(2):
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
ENERGY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2030

TABLED DOCUMENT 960-19(2):
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
ENERGY MANAGEMENT BLUEPRINT
2023-2026

TABLED DOCUMENT 961-19(2):
HOUSING NWT RENEWAL POLICY AND
PROGRAM REVIEW ACTION UPDATE

TABLED DOCUMENT 962-19(2):
WHAT WE HEARD: HOUSING NWT
ENERGY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker I would like to table the following four documents: Housing Northwest Territories Energy Management Strategy 2030; Housing Northwest Territories Energy Management Blueprint 2023-2026; Housing NWT Renewal Policy and Program Review Action Update; and, What We Heard: Housing NWT Energy Management Strategy. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

TABLED DOCUMENT 963-19(2):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF BILL 93:
PRACTICE OF ENGINEERING,
GEOSCIENCE AND APPLIED SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY ACT

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Quyananni. I wish to table the following document: Plain Language Summary of Bill 93: Practice of Engineering, Geoscience and Applied Science Technology Act. Quyananni.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 964-19(2):
LETTER TO CHAIR OF STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REGARDING GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTERVENING
IN SUPREME COURT OF CANADA CASE
ON THE REPORT OF CHILD AND FAMILY
SERVICES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Letter to Chair of Standing Committee on Social Development Regarding Government of the Northwest Territories Intervening in Supreme Court of Canada Case on the Report of Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

TABLED DOCUMENT 965-19(2):
TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH 2023 GRADUATES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a list of graduates from the Tu Nedhe-Willideh riding, and I want to say congratulations to them. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 966-19(2):
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR
THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 7 TO MARCH 30,
2023

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, pursuant to section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowances, and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the summary of Members' absences for the period February 7th to March 30th, 2023.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Member for Thebacha.

Motions

MOTION 82-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO AUGUST 16, 2023,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: I MOVE, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that when this House adjourns on Friday, June 2nd, 2023, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, August 16, 2023.

AND FURTHER, at any time prior to August 16th, 2023, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interests requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the schedule resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

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

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 95:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2023-2024

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 95, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2023-2024, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Bill 95 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 96:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2023-2024

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 96, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion -- oh, sorry. Bill 96 has had first reading. Sorry, getting ahead of myself here.

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Second Reading of Bills

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

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Quyananni. I move, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North that Bill 93, Practice of Engineering, Geoscience and Applied Science Technology Act, be read for the second time.

This bill repeals and replaces the Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act with a new Act. The new Act provides a modernized framework for the practice of professional engineering, professional geoscience and applied science technology, including for continuing professional development and discipline. Quyananni.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. I promise I'll keep it brief. I just wanted to say that it's exciting to me as an engineer, a professional engineer, to see this bill coming into the department that makes a lot more sense for it to reside in. The Department of Infrastructure probably, I think it's fair to say, contains most of the engineers that work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. I do know also that in the past, the government itself did not necessarily register their engineers as they did not see them in the role of actual work of engineering. However, over the last several years and decades, there has been a change in that relationship and an understanding that while engineers may be working for the bureaucracy, they still have a function and a role that is engineering and that they are parts of our council and our group as well.

Another piece that this does is it allows for the registration of civil engineering technicians and technologists which is an advancement in the territory. Previous to now, any of these people or these professions would have been

registered out of Alberta and their association, APEGA, so it's really important that it be allowed to come to the territory because technicians and technologists provide another form of employment in this area that does not require a four-year university diploma and is -- or sorry, university degree, it is rather a diploma program, which means it is a lot more accessible for many of the northern students. And hopefully something that I will see in the polytechnic curriculum when we get to that point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. 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 93 will be referred to standing committee.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

BILL 94:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2023,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 94, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023, be read for the second time.

This bill corrects inconsistencies and errors in the statutes of the Northwest Territories. The bill also deals with other matters of a minor non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the statutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in fair? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 94 is referred to standing committee.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 95:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2023-2024,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Boot Lake, that Bill 95, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2023-2024, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2023-2024-fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. 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 95 has had second reading and is ready for third reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 96:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2023-2024,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 96, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2023-2024-fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. 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 96 has had second reading and is ready for third reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, Bill 29, Committee Report 52-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(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, Madame la Presidente. I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): 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.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 23, Bill 29, Committee Report 52-19(2), Minister's Statement 264-19(2), and Tabled Document 681-19(2) and would like to report progress. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Nahendeh. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion's carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 72:
OPIOID DAMAGES AND HEALTH CARE
COSTS RECOVERY ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 72, Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery

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. Rutland): The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Kam Lake. 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 72 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 95:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2023-2024,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Boot Lake, that Bill 95, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2023-2024, be read for a third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I know I'm the only thing that stands between the Members and their lunch but I do owe it to my constituents and the public to explain how I'm going to vote on this bill.

This bill, what it does -- or what happened, of course, is that about 50 percent of the capital

spending for 2022-2023 was not spent. The authorized capital was not spent. So what this does would increase capital spending by about \$125 million pushing it to levels higher than five of the last six years and so the over budgeting that's happening here for capital, I can't support this. What it does is requires us to run a larger operational surplus than we probably need to be doing and thus less spending on programs and services that directly benefit our residents in areas like health care and education.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also observe that it's probably not good practice where sups are tabled in the House and voted on the same day. We managed to avoid it this time but I would not recommend that that happen in the future because I think the public deserves to know what's in a sup before we actually vote on it.

I was disappointed at the lack of clear answers from the Minister and staff that required a lengthy statement in Committee of the Whole yesterday with no notice or copies provided in advance to Members. For all these reasons, I will not be voting in favour of this supplementary appropriation and fully expect that the next Assembly will be asked to approve massive carryovers again about a year from now. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): 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. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave.

MR. SPEAKER: One more.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Nahendeh.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Frame Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please rise.

The results of the recorded vote: 15 in favour, one opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 95 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister responsible for Finance.

BILL 96:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2023-2024,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 96, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024, be read for a third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm not finished yet. So I again owe to my constituents and the public to explain how I'm going to vote on this one. I'm very concerned that the supplementary reserve will be exceeded on this very first sup for 2023-2024 on the operations side, and I believe that there's going to be lots more spending required as a result of the fires and floods. So I don't think that this is good financial management, especially in relation to the climate emergency and that we have to have a much larger supplementary reserve in the future like we did two years ago where it was \$65 million.

So I do want to commend the Minister, though. She has carried through on her commitments as part of our Budget 2023-2024 negotiations, and those commitments are contained in here. \$4.775 million in new spending, I want to thank the Minister for that. But that's really dwarfed by the \$15 million in new funding for NTPC in terms of rate stabilization.

Mr. Speaker, that's probably larger than the entire commitments the Regular MLAs have secured through budget negotiations over the almost four years that we've been here. We had no heads up whatsoever about this or a discussion with MLAs before this was brought forward in the supplementary appropriation, and I think that kind of thing should -- really, we should be told about this ahead of time. And I

think this is really as a result of some poor planning by NTPC.

We heard my colleague from Yellowknife North talk about how the fuel costs were estimated at a dollar in the general rate application. And what we've really though witnessed is a failure to actually lower energy costs here in the Northwest Territories, and that's what the NTPC should be doing, building energy self-sufficiency and doing itself out of a job through the use of renewables and alternatives. So I think it's fair to say that Regular MLAs have wanted fundamental change at NTPC. We want to get away from a management board of deputy ministers that have been in place since 2016, or the last seven years.

What we did, Mr. Speaker, was we negotiated a commitment for a discussion paper on governance and on March 23rd, the finance minister said in this House that we would get an options paper. While I can't really talk about what was given to us, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the public that it was not an options paper. We received a two-page letter with a two-page attachment with a Cabinet decision. No options presented; we got a Cabinet decision.

Again, I think Regular MLAs wanted to have some input on this. We're going to perhaps have an opportunity to talk about it unfortunately behind closed doors. But I think the future of NTPC and the need to lower energy costs in the Northwest Territories is still a live issue, and I need to bring some attention to this, Mr. Speaker.

So I will very reluctantly vote in favour of this sup, because it does provide follow through on the commitments during the budget, but in no way can my vote be considered consent or agreement with providing a further bailout to NTPC, and there's Cabinet's broken promise on that, on NTPC governance, and I think they need to work with us more closely on that in the future. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to reinforce my belief in the expansion of the Taltson as a greater greener energy. I don't always agree with my colleague, and I want to make sure that there has to be some support for the staff and the direction that is taken for greener energy and for climate change in the Northwest Territories. You know, we have to give the new president and their staff an opportunity to do that. It hasn't been long since he's been in that position. There are some things that are not quite right with regards

to how it's done, but I just want to make sure that greener energy is -- my colleague I -- I respect my colleague, okay, because he works hard. But hydro is the cleanest energy that you could ever get and, with that, I'm supporting this supplementary, like he said he's going to do too, but I have to make my position very clear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. And the motion is in order. To the motion. Minister responsible for Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to be very brief so there's no misunderstanding for the public. The money that's going towards NTPC isn't necessarily to support their operations. This is a rate stabilization fund increase, Mr. Speaker, and that is really quite specifically because given the costs of fuel, which everyone's experiencing, the government experiences it too and Northwest Territories Power Corporation experiences those increases in rates -- or increases in fuel, that winds up being an added cost that was not built in to the rates during the last rate process. Therefore, now, they're facing costs that were built in at a dollar and suddenly are at a \$1.50. That's a significant change, Mr. Speaker. Add to that that we are in a low water cycle therefore -- at the Snare facility when they have to burn diesel to make up for low water, firstly they're having to burn diesel to make up for the water and they're burning that diesel at the higher rate. So this wasn't an anticipated high cost and that's why it's coming in as a sup. In such circumstances, when the rates aren't set at that high number, a rider kicks in. The rider kicks in to ensure that, of course, that the corporation can remain viable by having the costs reflect -- for having people's rates reflect the costs. So, Mr. Speaker, rather than having individuals, residents, have to bear that rider right now, have to bear that increase, which if I recall correctly was between 20, 35 percent increase to people's rates, that's why this is before the House. I appreciate my colleagues' support on it but I did want to clarify it for the public why there is this significant amount there. It really is to ensure that the rider doesn't kick in and rates don't reach those kinds of levels. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. Rutland): 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. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Great Slave. And the Member for Nahendeh.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. 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 96 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, can you please determine whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret M. Thom, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills.

Assent to Bills

THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Margaret M. Thom): Please be seated.

[Translation] Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Premier Cochrane, Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly and staff and visitors in the public gallery. [Translation Ends].

Thank you. It is always a great feeling and an honour to be here and see all of you. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and hard work on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. It is with great honour and respect that I acknowledge the territory of the Dene, Metis, and Inuit of this great land. We are grateful to live, work, celebrate and be welcomed as visitors on your sacred lands.

As we enjoy these warmer months, I would like to wish each of you a safe, healthy and happy summer as you take your break, your well-deserved break, and enjoy quality time with your families.

Please travel safely on the land and on our waters, in the air, and on our highways, as you continue working for the betterment of all Northerners. Encourage and remind your families, friends, and people in your communities to be safe out on the land and to

wear personal floatation devices, or PFDs, when travelling by boat on our waterways and to take very very seriously the fire bans put in place as we are experiencing severe forest fires in our territory.

As this session comes to a close, I wish the Members of this House good health and happiness as you enjoy the summer and continue the work in your constituencies.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 72, Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act;
- Bill 79, An Act to Amend the Judicature Act;
- Bill 90, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 5;
- Bill 95, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2023-2024; and,
- Bill 96, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2023-2024.

Mahsi cho. Thank you. Quyananni. Merci beaucoup. Koana.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Members, before I adjourn our sitting until August 16th, 2023, I would like to thank you for a productive sitting. During this sitting, Members have appointed new law clerks to the Assembly, passed five pieces of legislation, and introduced four more bills to be reported in the next sitting. It was a short but productive sitting.

Please join me in thanking our interpreters for the important work they do making our proceedings available in our official languages.

Colleagues, also join me in thanking the pages. It was a pleasure having them back in the Chamber. Hopefully some of them will be back here one day as MLAs.

Members, you have raised and discussed many different and important issues this session. Members have discussed emergency response and impacts to fire evacuees, the importance of infrastructure and the vitality of small communities, holistic support required for those experiencing homelessness, support for those experiencing addictions, as well as youth in care.

Members, thank you for bringing forward the concerns and issues raised in your ridings. I also want to take this time to acknowledge the fire fighters and frontline responders working hard to manage the active wildfires across the Northwest Territories.

Colleagues, June is National Indigenous History Month. We must remember and celebrate that in 1975, the Northwest Territories Council, as it was known then, was the first Legislative Assembly in Canada to have a majority of Indigenous Members - a tradition we maintain to this day along with our sister territory Nunavut. The unique system of government we both share is not perfect but it reflects the Indigenous values of cooperation, respectful debate, and working together.

In reflection of the Assembly's shared commitment to diversity and reconciliation, this session we introduced Indigenous-styled cloaks for our table clerks. Many celebrations and assemblies lie ahead this summer, from National Indigenous People's Day to annual assemblies and other events. Members, enjoy this opportunity to get out and celebrate with your constituents.

While we look ahead, we cannot forget the challenges that face residents across the Northwest Territories. I want to take this time to acknowledge the families in the Northwest Territories who are looking for their loved ones. As mentioned in this House earlier, young Frank Gruben still remains missing. No parent should have to wonder where their child is. I encourage anyone who knows anything about Frank Gruben to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. Help bring Frank home.

Members, I want to acknowledge the residents of the K'atlodeeche whose community was greatly impacted from wildfire. This will be a season of repairing and rebuilding. I know you will all continue to support these residents.

I encourage you all, the residents of the NWT, to enjoy the days ahead with family and friends. Our summer is short, yet we are blessed with the Midnight Sun. Get out on the land and the water, but please be safe and encourage your constituents to do the same. Use caution when travelling on the land. Look out for one another. I look forward to seeing you all back in August for our final sitting of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Wednesday, August 16th, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1548-19(2), Indian Day Schools
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - 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 77, Nursing Profession Act
 - Bill 82, Legal Profession Act
 - Committee Report 52-19(2), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures

Report on the Review of the Rules of the
Northwest Territories Legislative
Assembly

- 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

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, June 2nd 2023, at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

