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The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

Please send any corrections to Hansard Editor
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Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 17, 2024****Members Present**

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland, Mr. Edjericon, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Jay Macdonald, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Mr. Nerysoo, Ms. Reid, Mr. Rodgers, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:33 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Shane Thompson): Good afternoon. Colleagues, please join me in thanking elder and former Commissioner George Tuccaro for the opening words and blessing today. Thank you. I'd also like to thank the YK Dene Drummers for joining us today. We often call the Legislative Assembly the place of the people and it is wonderful to see our cultures and people represented so strongly here today.

Before we continue, I would like to ask you to join me for a moment of silence in the memory of Mr. Anthony Wilfred James Whitford, or Tony to most of us, who passed away last month.

--- MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. Whitford was a former Member of this Legislative Assembly, a former Minister, a former Speaker, a former Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. He was a former sergeant-at-arms and an honorary clerk at the table. Tony's interest in, love for, and knowledge of this Legislative Assembly was second to none. He frequented the Assembly to take in our proceedings, and we all looked forward to seeing him and hearing his stories and laughter. The joy and honour he felt when joining us as an honorary clerk at the table was evident. This place meant a lot to him. Colleagues, I assure you that he also meant a lot to this institution.

My words could never do justice to the lasting impact that Tony had on this institution and all of us who have had the pleasure of sharing it with him. More importantly than any of the official roles and responsibilities he held, Tony was an advocate for the people of this territory and a friend to all who knew him. He will be deeply missed. On behalf of this institution, I extend our deepest sympathy to Tony's family and many friends.

Colleagues, an official memorial for Mr. Whitford will be held at the Legislative Assembly at 2 P.M. Saturday, October 19th. Overflow seating and a live stream of the ceremony will be available at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Colleagues, I have received the following correspondence from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the honourable Gerald W. Kisoun.

It states: Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the passage of Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2025-2026; Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2024-2025; and, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditure), No. 1, 2024-2025; during the first session of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Yours truly, Gerald W. Kisoun.

Before we begin, I would take a moment to remind all Members of my expectations as we debate and deliberate in this Chamber. We can and must be agreeable even when we do not agree. Difficult conversations should not be disrespectful conversations. In this Chamber I expect thoughtful, meaningful, and honest debate. I expect our rules to be followed, and I expect each of us to show respect for one another, this institution and the people we represent. I also want to remind Members to speak slowly and clearly for our interpreters. It is an honour for us to have these interpreters here for us, using, preserving, and growing our languages. And I did go around, and I did promise we will try and keep it nice and slow for them. As well, I would like to thank our pages for being here today. This young generation helping us here thank you for your time and attention.

Colleagues, as the old saying says, let's get down to business now. Ministers' statements. Minister from Municipal and Community Affairs.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 59-20(1): 2024 TERRITORIAL WILDFIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

HON. VINCE McKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the 2024 wildfire season, a season that presented significant challenges to communities of the Northwest Territories, particularly Fort Good Hope. Overall, we were fortunate to experience fewer community evacuations this year compared to previous years, but I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who supported response and recovery efforts during another difficult season.

Mr. Speaker, the Territorial Emergency Management Organization was activated twice this high-risk season in support of local emergency management organizations. The first was for a wildfire near Fort Liard, and the second for the wildfire around Fort Good Hope. While Fort Liard did not require an evacuation, the community of Fort Good Hope was not so fortunate.

On June 15th, leadership in the community made a difficult decision to evacuate residents for nearly three weeks because of the threat posed by a nearby wildfire. This evacuation resulted in the displacement of nearly 380 people, many finding refuge in neighboring communities. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the residents and leadership of Norman Wells, who hosted 220 evacuees, to the people of Deline, who welcomed 21 evacuees, and additional 140 residents of Fort Good Hope found shelter at a nearby fish camp, displaying incredible resilience during such challenging times

For almost three weeks, a number of Fort Good Hope community members and volunteers elected to stay behind to help fight the fire while others supported in many different aspects of the emergency response, including the providing for care of firefighters within the community and for evacuees who had been displaced. These efforts to protect the community and to care for its residents were inspiring and ultimately allowed residents to return home safe.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize the remarkable efforts made by a small community government and the Indigenous governments throughout this wildfire season. First responders, leadership, and local emergency management organizations, residents, business owners, and volunteers in Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, and Deline worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of their residents. Their quick action and

collaboration during these emergencies demonstrate the strength of community-led emergency management team in the Northwest Territories.

I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding work done by the forest management division and wildfire fighters from the Department of ECC to protect communities at risk. I want to particularly recognize firefighters in Fort Good Hope who, alongside of the wildland firefighters, protected their community. At the same time, I want to express my gratitude to the emergency management organization for their swift response in their request for assistance. This team worked quickly to arrange evacuation flights and support essential staff returning to Fort Good Hope to help fight the fire. They also coordinated the provisions of critical supplies to ensure the well-being of evacuees and those who remained within the community.

Now that we are in the recovery phase, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs continues to work closely with affected communities to ensure cost-recovery for eligible expenses related to evacuation and hosting efforts. The majority of expenditures have already been reimbursed and remaining eligible costs are being verified and processed as quickly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, this government has identified emergency management as one of its top priorities, and I want to emphasize the importance of collaboration in response and recovery efforts. The response to this year's wildfires was a complete team effort. Communities, Indigenous governments, local leadership, and the GNWT came together to protect lives and support each other during challenging times. I am grateful for everyone's dedication and commitment for protecting NWT communities and residents.

Going forward, we will continue to work alongside communities to strengthen our emergency response system, to improve coordination, and to ensure that we are prepared for future events. The Government of the Northwest Territories remains committed to supporting community governments in their recovery efforts while continuing to plan for future emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the community leaders, the first responders, and the residents who worked so hard to manage the challenges of the past wildfire season. Your resilience, determination, and compassion were inspiring and helped ensure the safety of NWT residents

which will allow us to rebuild and recover together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 60-20(1):
2024 WILDFIRE SEASON

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on the 2024 wildfire season, we are reminded of the challenges we faced, including those we have lost protecting the Northwest Territories. I would like to start by honouring the memory of pilot Tom Frith, who made the ultimate sacrifice while working to safeguard the community of Fort Good Hope this summer. His selfless dedication is an example of the courage and commitment exemplified by the wildfire management team. To Tom's family, friends and colleagues, our hearts are with you, and we share in your grief. His legacy will continue to inspire us.

I also want to remember firefighter Adam Yeadon, who lost his life in the line of duty in 2023. This year, Adam's name was enshrined at the Fallen Firefighters National Memorial in Ottawa, ensuring that his sacrifice will never be forgotten. These losses weigh heavily on our hearts, serving as stark reminders of the very real challenges and dangers firefighters and other wildfire management professionals face as they work to protect NWT communities. Furthermore, the extreme fire seasons in 2023 and 2024 underscored the challenging nature of their work and the remarkable perseverance they display in the face of adversity and loss. Despite another extremely challenging fire season, the teams have demonstrated their dedication to protecting the residents of the NWT and the things we value.

Mr. Speaker, forecasts for the 2024 season predicted another challenging wildfire season, with severe to extreme drought continuing across the territory. In preparation for this year's response, the Department of Environment and Climate Change applied the lessons learned from 2023 to be ready for the new reality of wildfires in a changing climate. To enhance our readiness, we invested in more air support, bringing on an additional long-term helicopter and more air tankers to support our response. We brought crews, equipment, and other resources on earlier to be ready for the season. Mr. Speaker, these efforts paid off very early in the season with the successful containment of a fire southwest of Fort Liard.

In addition to this work, we enhanced our fire intelligence capabilities by improving fire

modeling and using large-scale infrared scanning to ensure we had the information needed to start the season. Throughout the season, 1.7 million hectares of land burned in the Northwest Territories, the most within any single jurisdiction in Canada and well above the territory's 10-year average. But with the hard work and dedication of firefighters, fire managers, specialists, communities, local departments, brigades and local community partners, we were able to protect hundreds of homes and cabins across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the review of 2023 wildfire response operations recognized the good work of our wildfire management program and also highlighted the need to expand efforts in wildfire prevention and mitigation. Our government has made these investments, and they are already paying off.

We established a wildfire prevention and mitigation section with three new positions. This new team established and delivered the FireSmart Advanced Home Assessment program across the territory. Through this program, more than 100 residents received help from FireSmart experts to assess their homes and properties, to ensure more homes in the NWT are FireSmart. We cross-trained five community fire departments to begin offering the program locally and to help build wildfire preparedness capacity within local governments. Our prevention and mitigation teams also completed nearly 70 FireSmart events and activities, going to schools, community events, and neighborhoods across the territory to help educate residents. We also worked with community governments to review, update, and improve their community wildfire protection plans, and with the NWT Association of Communities to support local community fuel reduction and removal projects through a \$20 million investment from the federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Program.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT was proud to help out some of our neighbours this summer, sending crews to British Columbia, Alberta, and Oregon through the same mutual aid agreements that benefitted us in 2023. In doing so, our crews provided essential support in other jurisdictions' time of need, and our firefighters gained invaluable knowledge and experience from their counterparts in these agencies.

Mr. Speaker, planning and preparing for wildfires is a year-round job. This offseason, we will continue to work towards implementing the recommendations outlined in the 2023 wildfire response review as part of our ongoing commitment to continual improvement. To help us do this, the Government of the Northwest

Territories has requested \$30 million from the Government of Canada to support our efforts given the challenges we face from a changing wildfire environment amidst a changing climate.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to invest in our wildfire management program and team to ensure we are ready to face the challenge of future wildfires, which include enhanced work on fuel breaks, training and cross-training, planning, and preparedness.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with communities, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous organizations in true partnership to ensure we are all listening, learning, and planning together for future success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 61-20(1):
PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about education, we often talk about meeting students where they are at. This means providing resources to students at every stage in developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Mr. Speaker, this philosophy does not end when someone leaves school. That is why the Government of the Northwest Territories offers programs for every skill level at every career stage: From planning to enter the workforce, to upskilling for a new job, to starting a new business. With the average Canadian working 15 jobs in their lifetime, this means there are ample opportunities to all be lifelong learners.

Mr. Speaker, under Skills 4 Success, the NWT's overarching labour market strategy, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment offers a number of programs to help residents develop skills to join the workforce, advance in their current workplaces, or move to a new job. Since 2021, these programs financially supported nearly a thousand clients, and fulfilled over 18,000 requests from residents for career services like career counselling and job search help.

Post-secondary education is also important for preparing residents for job opportunities. The NWT Post-Secondary Education Strategic Framework sets the goal of ensuring the post-secondary education system responds to labour demands. Together with the Post-Secondary Education Act, the Government of the Northwest Territories is

focused on fostering an education system that is student-centered, accessible, high-quality, and relevant. Updates to the income assistance program earlier this year also sought to ease residents' path to the workforce by increasing the amounts of earned income residents can keep without impacting their income assistance. This means that residents can "try out" a job or ease into employment without a significant impact to their benefits.

In addition to supporting the cost of training and education, Education, Culture and Employment also supports the transition to entrepreneurship through the self-employment program. This program accesses up to \$26,000 for expenses Northerners may incur when starting their own business.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment also supports entrepreneurs, notably through the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development, or SEED policy. Through SEED, entrepreneurs can access up to \$25,000 to support financial management, product development, and marketing strategies. In 2022-2023, over 350 individuals, businesses, and organizations accessed SEED, with over half of all funding going to communities with less developed business infrastructure.

Prosper NWT also offers a comprehensive suite of supports to encourage the creation and development of businesses. Last year, Prosper NWT disbursed \$4.7 million in new loans, contributions, ventures, and subsidies. More than three quarters of these supports, or \$3.6 million, supported businesses and entrepreneurs outside of Yellowknife. One such success story is Ditchers Landscaping, founded by Drayton Walker in Norman Wells. Ditchers Landscaping has grown from a small operation with minimal equipment to a thriving business that now employs eight people. With support from Prosper NWT, the company expanded its services to include snow removal, janitorial, and general contracting work, contributing to increased employment and economic growth in the Sahtu.

Prosper NWT also provides business services to help Northerners start and grow their businesses. Resources include online learning sessions, a business library, and a comprehensive step-by-step guide to starting an NWT business. Last year alone, almost 150 people attended 37 business sessions to improve their business skills.

Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to providing access to the education, training and resources

Northerners need to thrive in the workforce and to build businesses that support quality, fulfilling employment in all of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Ministers' statements. Deputy Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 62-20(1):
PREMIER AND MINISTER ABSENT FROM
THE HOUSE

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Hay River North, Minister of Justice, will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to host the federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Justice meeting.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes will be absent from the House today and tomorrow in order to attend to a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Deputy Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 320-20(1):
ENERGY SECURITY

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today is about energy security. The crisis in Norman Wells has drawn our attention to how climate change makes our fuel resupply vulnerable with the low water levels, but it also should draw our attention to how vulnerable a community is when it has no competitive market for petroleum products. Norman Wells is dependent mainly on one private fuel supplier which essentially holds a monopoly and therefore can raise prices whenever it feels it needs to with no regulator to oversee how much price increase is actually needed.

Now, our NWT energy strategy highlights energy security as a core pillar but we've been focusing primarily on electricity and missing key vulnerabilities elsewhere, like in supply chains for heating fuels and transportation fuels.

Many people assume that energy security means we have to produce 100 percent of our energy locally. Now this is a noble dream, and we should absolutely put in more solar panels and windmills and even gas wells where those are cost effective, but for all 33 communities to produce 100 percent local energy would require just astronomical resources, and we might as

well start a goal of starting our own space program. So we need to get more practical and realistic about energy security. So that would involve, first and foremost, ensuring redundancy and backup plans, whether that's modern, efficient backup generators in power grids or having a backup plan for ensuring resupply of transport and heating fuels.

Second, the GNWT can do more to secure supply chains for all imported energy sources. Thankfully, the GNWT fuel services division was planning ahead to ensure all other Sahtu communities got their fuel trucked in over last year's winter road. Communities have been calling on the GNWT to similarly help secure supply chains for wood pellets. There's also an opportunity to help secure renewable diesel supply chains which will be a critical step in moving towards a net-zero climate target. Often overlooked, but critical to energy security, is the need for energy efficiency and conservation wherever possible. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement, which is one more sentence. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, finally, we need to ensure communities feel more sense of control over their energy systems and make sure there are trained local people available to maintain them and troubleshoot when things go wrong because all the biomass boilers and windmills in the world won't do any good if they sit broken and unused. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 321-20(1):
CHANGE MANAGEMENT

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government has a tendency to struggle with implementing and responding to change effectively. This is a common problem for large organizations, and I argue it is a big problem for the GNWT that we aren't talking about as an overarching issue. Poorly implemented change management is at the heart of many of the issues MLAs and the public raised about the GNWT. Rather than providing specific examples at the outset, I'm going to speak to some common change management errors listed by John P. Cotter in his book *Leading Change*. I think people will find at least a few of them will ring true on changes they've been a part of or had a stake in.

One error is allowing too much complacency when communicating a change or failing to establish a sense of urgency. Another is failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition to drive the change that we're trying to achieve. Another is neglecting the importance of a driving vision and communication of that vision throughout the organization. The fifth error is permitting obstacles to block the new vision because employees feel disempowered to overcome them. Another common error is declaring victory too soon, communicating that the change is done when we're only halfway through its implementation. Finally, the eighth error is neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture.

John Cotter notes that until the change is rooted in social norms and shared values, it is subject to degradation as soon as pressures associated with the change efforts are removed. Is this starting to sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? Certainly, I can identify a few change processes which have exhibited some of these characteristics. The one which stands out most starkly to me currently is the transition of Aurora College to a polytechnic university, a process which I would argue has suffered from all of the noted change management failures on some level or another along the way.

Other change processes come to mind. The Stanton transition, departmental mergers, or the struggle government is currently having to shift resources to the Assembly's new priorities. The remedy to this problem, of course, is to reverse the above-noted errors. We need to ensure effective change management principles are built into and maintained in our processes. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Members. Mr. Speaker, we also need to ensure staff throughout the organization understand how to lead and respond to change effectively. This will help build change resiliency into the fabric of our organization and overcome change resistance which holds us back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 322-20(1):
EDUCATION OUTCOMES

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to

talk about our schools and learning opportunities for children in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, on September 30th of this year, the Premier spoke to the media. He said, quote: Half our population is Indigenous and even then we have the highest proportion of residential school survivors in Canada. So when we talk about things like the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, it means something different here, end quote.

Talking about reconciliation is important, Mr. Speaker, but what about action? We are supposed to be closing educational gaps for Indigenous students. Look at the Calls for Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada shows there is still work to be done in the Northwest Territories. We must improve education attainment levels and success rate. We must teach Indigenous languages as credit courses. We must respect and honour treaty relationships, end quote.

It is 2024, Mr. Speaker. Why does the most recent GNWT early development survey show that children are falling behind in areas of the territory where most students are Indigenous? The percentage of children who are on track for grade 1 is only 37 percent -- it's 37 percent in regional centres, only 23 percent in small communities. More than half, 53 percent of children, are considered vulnerable in small communities. Why are we failing these students, students in all small communities? What action do we need to take to help students succeed? Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of education at the appropriate time. Mahsi. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 323-20(1):
NORMAN WELLS RISING FUEL COSTS

MR. McNEELY: Mahsi cho. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since our last Assembly sitting, the Sahtu has faced a very dramatic summer, starting with the cancellation of the marine river barging services and the concerning wildfires in Fort Good Hope, plus the evacuation.

Mr. Speaker, this issue or situation has created a large negative chain reaction of stress on projects, resupply, household food security, summer public infrastructure preparations for O and M, school supplies, and essential services. Most critically, it has impacted the availability of home and commercial heating fuel.

Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of essential resupply is far from resolved. Most recently, the Sahtu has seen outrageous, soaring prices in both bulk and retail stations. This crisis situation has become so dire that a month's salary will not cover the cost of one home's heating fuel tank fill up.

Mr. Speaker, the consequences of unaffordable costs are severe. Mr. Speaker, this threatens our residents' ability to continue residing in the region. I remind the Assembly that the Government of the Northwest Territories has 172 employees in Norman Wells and 150 in the surrounding communities. Mr. Speaker, we must move swiftly and decisively to address the crisis and, more importantly, support a physical model in the reduction of fuel costs back to pre-shipping dates by eliminating the air transportation costs with stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, in closing the Sahtu petroleum products supply consists of four surrounding communities owned by the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Norman Wells is supplied privately by Imperial Oil limited. This private sector -- Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mahsi, colleagues. This private sector supply is in and currently being resupplied at the air transportation costs burden to our citizens. It is the people -- it is the people are victims of poor planning? Good questions. Later I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 324-20(1):
MARY TEYA, ORDER OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES RECIPIENT

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise with great honour to congratulate a well-respected constituent of the Mackenzie Delta and a lifelong resident of Teetl'it Zheh. Ms. Mary Teya is the recent recipient of the Order of the Northwest Territories. The Order of the Northwest Territories recognizes individuals who have served with great distinction and excelled in any field of endeavour benefitting the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I personally cannot think of anyone else more deserving to receive this distinguished award other than Ms. Teya. I have known Ms. Teya all my life, and she was worked tirelessly in many different capacities to

see that the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the Northwest Territories, and her beloved community of Teetl'it Zheh, be treated equally and be given all the opportunities that they deserve in order to live a healthy lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Teya has worked as a community volunteer, a health representative, a community counsellor, a community leader and, most recent, before her retirement, a reverend at St. Matthew's Church in Teetl'it Zheh. Including retirement is an understatement because today she still lends her voice to the community in order that the residents of Teetl'it Zheh be given all the opportunities to lead a prosperous lifestyle. All these capacities that Ms. Teya has worked on during her distinguished career was because she wanted the best for the Indigenous people of our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, I have known Ms. Teya all my life, and I have personally witnessed all these tasks that she has undertaken for the benefit of her people. Ms. Teya has an open door policy in that she will not turn anyone away if they are in need of help. I believe that Ms. Teya looks out for the best interests of the future of our community. Ms. Teya still advocates for the younger generation of our community because she believes they are the future leaders and decision makers and should be involved in the community meetings to make them aware of our everyday struggles.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to ask my colleagues, the residents of the Northwest Territories, and especially the residents of Teetl'it Zheh, in congratulating Ms. Teya on receiving the Order of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 325-20(1):
IMMIGRATION

MS. REID: Mr. Speaker, the riding of Great Slave has a large population of newcomers, immigrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers, and permanent residents. These folks can't vote, but I still proudly represent them. I want to be clear. I know immigration is a federal issue, but decisions made in Ottawa affect our neighbours. Some are highly skilled individuals, including health professionals, but they're often only able to secure unskilled positions. There's a stark reality for many newcomers who feel tied to jobs that don't pay well, feeling compelled to stay in a job because their employer tells them they will put in an application for the nominee program.

The program requires applicants to be working with an employer for six months before sponsorship. Some workers are waiting much longer because their employer delays their application. Having your residency tied to your loyalty of your employer is a vulnerable and precarious place to be for any worker. The pause put on the nominee program this past July, after the territory reached its cap of 300, was a shock to the newcomer community. This program is a preferred gateway for newcomers wishing to establish themselves permanently in our territory.

The NWT is a place of promise for many folks trying to build a new life with their families, but this pause has broken their hope and eroded their trust in this program. Moving the goal posts for newcomers to start their path to citizenship is painful to witness, Mr. Speaker, especially when they and their families are in a vulnerable position to begin with.

Many newcomers chose to establish themselves in the North rather than down south because we were a rare Canadian jurisdiction that had never reached its annual nominee cap. But this has changed. Yes, the perception of immigration across Canada is changing. There are populists in this country who are equating newcomers with housing crises and a cutthroat job market. And it is true that in some southern jurisdictions, unchecked population growth is straining our safety nets, but unlike these jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, the NWT has essentially been in a population standstill for a decade. There might be a day when our welcoming capacity will become compromised and we will have to limit the number of newcomers who we welcome each year, but we are far from that point today. We need to welcome immigrants to grow our population. We need immigrants to fill the vacant positions in health care. We need more workers. We need more entrepreneurs. We need more taxpayers. And we need increased federal transfers. We can't afford not to be welcoming. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. That means we need a nominee program that works for our employers as well as for the newcomers hoping for a better future in this territory. This means we need more spots in the NWT nominee program, and the GNWT must ask the federal government for an increase to the quota. I will have questions for the Minister of ECE at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 326-20(1):
GRATITUDE FOR COMMUNITY AND
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SUPPORT
DURING LOSS OF HOME

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

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given that Monday was Thanksgiving, I thought I'd open my Member's statement this session with some gratuities of my own. As I know you know, and most Members know, on June 28th, 2024 we lost our home in Inuvik to a tragic fire and our contents and one of our beloved pets, as well as my neighbour lost her home as well in that fire. And I'd just like to offer a thank you. The support has been overwhelming, certainly from my colleagues here in this House who sent messages and emails and phone calls, from the staff at the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that again, reached out and for their support and for their patience in dealing with this this summer, to our friends and family obviously in Inuvik, particularly to Ken and Loretta Dalton and their family who took us in when we literally had the clothes on our back when we walked out of that place. So a big thank you to them. To Sheila Nasogaluak, my constituency assistant, who held the fort down and ensured that, you know, that residents' concerns were still being heard and that she was there to cover the office, which was amazing. And certainly to the people of Inuvik, Mr. Speaker, the support, as I said, was overwhelming. They made sure we were looked after. They made sure we were safe, that we had what we needed. And, you know, I couldn't ask for a better community to live in, Mr. Speaker, and I'm so grateful for that, and I just wanted to use this time to say thank you to everyone.

And with the little time I have left, Mr. Speaker, I will say as well that if you've been in Inuvik lately, you'll notice that the town of Inuvik has sold 65 lots up there. You will see new housing developments going up by both the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in governments. You'll see signs around town saying new office complex is coming, a new Marriott hotel is coming, a new apartment complex is coming as well, and certainly I congratulate both the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in governments for what they're doing up there and it's nice to see that kind of growth, the new growth in our community, and we -- I hope that we as a government can follow suit and be just as productive as they're being, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 327-20(1):
ILLICIT DRUG TRADE

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in recent years, the Northwest Territories has seen a dramatic increase in drug-related crimes that is affecting our small communities like never before. The demand for these drugs keeps increasing and employment opportunities and access to vital services continues to decrease. We need a long-term solution to address concurrent housing and health crisis as well as the continued burden of intergenerational trauma has on Indigenous families, and solving these problems are no easy task. There are, however, short-term solutions that are becoming increasingly clear. Community leaders have long been advocating for enhanced public safety and security measures. Community leaders have reached out to me to seek funding for the installation of security cameras and the hiring of security guards in the community to monitor prevalent illicit activity such as acts of violence, drug dealing, and break-ins. My constituents are also eager to work together to create signage indicating that drug trades are not welcome in their neighbourhood and in the community.

I asked the MACA Minister earlier this year to listen to these requests for additional funding but, unfortunately, the department only pointed to their previously allocated annual funding. Considering our drug crisis, we should not be asking our small communities to stretch their dollars any further and potentially underfund our other services that must be provided in order to cope with these extraordinary circumstances. Our communities have limited resources already, and the residents are all only becoming more vulnerable by the day. By allocating more funds for security cameras and security guards, we can deter criminal activity providing valuable evidence when incidents occur and foster a greater sense of public safety amongst residents. Additionally, the presence of trained security guards will not only enhance physical safety but also promote community engagement and trust. They are sick and tired of feeling hopelessness while these illicit activities take place every night destroying the health and wealth of their community, family, and friends. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 328-20(1):
MAKING POSITIVE CHANGE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are rapidly nearing our one-year anniversary as an Assembly and 1,053 days until the next election. As I reflect on this, I'm also mindful of today's opening prayer from former Commissioner Tuccaro on being a force of positive change for our communities. That is why we are here. But let me ask you, Mr. Speaker, are we better off today as a territory than we were a year ago? Have we made positive change on the most pressing issues facing Northerners?

Mr. Speaker, health care is in crisis, with doctors, nurses, and workers continuing to leave the profession in record numbers. 15 percent of the NWT is in public housing, 2 percent on the waiting list, 42 percent of NWT homes require repairs, 10 percent of the population lives in poverty. Climate change has irrevocably changed our way of life. It has destroyed the community of Enterprise which remains devastated after the 2023 wildfires. It is currently responsible for a humanitarian crisis in the Sahtu. All three diamond mines are set to close in 2031.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this government and this House are aware of these problems. Most of this list was cribbed from a fact sheet prepared by the Premier's office. Yet, where is the sense of urgency to take action? I don't see it. My constituents don't see it. Working people don't see it. What we do see is a government sleepwalking its way into one crisis after another. It is time to wake up, Mr. Speaker, and I am putting this government on notice that if things don't change, there will be consequences.

Mr. Speaker, this Assembly purposefully chose four priorities in order to ensure we could achieve real success and deliver on the needs -- of the greatest needs for our constituents - housing, health care, economy, and public safety. Clear, concise, small in number - four priorities. So let's get them done, Mr. Speaker.

No more action plans, no more ADMs, no more working groups. Let's get moving on legislation, let's get moving on spending, and make real lasting change before we fall so far behind our challenges, we can no longer catch up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 329-20(1):
FIRE TOWERS

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about fire towers and job opportunities for the residents of the Deh Cho.

Fire towers are used to monitor wildfires. Government employees used to operate them seasonally, typically from May to October. We used to pay a person to stay up there and keep communities safe. The fire tower near Enterprise was completed in 2015, and it's still in active use. What I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, is how is the tower currently staffed and can the government look to create more jobs with this kind of work? As I have said in the House in past statements, the residents of Deh Cho need practical and viable solutions after the devastating loss of homes and other buildings, which was 80 percent of all structures in Enterprise. Deh Cho residents need help. They need new opportunities; jobs young people can do. Working on the fire tower is one way to help ensure this devastation from wildfires does not happen again.

Mr. Speaker, this fire season, but last year especially, we know the government is spending more and more on responding to wildfires, that the department has satellite technology to track where commitment is, technology to measure the size of fires even underground. They use aircraft to monitor and put out fires. Costs are only going to increase. But I think we must really look at the establishment of more fire towers. This will employ people and cut down on costs. It will be easier to spot wildfires if we use our towers and our people effectively rather than leaving -- having helicopters and airplanes flying constantly trying to action fires that could have been spotted earlier. We use the ten or so towers we currently have in the territory but can we use them more effectively to employ more people, respond to fires near communities early, and ultimately reduce the devastation and financial loss wildfires cause? I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 330-20(1):
ONE YEAR POST-EVACUATION IN HAY
RIVER

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome back my friends and colleagues to the House. I look forward to this session and working with you all to continue moving the NWT forward.

This August marked one year without any evacuations for the community -- well, evacuations and emergencies for the community of Hay River. We are one year evacuation free. It's been a while since we could say that. Hay River, like no other community in the North, has experienced troubling events. But my community is resilient, and we will continue to move forward. We are still addressing issues that affect Hay River and its economy. Record low water levels have impacted both the fishing industry and shipping industry. The Hay River rail line remains uncertain as CN has decided not to rebuild the line after the 2023 fire. As the MLA for Hay River South, I will continue to urge CN to invest in rebuilding this line to reduce the costs to the residents of the North as this is pocket change for them. The community continues to rebuild from the 2022 flood and the 2023 fire, and the summer of full work for the contractors have had the opportunity for them to do lots of work this summer. This past year has also seen a return to normalcy and fun in Hay River, with some of our annual events such as the Polar Pond Hockey, the NWT Track and Field Championships, our Lobster Do, and Hay Days, just to name a few. Additionally, other organizations held events like the July 1st celebrations and National Indigenous Peoples Day. Events like these, along with other events in our community, is what makes our community and the volunteers that do it help make our community what it is today.

As we move through the year and the fall approaches, the town is alive with the return of school, winter sports, and our arena is packed again. This vibrancy is part of what makes Hay River so lively and active. In fact, Hay River won the Canada's Most Active Community in 2024. We received the \$100,000 grand prize to support local physical activity and sport initiatives. Mr. Speaker, I'll ask for unanimous consent to continue my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you. I had this timed, but I'm a little slow with it. Hay River had more than 40 organizations participate in the challenge, recording 197 events, programs, and activities that provided opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to get active. From a seniors' lift-and-learn program, mushroom picking, kayaking, golf, walking clubs, and the school-bike-bus programs. These were fun ways that residents were able to get active, and I don't think my epic athletic abilities made this list.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 331-20(1):
TRIBUTE TO THE LATE ANTHONY (TONY)
WHITFORD

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk today about a man I've known most of my adult life, Mr. Tony Whitford. Perhaps he knew all along that a young Fort Smith young man would one day, who was riding the barges in the 50s, would become our Commissioner. Tony's inspirational story could simply be anyone's story or tale in this building. It's a story of perseverance and kindness. Tony's story, or even in some ways his chronicles, could easily be tucked away in a Mark Twain account about a life full of adventure.

Mr. Speaker, Members could imagine, just for a second, if they could pause their busy lives and close their eyes and open our minds and embrace a magical tale, I could hear the journalling of Mark Twain right now, his legendary accounts would probably sound something like this. And then there was poor Hawkin Tom rafting down the Mighty Mackenzie, and Tony was piloting them and telling them stories along the way. Little did they know their journey was just about to begin. Tony was full of life, interesting stories, and an endless capacity of bad dad jokes. Not to mention, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of seeing many of his pencil sketches and being given crafted birdhouses. He was the everyday man. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, he was a giant of kindness who always had time for you. When Tony would call, he would check into you. He genuinely wanted you to know he wanted the best from you. He raised your spirits, even just with a simple word or two, and I am grateful for those many occasions. I would always smile, Mr. Speaker, when I'd often hear that familiar greeting and I'd hear someone bellow out, how's the Hawk today he would say to me. He was -- you know, he was in his own way a perfect friend for all of us. Tony was my friend, Mr. Speaker, and I was grateful to be his friend. He was such a special person. That's why in 2015, I requested the government name the new government building, which was unnamed at the time, the Whitford Building but it was not to be. However, there is another opportunity to continue and recognize his legacy of kindness in a true hallmark way he was. This spring I emailed the Minister of housing to name the building on 53rd Street the Whitford Building. I call upon this government to do the right thing, set aside bureaucratic processes and protracted policies and

needless debate that doesn't have to happen, take the courage and name the 53 Street building the Whitford Building, which will be a fitting honour for a man for a building that was built to give people hope and dignity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he was full of kindness, and his legacy to me will always be that. I ask Members today, if they would, break from tradition of normally staying silent when we thank someone in a eulogy, but to tap on your tables and let him hear, and he would have the greatest smile I can see on his face knowing that this Assembly not only loves him, cares for him, and wishes him Godspeed until we all meet again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the additional time as well today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Our condolences go out to his family and friends. Beautiful Member's statement. Thank you. Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 332-20(1):
CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR BOB HANNA

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Good afternoon, colleagues. Robert Earl Hanna was born in the Hanna farmhouse on February 7th, 1938. The farm is located outside the village of Port Maitland, Ontario. He was the eldest of 4 children to Earl and Marion Hanna.

During his celebration of life, a couple of stories had us laughing, like the time he tried to cut a hole in his bedroom closet to make a secret passage to sneak out. His brother Larry told on him, which put a stop to those plans. As an older teenager he would sneak out his bedroom window by climbing down a tree and head into the town for some late-night adventures. His parents eventually found out, and the tree was cut down. This was Bob, always thinking how to make the next adventure.

During his celebration of life, they spoke about the farm, his work and adventures until he ended up in Fort Simpson. I have attached this at the end of this statement and would like them deemed as read.

In 1987, Bob moved to Fort Simpson to work for the Fort Simpson Housing Authority. After a good career with the Local Housing Authority, he retired and started his own business Bob's Mechanical. People asked I thought you retired? His reply was I got too much stuff to do. I can tell you Bob loved Fort Simpson and the people. As the old saying goes, home is where the heart is, and Fort Simpson was his home. Bob was a generous man, generous with his time, especially helping people in the middle of the night when their furnace went out or with his resources. He had always had any tool or

supplies in his shed that you needed, and he'd have no problem letting you have it or borrow it.

Bob was a hard worker to ensure his family had a roof over their heads and food in their belly. I can tell you he made the best fried chicken in town and would oftentimes open the house on Friday nights to the neighborhood kids for his famous chicken and chips followed by pancake breakfast in the morning.

Bob served at the village for many years. He was always trying to make this and his community better. He told it like it was and was not afraid to ruffle a few feathers. I can tell you I totally enjoyed speaking and listening to him. Unfortunately, Bob passed away on December 9, 2023. I can tell you his family, friends, the community of Fort Simpson and the region will sadly miss him. God bless you, Bob.

The family farm was 80 acres with cattle, horses, pigs and chickens. Much of the work had to be done with a team of horses on the farm, so he learned about hard work at a very early age.

Bob attended Dunnville High School; he was very smart but bored with school. He wanted to work, learn a trade, and make some money. He was determined that farming was not to be in his future. His first job was at Powell's Shipyard on the Grand River, just a couple of miles from the family farm.

At age 19, with a friend he drove his VW Beetle out west on what was to be a vacation. He never returned to live on the farm again. He first lived in Elrose, Saskatchewan. Where he owned his first business with his brother-in-law (Elrose Plumbing and Heating). In the late 60's he went on to work in the Potash Mines in Saskatchewan and by the 1970's he moved to St Albert AB, where he lived on a little country property where he had some chickens he raised. This is the closest he ever came to farming. When the 1980's rolled around, he discovered the NWT. First living in Yellowknife, where he owned his own business.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to -- and I apologize if I say this name wrong -- **NAME**. As well as I'd like to recognize Mary Jane Cazon, our interpreter from Fort Simpson as well. So welcome to the House of Fort Simpson.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River South.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mr. Melvin Larocque who is the union vice-president, first vice-president. He is a constituent of Hay River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife South. There we go.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to recognize Gayla Thunstrom. She is the UNW president and also a resident of Yellowknife South.

Mr. Speaker, before I'm done, I happen to have three pages also with us this week. **NAME**, thank you very much for your help and service this week in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize my previous colleagues from the UNW, Gayla Thunstrom and Melvin Larocque, as well as three members from the Fort Simpson Housing Authority who are here today watching the proceedings. Welcome. And, also, I would like to say a very warm welcome to my page from Great Slave, Jack Lau. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize Mary Teya, sister **Margaret Begg**, daughter Ann Kay and grandson Robert. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Melvin Larocque who originally was from Fort Resolution, then Hay River, and now in Yellowknife. I just want to recognize them. Also, I want to recognize our translators, all of them that are here, in particular Mary Rose Sundberg and Jonas Lafferty, and thank you for your services. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize a page we have with us

from Yellowknife North, Greta Cole. Thanks for your help today, Greta.

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

MR. HAWKINS: I was worried you forgot about me, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I'll do is I'll recognize them as a group. First off, I'll recognize the team of PSAC, the UNW, and certainly the overall package of the supporting and striking workers who came to grace the Assembly, and I want to appreciate and recognize lastly their respectful efforts both outside the efforts advocating for the cause and their certainly respectful efforts in the gallery watching our proceedings. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to recognize the two pages representing Frame Lake today, Emery Moffatt and **NAME**. Thanks for your service, guys.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and welcome, congratulate Mary Teya and her daughter Annie and who I've known for many years. So I want to welcome them. And I would like to welcome back the interpreters. And it's also good to see Ms. Nadli up there, so I would like to welcome her too as well. So thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a page from Range Lake, **name**. Thank you very much for your work today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION 299-20(1): NORMAN WELLS CRISIS SUPPORT

MR. McNEELY: Mr. Speaker, following up on my statement here earlier today, my questions

are to the Minister of Finance. I feel we have discussed this situation at length and are now comfortable to address for Norman Wells' high, high cost of living and fuel.

My first question: Will the Minister of Finance agree to cover the air fuel transportation costs to Norman Wells? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, I do want to acknowledge we've had a lot of conversations, and I'm grateful for the MLA from the Sahtu. He is in our ears all the time, and it brings the reality of the people on the ground to what can sometimes seem far away when you're not in the moment of it, brought that voice to Ottawa last week as well. And I'm grateful that he was there to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the fuel resupply to the Sahtu is through Imperial Oil. The fuel services division supplies the other Sahtu communities. So figuring out exactly whether we use public dollars to subsidize Imperial Oil's delivery of fuel is a tricky question. Am I to pay the contractor on the ground or Imperial Oil? Or how exactly are we to determine what they are doing and ensuring that there is no profits being made off of that if we're using public dollars. So I have committed to the Member, and I'm going to continue to say that here, we need to find some solutions. The potential impacts to residents, to the government, to services, to this community are too great to not find a solution. I just don't have that solution here today beyond some of the programs that have already been put out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to our Minister for that reply. With her legal background, I'm quite somewhat comfortable on the word "commitment".

My second question to the Minister of Finance also is will the Minister support a codeveloped draft agreement to pay vendors in sponsorship with the town of Norman Wells? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate creative solutions. So I certainly can say as I, you know, indicated or implied in my last response, the Member for the Sahtu, myself, and other Members of Cabinet met with federal officials last week in Ottawa to address this very issue. Multiple departments were represented from the federal government, putting to them that we're going to need some supports that given this crisis, the impact that it's having across government, given the

impacts of low water across government on a number of fronts, we are stretched. But we've put this to a large number of those departments. They are actively working to it. They've responded already today with some information to acknowledge and summarize where they're at, and we've also had some conversations with Imperial Oil. As I've said, this is their resupply. They did not get all their fuel in over the winter road. Obviously, it's a bit unexpected to have no barges go in, but certainly fuel services was able to get all of our fuel in. So I'm looking for exactly the kind of solution the Member's mentioning, something that we can, you know, look to the private sector and ask them what they're prepared to contribute to this community that they've been in for 40 years and also recognizing that government does play a role in terms of filling gaps but noting that it's public dollars, and we want to be making sure that we're using those public dollars effectively and to support the community and the residents there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that response. Here I'm feeling more and more satisfied and comfortable however I can't really say that for the many people out there in the community.

My third question to the same Minister is the Minister exhausting all possibilities for a cost shared model with the Government of Canada and Imperial Oil themselves? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that certainly flows well. I'd like to say that we are -- I'm cognizant of us saying we're working on something and us committing to finding a solution doesn't fill the fuel tank of anyone in the Sahtu this week. I'm conscious of that, Mr. Speaker. I believe we are. As I've said, I've spoken with Imperial Oil myself and Minister Cleveland just this morning. We've spoken with Members in the federal public service. A variety of departments are involved. We have follow-ups happening at our department levels. So I do believe that we are pushing this issue. It came upon a little faster than perhaps we were expecting in terms of the timing of when Imperial has decided to start to fly in fuel, which is resulting in the higher costs. So we need to action this quickly. I appreciate the Member's diligence on this. I do want to, again, reiterate that we recognize that something's going to have to be done and we want to work with the Member and the communities to find some solutions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the Minister here, and I feel this is a very large, multimillion-dollar situation, and I don't feel comfortable in asking four questions on behalf of the Sahtu, but I'm going to ask my last one with some extra reserves for tomorrow. Will the Minister agree that this is a crisis emergency situation? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, if the residents of the Sahtu are facing fuel bills that result in them being unable to fill their fuel tanks even as they're working full-time, that is going to be a crisis. It's going to be a crisis the minute somebody can't fill their fuel bills, something like their house fuel is up -- or freezes up. They're literally people are unable to stay in their homes. So, yes, I mean, in that sense, Mr. Speaker, it absolutely is a crisis. It's how we respond, how quickly we can respond, and doing so in a way that actually allows people to continue to live, work, reside, be in the Sahtu. Mr. Speaker, we need to find some short-term capacity solutions to make sure that the programs that we have already, seniors home heating subsidies, income assistance programs, the relief program for barges for the barge resupplies that have been put in place, that those are working. Let's see if they can work even better. Let's see what's going to come of that as these fuel prices are coming in. And if they're not, well, Mr. Speaker, then it's a crisis for that community and the government's role here is to make sure that we can be there to support them. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 300-20(1): EDUCATION OUTCOMES

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to last year's early childhood development instrument, EDI, vulnerable children have challenges in one or more of the five areas of development listed in the survey. Can the Minister identify which of these areas of development are ECE's greatest priorities for small communities? Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is really looking at supporting children for increased education outcomes,

especially in small communities and across the territory, from a wholistic sense. And so that's everything from ensuring that we are doing certifications for early learning and childhood operators, so our daycare and day home operators, and ensuring they have the supports they need when they're supporting our children from zero to age 4. Implementing the BC curriculum, and so that is our school aged children, from there. And even pieces like implementing and continuing to evolve and grow our school-based mental health and wellness program. And so there's multiple instruments at play here. We are at a time of transition within the education system of the Northwest Territories. But I absolutely hear the Member, and I appreciate her bringing education to the floor of this House repetitively. We need to have this conversation here on the importance of education in our communities and in our homes. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, she didn't answer my questions. There was physical and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language, numbers, and etcetera. But anyways, I will go on to a second question.

Can the Minister explain why twice as many students are listed as vulnerable for small communities when compared to Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd love the opportunity to sit down and discuss in great lengths and details why the differences exist for small communities. There's often been differences that exist between our cities, our regional centres, and our small communities, and the efforts that are at play here in order to increase the equity between them. It exists in the programs that I have laid out here and in the increased supports. So one of those increased supports as well is affording training to classroom assistants to ensure that in small communities the people who are on the ground that are supporting students have the training and the supports that they need to be able to turn around and afford those to students to increase the education outcomes that we're seeing across the territory. Thank you.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need more money for program and services in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, 2023-2024 EDI surveys -- is the 2023-2024 EDI survey available, and if it is, when will it be released by the Department of ECE? Is it getting better for small communities? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the information of dates at my disposal or at my fingertips right at this time, but I would be happy to follow up with the department and ensure that I get that back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the Minister if the Minister can make a commitment to come and visit Tlicho region, to visit some of the schools that needs a lot of help, that we need a lot of program and services, if the Minister can come and visit our school in the near future? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every moment that I have had the opportunity to spend in the Tlicho region has been nothing short of incredibly rewarding. I appreciate the time that the Member has invited me and I have gone, and I would absolutely love to accept. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 301-20(1):
CHANGE MANAGEMENT

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance today. Mr. Speaker, as the Member -- or sorry, as the Minister responsible for the public service, what is the government doing to ensure change management principles are entrenched in our processes? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are some efforts underway already. For instance, in terms of the GNWT's core competencies, which is what we use to evaluate the employees that we have in our workforce, we do have within that action management as being one of those core competencies and obviously associated training to try to support that, which isn't to say, Mr. Speaker, that more emphasis and highlighting can't be done, and so I appreciate the opportunity today to do that here on the floor. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what processes do we have in place to assess the effectiveness of changes that we implement at the GNWT? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, there are specialists in change management within the GNWT. Their roles though more typically would be in terms of developing the programs that we have. For example, there's a change management senior advisor within executive and indigenous affairs that's helping to lead some of the whole of government work that is underway within this government around being strength-based and trauma-informed and trying to manage that type of cultural change within government.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I hear the Member's question. It's about assessing effectiveness. That in and of itself is a cultural change that needs to take place. It's part of the government renewal work that we're doing to try to include a more evaluative process, but that work certainly does take some time, and I do acknowledge that. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what is the government doing to ensure staff understand how to lead and respond to change effectively in their roles and in the changes that they're working on? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this really is a cultural issue and one that we want to ensure -- I mean, I've certainly spoken in the House many times about having an inclusive and a diverse workplace but having one that also can manage change, lead change, thrive in change, that too is workplace culture. I certainly acknowledge that. Again, I know there's a lot of public servants who are watching and who always watch, and wanting to encourage them to have those skills and to seek out those opportunities. The GNWT's Aurora -- or sorry, leadership development program does include elements of change management within it, and that is certainly one way that I would encourage people who are looking to move through the organization, to go and undertake that program. But if there's other opportunities -- I know that the Member quoted a book -- we want to encourage that. We want to get to that place to have an evaluative and supportive culture. So that's one opportunity here, and I'm looking forward to finding others. Thank you.

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

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question is what steps is the government taking to encourage change resiliency throughout the public service, and

does the Minister feel that we could be doing more? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can always do more. There's always room to improve. There's no doubt about that. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the last five years have had a lot of crises and a lot of difficult times and a lot has been asked for the public service in the last five years. So learning through those processes and managing those changes and managing them into the future, absolutely, we can continue to improve. And, again, whether that's through doing the development training that is already on offer, that includes change management, whether that's in terms of our own processes and how we communicate change, leaning on those folks who do have that change background, those are all areas that I certainly do want to commit. Having had this debate here now, I'll certainly commit to going back to the department and making sure we are maximizing all of those resources. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

ORAL QUESTION 302-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES NOMINEE
PROGRAM

MS. REID: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. After that exchange, I have a lot of questions for the Minister of Finance myself, but I'll keep it to the Minister of ECE for now.

So like many issues in the North, the federal one-size-fits-all approach isn't working for the territory, and recent federal limits on temporary foreign workers are concerning to my constituents. Has the Minister formally asked the federal government to increase the quota of nominees? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in short, yes, absolutely. This is our first time -- 2024 will be our first time ever filling our quota for the nominee program in the Northwest Territories. We have requested an increase, and this is similar to other jurisdictions across Canada. We've requested an increase from 300 to 500. In the meantime, I can also -- and sorry, while we have not heard back from the federal government on that one, I intend -- I am expecting to hear back from them by the end of the year. And I could also confirm for the Member that we have asked about an increase

to our allotment in this calendar year, both politically and at the officials level, but our allotment currently sits and remains at 300. Thank you.

MS. REID: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that. That's good news.

I'm also wondering in the solution that she is proposing with her federal counterparts whether there might be part of it that would look like the deal that the Yukon recently secured earlier this month to secure temporary measures to extend work permits. Mr. Speaker, if she could elaborate on that. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, temporary measures that the Yukon joined allows the Yukon nominee program to support the extension of work permits for applicants in their assessment queue that they currently have and who have work permits that expire in 2024. One of the things that we did here in the territory is that we prioritized those applications in 2024 and expect to be able to work our way through them in this calendar year. So the Government of the Northwest Territories did look at the option and opt in program that Yukon is currently partaking in but decided that they would be able to process the applications in this current calendar year and so it wouldn't serve our needs. Our needs are to continue to work as quickly as we can through applications. Thank you.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we're nearing the restart of this program in January for a new batch of, I guess, up to 500 now, hopefully, but 300 definitely, which brings fears for my constituents about a bottleneck. Can the minister explain how ECE is preparing for applications in 2025 and whether the applicants who are affected by the pause will be prioritized? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so applicants with an expiring work permit in 2024, as I said, we're still able to submit their applications to the nominee program and are being assessed within the queue based on that priority. Applicants who have not been able to apply because of the pause that was put in place will be able to apply when the program opens up in January of 2025 again. So in acknowledgement of the increase to applications that we have received, Education, Culture and Employment is doing what they can to ensure they have a full complement of staff in order to receive the increased -- expected increase in applications again in the next calendar year.

The other thing that is happening that we talked about during the last sitting of this Assembly was the amalgamation of our immigration programs from Education, Culture and Employment and Industry, Tourism, and Investment and both being placed within Education, Culture and Employment. So that will help in the future with staffing capacity as well. Thank you.

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

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister have a handle on how many applications she's expecting for 2025 considering the backlog now and what she might expect in the new year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that would be a hard one to predict. I know that we did receive more applications than our allotment this year. It wasn't a completely unmanageable amount, so I was hoping to see an increase to our allotment in this calendar year to be able to continue to receive those applications and to process them. I would expect that if our allotment remains the same that we would expect to see a similar number of applications come through in the Northwest Territories, if not a little bit more, because of changes that are happening to the program down south as well. But I hope that I will have good news for this House and that we end up seeing an increase to our allotment for the program. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 303-20(1):
LOCAL HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS
SUPPORT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions will be to the Minister of housing and to be clear, it's not about the specific negotiation discussions of the union and the workers but it'll be about the structure and the process and the impacts it will have. So I want to make sure that I don't be viewed as I'm getting into the negotiations. That's between the teams that are appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, let's start off with first, does the Minister recognize and support the employees at the LHO and as such, if she does -- I'm assuming she does -- what is she willing to acknowledge on the record about the impact and important role those workers provide at the

LHO for service or people in public housing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the important work that the local housing authority employees do every day in all of our communities. We have 24 local housing authorities operating throughout the Northwest Territories in 32 communities, so this is important work that they do. I recognize the impact and recognize what's happening today in one of our local housing authorities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the words of recognizing the important work and the impacts they have; I'm sure the employees do as well. That said, recognizing the important work and the impacts of the work that they do, it must come at a cost that they've been on strike for close to two weeks, a little more than two weeks, and as such, does the Minister know how much the strike has currently cost the LHO and what are they prepared to do financially to deal with this while the strike is going on? So I want to know some dollar amounts the department has been assessing the impacts of this strike. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have dollars amounts this afternoon. I can provide the Member some information, but I don't have dollar amounts in terms of impacts. I have been pressing Housing NWT to provide me more updates, daily updates, on the impact of the strike in Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will accept the Minister's office of updating on sort of the financial impact. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the partnership with respect to the bigger picture the department has with the LHO.

Mr. Speaker, does the department through its policy and financial support as the financial agent -- at the end of the day, are you -- are you the ones that will pick up the overall pending costs of any of these additional expenses required through this process while the workers are on strike as the funding agent for the LHOs? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked Housing NWT yesterday for an update on how this works locally and territorially. And from what I understand, we as Housing NWT sign a community services agreement with the Fort Simpson Housing Authority to manage the

houses, the public housing units at Fort Simpson. So we provide them a budget allotment every year, ask for audited financial statements every year, and that is what we do as Housing NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary, Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping the Minister was going to keep going on her own, but I'll prompt her with another question first -- or the last question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister recognize that some of these problems could be solved today if the department would meet with the workers, you, including the officials, and sit down and talk with them to meet their needs? Because I suspect that the financial cumbrance of this whole issue can be easily solved over not only a box of Tim Horton doughnuts but literally 20 or \$30,000, we could have good workers protecting our public housing as it needs to be. Would the Minister be willing to reach out to help foster a positive end to this strike for what's considered very little money? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, officially I can't intervene in strike action as Minister of Housing NWT. Unofficially, I can have a private conversation with anybody but, officially, I can't do that. And I can't impact strike negotiations, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

ORAL QUESTION 304-20(1):
ILLICIT DRUG TRADE PREVENTION
MEASURES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the 20th Assembly, this government put forward four top priorities, and the fourth priority of this government is safe residents and communities. Mr. Speaker, my community of Fort Resolution, the leadership there approached me about putting in cameras and looking at security guards and that, those issues that they brought to my attention. But in previous governments, I also raised this issue. But anyway, my question to the Minister is that is the Minister prepared to look at making a commitment to come up with a clear action plan as to how we're going to deal with this issue in Fort Resolution while moving the top four priorities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Which Minister are you directing your question to? Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am unclear of the issue that he's speaking of, if he can clarify that.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The community's been asked to use their CPI dollars and operation and maintenance dollars to look at funding cameras to be put into their communities et cetera, but the money is just not there. And my question to the Minister, can we work together to come up with an action plan to help the communities put these much-needed cameras in place so that we could deter drug activities in our community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this doesn't really fit under municipal and community affairs. It's not really our -- in our department. We do fund communities. Our total funding allotment is about \$110 million to communities for their -- to operate their communities. How they see fit to operate their communities with those funds, it's essentially up to them. I do know that some of the stuff that he's talking about, the Member is -- you know, the signage for an example, it can be -- about \$10,000 of that can be used out of the CPI funding. So other than that, most of the stuff that the Member's speaking about would probably be best suited for the Department of Justice or -- yes, I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister. The issues that I brought forward here in regards to the activity that's happening in our communities, not only just in my riding but throughout the Northwest Territories, my question would be to the Minister, in order to meet the top four priorities, is your government prepared to work with Indigenous governments as to how we can work together to fund some of these activities that's not without taking the monies out of CPI dollars and the gas taxes that was paid or operation and maintenance? Thank you.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So with that, like I said we distribute the funds to the communities. You know, they -- it's not for us to tell the communities how to run their programs and services within the municipalities. At the end of the day, it's up to the communities. We are supporting safer communities. The Department of Justice, I know has done numerous things by adding, like, more officers and also another program to support the fight against organized crime essentially. So the department of MACA does

not have the funds available to add to the services of, you know, fighting the drug activities and stuff in the communities. Again, our department has \$110 million they distribute to 33 communities and it's up to the communities on how they want to see fit to operate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Final supplementary, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, well, then having said that, I guess my question would be is that we're already in year one of the four-year mandate we already are in as a government, but for -- to meet the commitments that is laid out in this government for safe residents and communities, is the Minister willing to commit to work with communities, Indigenous governments, and try to find new ways to get money from either Ottawa, or wherever they can get it, to meet one of the top four priorities because the issues in our community are real, and we just don't have the money to deal with that issue. Thank you.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't disagree with the Member. You know, these are issues throughout all of the territories and all the communities. My home community is feeling the stress of illegal and drug activities. But the department of MACA, like I said, it's kind of out of our department so this may be -- I do support it. I am -- you know, my moral values tell me that these are things that we need to tackle and as a government it's something we said we're going to do. But it might be something for myself, the Member, and the Department of Justice to sit down and have discussions and try to find a direction that's positive for the communities of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ORAL QUESTION 305-20(1):
HEATING OIL

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. The NWT Association of Communities has called on the GNWT to take a greater role in securing wood pellet supply chains, perhaps in similar ways that we currently secure petroleum products through procurement, transport, storage, and other things for many communities. So is the GNWT considering how it might secure wood pellet supply chains? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. There is work happening in this space and one of the ways that we support the supply chains is by actually being one of the larger consumers of biomass products and wood pellet products. For instance, about 32 percent of all GNWT heating load is right now met with biomass which does make us a fairly big player in terms of supporting the local resources that there may be in order to have a supply of wood pellets happening on a regular basis, and this may well be an opportunity for those in the Sahtu, where the almost \$2 million program we had in place to support freight costs, could actually be employed by those in the region who are bringing up or trying to bring up wood pellet supply. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So is the GNWT working, perhaps with Arctic Energy Alliance, to help get more subsidized wood stoves and pellet stoves into Norman Wells as soon as possible, given the crisis, to relieve some of the dependence on heating oil in that community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our Department of Infrastructure does work quite closely with the Arctic Energy Alliance. On this particular area, though, right now in terms of subsidies for wood pellets and, indeed, subsidies for quite a number of energy efficiency programs, this is right now unfunded. This was one of the areas where the federal low carbon economy leadership fund was reduced rather significantly and took a significant hit on our budget in this space. So we are actively asking the federal government what they're going to be doing to bring that back and recapitalize it. We'll get that money out the door through Arctic Energy Alliance the minute we do. But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to follow up and ensure that officials at the Department of Infrastructure are touching base with SSI. We do right now work with other Indigenous governments to do exactly this, to get wood pellets -- wood pellet stoves brought into communities working through local governments. So I will follow up on that today and see if we can't initiate some action like that with the Sahtu region. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I certainly appreciate that we've been looking to the feds up until now for these kinds of programs, but we're also seeing that the costs are falling on the GNWT of the consequence of having this dependence on heating oil. So with that in mind, is the GNWT looking at opportunities to increase energy efficiency and

conservation in any buildings or homes in Norman Wells that are currently relying on heating oil again to relieve some of this dependence and the high costs that that community's experiencing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the good news here is that all of the largest GNWT assets in Norman Wells actually are already equipped with biomass heating systems. This is five systems over a thousand kilowatt hours are all operated through a pellets system. And the benefit of that, again, is that it creates the local supply demand -- or rather it creates local demand which then encourages a supply chain and a bit of an economy of scale in that regard. So with respect to whether or not there can be changes also brought in to smaller units, smaller assets, I'll certainly go back and see if there -- what hasn't been converted and whether we can work, again, with the community government and beyond so that they have some energy resiliency and alternatives. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary, Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so finally, with regard to energy security, will the GNWT be taking a greater role for next year's fuel supply to ensure that fuel is transported to Norman Wells over the winter road rather than taking a chance on the next summer's barge? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Infrastructure took a fairly significant role last year. You'll recall that just a little later, less than a year ago, we were already in a situation where because of last year's challenged barge season there was some resupply of fuel that had to happen by air into the Sahtu. That came with costs. It came obviously with some uncertainty right in and around the Christmas period. We were able to get resupplied, and then started into the winter road season. We widened the winter road, had increased patrols on the winter road, had increased signage, had increased checkpoints to try to support more trucks moving more efficiently bringing up more load. And, again, Mr. Speaker, the GNWT through the fuel services division was able to resupply all of the communities that we are responsible for to a point that they can make it to the winter road season this year. It came as no particular surprise that water was low. It came as no particular surprise that the water could be challenging. And here we find ourselves with the one community that was serviced by the private sector not fully serviced

and not fully supplied. So do we remind our partners in the private sector? Certainly do. One good news I will give you, Mr. Speaker, just today we've committed with Imperial Oil to have a task force ready to roll so that we do not find ourselves back in this situation next year and that no one has to find themselves back in this situation next year. Thank you.

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

ORAL QUESTION 306-20(1):
HOUSING REPAIRS

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of housing. When we were here last session, we talked about the units in Inuvik, the long waiting lists, and the units that needed to be repaired. I think it was something around between 12 and 17 that still were being repaired. I was just wondering if I could get an update of the status of the repairs in Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister for Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. The information I have today on the status of repairs to Inuvik public housing units is that we have two units that are about 50 percent complete in the modernization and improvement of that public housing unit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister Kuptana. I understand that some of the work's being done on M and I. I also understand, I think, there's likely about seven units that still require repairs. And I say this because we do have some folks living in our apartment building up that housing leases that we know is a known area for drug consumption and drug selling in there. So our list is quite long.

Is there any other money, I guess, outside of the maintenance and improvement funding that the local housing authority gets, any other money committed outside of that to repair those units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the local housing authority in Inuvik is provided an annual budget allotment and much of that budget is for maintenance of public housing units in Inuvik. They have been doing minor repairs and trying to get many of the units up to par for public housing tenants. So that work is ongoing, Mr. Speaker. We're hoping to get more done over

the fall/winter, so hoping to provide better news for the MLA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know the Minister understands, living in the Beaufort Delta herself, the importance of this work. I guess can I get a commitment from the Minister on -- I know there's at least five units right now that have no funding allocated for them from what I understand in speaking with the local housing authority. Can we get a commitment of a plan going forward to get all these units repaired within the next 12 months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will definitely look into it to see what -- the details for the question from the Member. I cannot commit to getting the completed -- the work completed. I have to look at the budget, see what we have allocated, especially for the riding. But I will follow up with the Member on the details. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary supplementary.

Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

ORAL QUESTION 307-20(1):
CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRESS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's -- well, it's been back to school for a bit for parents in the Northwest Territories. As one of them, I'm always keen to help support students in their education journey and working families as well. One of the biggest things that's happening in our school districts is the change to the BC curriculum. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment speak to the progress of the implementation of the new curriculum in NWT schools? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are in our second year of implementing the new curriculum into our school system. We are working on a phased-in approach. It is a five-year phased-in approach, and that is because we recognize that there is significant amount of work to be done, and we want to ensure that we are affording the proper time to do it in a -- you know, a very progressive way, where people can learn about the curriculum and then implement it with students and have resources to be able to do that. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how much money has the department put aside to help transition schools over this five-year period? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the question is how much money is going specific to -- or specifically to education bodies for the task of implementing the new curriculum, the answer to that question is there is no funding allotment specifically for this. The reason being is that the education bodies are already funded for curriculum coordinators within schools and support coordinators, and they're also already funded within the school funding formula for evergreening material as well within our school systems. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find that alarming. I know the Minister and I were at the same meeting but for one district in Yellowknife, the cost of implementation is around \$600,000, and if it's not coming from the -- it's coming from resources that should be going to just support the schools and support our children in those schools. Will the Minister reconsider this approach and fully fund the transition that the government has mandated on school districts? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I sit at the same meetings as the Member, and I'm always keen to have conversations with our education body. I have a meeting tomorrow with the NWTTA, and this is one of the conversations that is on our agenda as well.

Within the request for new resources or new funding allocations, the department works closely with the Government of BC to determine what types of new resources would be required, and one of the things that was learned in that conversation is there is no expectation of additional resources because there is already the bodies within the school systems that support teachers to administer curriculum. What we're doing is we're switching that curriculum. We do have training provided to teachers. We have online platforms. We have online platforms that we share now with teachers from British Columbia where we can share lesson plans and also training for how to implement this new curriculum.

In addition to that, teachers are supposed to still be able to use their previous education material. So there might be a desire to bring on new material, absolutely, but that is why that funding exists, but there is not a need to completely kind of throw every piece of material or book that was used previously in order to

really move into the BC curriculum. So that's why there's not a large chunk of money to do that. Thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's true that you don't need to replace every book but we're talking about software licenses, professional development, and the costs that have been communicated with me and with other Members of this House are clear, there is a cost to this. It is not being able to be dealt with by coordinators in the schools, and when we download the costs on to parents, on to teachers, it means more improvement days, more professional development days, and less instructional time. So will the Minister work with school boards to provide additional funding -- maybe it's not the full amount, but additional funding to help cushion the impact of the extra costs of the curriculum change and ensure that we have as much -- and protect instructional time for our kids? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to be clear, there are no additional PD days being allotted. One of the agreements that was made -- or STIP days. One of the agreements that was made with education bodies was to allot time from their existing professional development days and dedicate it towards the implementation. So while I absolutely hear the Member, I do want to share that some education bodies have come forward and have said that, you know, this is how they are implementing the new curriculum, these are some of their success stories, these are how they're participating in that work. So this is not a sentiment that is shared among all education bodies. But I definitely want to ensure that I am hearing the details from each education body and that we are having conversations about this and are ensuring that at the end of the day, teachers are supported to teach our kids. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Deh Cho.

ORAL QUESTION 308-20(1):
FIRE TOWERS

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to stay focused on the four priorities that we have going for us in this government.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change confirm how many fire towers are

currently in use in the NWT and explain how they are operated? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Deh Cho. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member for the question.

Currently, we have 11 fire towers across the Northwest Territories. Nine of those are camera-based towers. One of the towers is -- two of the towers are located in the Nahendeh riding, one in Fort Liard, and one in Somba K'e. The Fort Liard tower is person operated as well as the one in Somba K'e. It is a unique situation. It also has cameras attached to it primarily for this season in that the person that holds that position was on leave for the 2024 season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing the local employment opportunities for the hamlet of Enterprise, can the Minister confirm the number of people the Enterprise fire tower employs throughout the year.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the tower in Enterprise was a manned tower which recently the incumbent in the position resigned within the last couple of seasons. Since that time, cameras have been placed on the tower in Enterprise, and the position has been transitioned into Hay River and turned into a monitoring role to assist with the monitoring of the many camera sites across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Thanks to the Minister for that answer. Can the Minister commit to creating local fire tower jobs for the upcoming wildfire season? That's we're talking about next year. Thank you.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. As we look at our current array of inventory towers across the Northwest Territories, many of this infrastructure was inherited from the federal government and much of the infrastructure currently doesn't meet the standards to be in service. So we've looked at many opportunities to use technology across the NWT as part of a larger plan and part of the plan is associated with the funding dollars that were provided from the federal government. So part of this plan involves putting towers in and around communities and areas of high value to get the most opportune return on those towers. And part of that work will be as the plan moves forward looking at the

opportunity to create more monitoring positions because one person can only monitor so many sites at a time so as that program advances, there will be other potential opportunities on the horizon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary, Member from the Deh Cho.

Oral questions. Written questions. Member from Range Lake.

Motions

MOTION 40-20(1):
EMERGENCY DEBATE ON NORMAN
WELLS STATE OF EMERGENCY
DECLARATION,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for the Sahtu, that, pursuant to Rule 3.5, that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance requiring immediate consideration; namely, the humanitarian crisis in the Sahtu, specifically in the town of Norman Wells, where the town council has unanimously declared a local state of emergency on October 15th, 2024. The people of the Sahtu urgently require an indication of the kind of short-term and long-term strategies that the Government of the Northwest Territories will employ to ensure that necessary support is provided to residents and businesses and is of territorial significance as local authorities do not have the resources required to provide the required humanitarian relief to the residents of the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members, the Member from Range Lake is moving to set aside the business of the House to discuss a matter of public importance requiring immediate consideration pursuant to Rule 3.5. This is an extraordinary measure and will likely require debate on whether or not this is an urgent question. It is also the first time this provision has been used in the 20th Assembly. I will call a short break so Members can review section 3.5 before we proceed. Thank you.

--- SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Members, the Member is seeking to set aside the ordinary business of the House. I will allow him five minutes to make a statement explaining the matter to be discussed and the reason for urgency. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, our rules permit the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance requiring immediate consideration subject to the following conditions:

- A. The Member proposing the motion shall give written notice to the matter proposed to be discussed to the Speaker at least one hour before the sitting of the house;
- B. No more than one matter shall be discussed on the same motion;
- C. The motion must not raise a matter of privilege; and,
- D. The motion must not raise any matter which can be debated upon a motion with notice.

Mr. Speaker, you can be assured that the conditions pursuant to our rules have been met by this motion, but there are other tests that could be applied as the House considers this debate. For that, we can turn to a precedent in the House of Commons, in particular, the speakership of John Fraser from 1986 to 1996, who had to decide on 149 specific cases of motions calling for emergency debate. Although the House of Commons' practice is different than ours, there are commonalities that the House should consider when debating an extraordinary request for emergency debate.

On October 17th, 1986, Speaker Fraser wrote: In considering an application of this kind, the Chair must take three factors into account. In this case, I would say the House must take three factors into account. The issue raised must constitute a genuine emergency. The Chair used that word in the sense that it is something which is of such urgency, it calls for immediately for something to be done about it. It is not enough -- and I would ask the honourable Members to understand this -- that it be a matter of great importance. It is in the view of the Chair that the issue is of great importance, but the issue must call for immediate and urgent consideration. The Chair must also take into consideration whether or not there will be other opportunities to debate the matter and other opportunities within a reasonable period of time. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, it is without a doubt that the people of the Sahtu are in such dire straits with respect to the state of emergency that's been declared that immediate and urgent consideration is required. The community has reached the limit of their capacity to resolve the matter and is turning to territorial and, indeed, national authorities for help.

Mr. Speaker, in the House's consideration for this motion for debate, I ask us to consider the longstanding tradition in this House of government members treating motions as advice to government and; furthermore, responding in 120 days as grossly insufficient to provide an immediate and urgent disposition to the humanitarian crisis in the Sahtu. Yes, a Member might move such a motion within the time afforded by this sitting but the response from government would fail to meet the moment at hand. The people of the Sahtu are calling out for justice and relief at a time of great distress, and I submit that there are no other opportunities afforded by this sitting to adequately consider their needs and meaningfully respond but for an emergency debate.

Mr. Speaker, of the many examples in the House of Commons of emergency debate, most of -- or a select few have been about regional matters such as the cod fishery in Newfoundland or the takeover of Dome Petroleum by Amoco Corporation. These were all decisions handled by Speaker Fraser. These matters speak to urgent and immediate matters of public concern respecting regions of Canada that were then raised -- or deemed important enough to be raised to the national forefront in the House of Commons. The comparison to this motion at-hand with a region of the Northwest Territories hard hit by an issue of urgent and immediate concern should be viewed in the same light by this House. We cannot afford to wait a moment longer to leave this matter unresolved, and there is no other mechanism afforded to this House to adequately consider the emergency at-hand. I ask this House to give leave for this emergency debate and set aside the business of the day and to proceed without further delay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members, at this point, I will only hear debate on the question of whether or not the need for debate is urgent. That means why this debate must happen today and the regular business of the House be set aside. The House will then vote on the Member of Range Lake's motion. If the motion carries, I will then allow debate on the subject itself. If the motion fails, we shall continue on with the orders of the day. If the motion carries, the debate will continue until such time there is no one seeking to talk or we reached the hour of adjournment. If there is no one seeking to talk and we have not reached the hour adjournment, I will adjourn the debate and return to the orders of the day.

To the question of whether this debate is urgent. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will support the proposal for the emergency debate on the particular topic about the emergency in the Sahtu. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member who brought forward that the situation is urgent, time is of the essence, it is important, it is specific, the issue we are raising. This is why we need decision makers to talk about this. We need to talk about allocating resources and respond to public need on the basis of the public trust.

Mr. Speaker, in essence, there needs to be an urgency debate that facilitates the discussion that has to happen and including the inspirational work that we need to do that we need to remind people in the Sahtu they matter. That's why this discussion cannot wait.

Mr. Speaker, our audience may be here at this very moment, but everyone is listening far and wide. Even the Minister defined this as a crisis today -- and I haven't read Hansard, the specific wording. So if you're recognizing a situation in the Sahtu as crisis, I think it meets the goals and objectives of an urgent debate.

Mr. Speaker, speaking further to the motion of why we should have a debate, we cannot dull this urgent call by finding ways to turn this into a protracted process. As my colleague also mentioned earlier about Members do have options such as motions and Member's statements, but we must call into question the effectiveness of how they deliver the message and the effectiveness of the response. I am going to just elaborate a little further on what he had said.

When Members pass a motion, the government has up to 120 days to respond. Mr. Speaker, if they were kind and didn't use all of their time, they would respond tomorrow. But if they had to do a lot of work, which I respect would be required, the earliest that they may be able to respond to this urgent crisis would be February 5th. That's 110 days from now. Do the people in the Sahtu have 120 days?

Mr. Speaker, if the government took -- which isn't unnecessarily reasonable, depending on the case -- their full 120 days as prescribed, that means they wouldn't be back in the House responding officially to this problem not until February 25th of 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the Sahtu need this discussion today because it is a real crisis. I've spoken to people who are asking themselves they cannot stay there so we need to show them -- sorry, stay there under the circumstances if there's nothing happening other than us sitting and waiting, Mr. Speaker. Nothing tells the world more they matter than us

talking about their issue. And on that note, Mr. Speaker, it's easy to say this doesn't affect my riding but, Mr. Speaker, it's affecting every riding in one way or another. Hence, it's a territorial issue.

Mr. Speaker, I won't go through the measures of test such as time and urgency and whatnot, but I'll end with this pointing out the fact that the House of Commons, as my colleague has said, has talked about a number of subjects from fisheries, forestry, agriculture, fur trade, and they have all been judged acceptable topics for urgent debate, Mr. Speaker. Even grain, which probably doesn't change overnight, this situation is a situation that would change overnight, Mr. Speaker. Fisheries and all of those other subjects probably had time to deal with but tell me, Mr. Speaker, is cost of living, affordability, no gas, no opportunity, people can't buy food, is there a better reason why we shouldn't be talking about this subject? And I'd say I can't think of a more paramount issue that should be drawing the collective attention on the Members of the Assembly. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I genuinely believe this is a crisis we need to speak about. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, would please put your hand up. Sorry? Something to clarify, Mr. Rodgers? Sorry, I need to clarify.

So what we're voting on is if this is a debate that we want to have the conversation. That's what this vote's calling for. Okay, so we all have a clear understanding? What's that? You want a recorded vote?

Member from Yellowknife Centre is asking for a recorded vote. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion has been called. All those in favour of having this debate, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Mackenzie Delta. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Nunakput.

The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. SPEAKER: Those abstaining, please stand.

To the motion if we need to have emergency debate, 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. To the subject of the debate. To the motion, we will start with Sahtu and then Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to my colleagues. It's gratifying and heartfelt, warming, that 16 members have voted to have this debate. And this debate really addresses the urgency that we are experiencing in Norman Wells and the Sahtu.

I feel that I have said this many a times here so I'm not going to have a presentation in front of you other than what I've said here in the North and there in Ottawa. As we all know, I went to Ottawa with my colleagues, the mayor of Tulita, Doug Yallee, and the mayor of Norman Wells and his staff, Mr. Pope, to share the concerns of the magnitude and the in-depth of the urgency. The urgency is really created by airlifting at extreme high cost of air fuel due to the lack of the barging system and the cancellation. And to put a dollar figure to that, Mr. Speaker, is my discussions with Imperial and the research to find out what is actually happening. Yes, I understand we're flying in fuel. How much? Okay, I initiated the discussions with Imperial Oil. They are hauling in 1.9 million liters of fuels from Yellowknife to Norman Wells at an expected rate -- and this was at the time of the procurement process, but the fuels were already been mobilized -- between \$3 and \$3.50 per liter. So if we do the math, Mr. Speaker, that comes out to an impact of increases to \$6.6 million. So of the fuels in our discussions with Mayor Pope for example -- of the fuels you are hauling, or the supplier's hauling in 1.5 million liters of diesel fuel that you could put in your automotive and heavy machinery and in your home as heating fuel, same product different rates. So that portion of 1.9 is being hauled and the other portion is 400,000 liters of gasoline. Now, to put a dollar figure to that, in comparison this government mobilized 400,000 liters of gas at the beginning of August from Inuvik to Fort Good Hope. When I do the math on the tendered process at 1.523 million, 400,000 liters, I come out with 3.80. 3.80 in comparison to the Norman Wells mobilization is in that market area. So I'm kind of assuming that the mobilization of fuels to the Sahtu, being \$3 and 3.50, economy of scale might be a factor for reductions because you're hauling in more. But it's still in that above \$3 area for airlifted costs.

So that's the situation that we're faced with. And that cost is being passed on to the existing market. When I purchased fuel at the home heating rate several weeks ago, it was 1.93 per liter prior to this adjustment to recoup the costs of transportation. So we add that together, and we come out to over \$5. Now, the bulk fuel rates for diesel stove boat is over \$5. And to show the impact to our citizens of the Sahtu, we say your standard fuel tank is 250 gallons, times 4.5 liters per gallon, times 5.50, that's \$6,200 that you have to pay to fill that tank up. What about your other living costs? What about your existing mortgage? Utilities? In my Member's statement as you recall, that's a month's paycheque. So given those evidences and arguments, I really sincerely feel we have a crisis. Now we need a solution.

In discussions with the leadership in Norman Wells and the business community, they cannot afford to go to work. Projects are being cancelled at that rate. And you can clearly see that that rate is a chain reaction to the whole community. Our housing corporation has 53 units that require the fuel truck to come and deliver fuel. Our Indigenous airline, North Wright Airways, provides staff housing. They have 34 units that require the same heating fuel product, and they are on the supply chain for the fuel truck. So their O and M goes up. So does the cargo rates, freight rates, charter rates, and scheduled flight tickets. This government, indirectly, is going to be impacted by that.

There is a number of medical travel clients coming out of the Sahtu. Those ticket prices are going to be the realization of increases which we are going to have to see supplementary adjustments to support that. So as I mentioned, and I just give one conclusion that, you know, it's a crisis. We need more than four questions. To discuss the magnitude of the situation goes far beyond four questions.

I think my constituents would respect this government standing behind that crisis to similar situations that happened in the past in other areas of our Northwest Territories. And who's to say, it might be your community next. Maybe not this winter, maybe not this coming spring, maybe not this coming summer, but who's to say when that's going to come. So given the fact that we are all together and we're standing unanimously to address this situation and to debate and fully understand what tools in the toolbox we have for the solution, understanding the solution is more importantly than understanding the problems because you've come to a collective discussion on making an informed decision once you understand the magnitude of the problem.

So therefore, I'm very glad to share the voices of concern from the Sahtu, and I welcome, and I respect, every individual in this Chamber today that stands behind that endorsement.

The local leadership in Norman Wells have issued a state of emergency, a humanitarian state of emergency. I expect this government to stand by that direction. We have said time and time again we want to work with the people that put us in this Chamber of decisions. I'm not standing here defending my household; I'm standing here defending the people that put me here. And those people are directly impacted financially and stressfully and the domino effect of stressful burden to the household is just unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I think I've kind of covered the magnitude of the problem, the creation of the problem, airlifting that fuel in, the fuel is being trained to Enterprise, put in the truck, comes here to Yellowknife, and the air barge takes it from here to Norman Wells. So that's the mobilization of fuels. And more heads are better than one, I'm told on many occasions, and I look forward to my colleagues' expression of solutions to the situation that we have ourselves in. I can't stress enough it is a crisis. Not an emergency, it is a crisis. We need solutions now. Minus 30 below weather are coming. People have turned their thermostats up already. So therefore, considering the demand for resolution, I'm hoping this government would stand behind supporting the state of emergency and come to a final financial conclusion. Mahsi.

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

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand here today and support this motion, support the seconder, my colleague from the Sahtu, and to support the people from -- the residents of the town of Norman Wells. This is, indeed, a crisis. We look at \$40 a gigajoule of gas in Inuvik and I think that's a crisis. I can only imagine, to pay \$6,000 to fill the fuel tank. It's going to be a crisis. It's a crisis now as temperatures get lower.

Mr. Speaker, the -- I mean, the precedent of -- if you want to call it bailing out a community or bailing someone out, we've done this in the past. We've spent an additional \$30 million to build a windmill in Inuvik that's reducing greenhouse gas emissions yet not really providing any relief to the power grid up there for the residents. We provide -- we subsidize power every year, you know, in our communities. When the barge didn't get into Sachs Harbour, Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago, we -- the NWT stepped up and we flew all

the materials in there, including building materials going in there to build homes for local construction companies that had to go in there that didn't make the barge. So stepping up and doing something about this emergency now, I think, you know, we have no choice. Would it be great to get that -- to be able to get that funding from the federal government? Of course it would. But, again, we can't wait as my colleague from Norman Wells, from the Sahtu, has said. We need to act on this now. Whether that means, you know -- and I've talked about with our -- with my colleagues about how we could do this. I don't think by doing rebates to individuals or businesses. I think the administrative burden on that would be too much. We'd likely spend a million dollars there alone just doing that. I think, you know, the simplest way to do this thing is to reach out to Imperial Oil who is the provider in there. I don't know, I mean they typically barge their product in. Could they have trucked it on the winter road this time? Likely. We knew that the barge wasn't going to get in because we own the barging company. You know, I don't know what information Imperial Oil had. I know they've been a good corporate citizen in Norman Wells for many years. In my opinion we look at the cost, we find out from the provider what the additional cost was to get that fuel in there, we look at that number, we cut that cheque, and we ensure that the residents are paying the same as they always paid for the heating fuel and gasoline in the community. It's simple. We had an issue last week where Canadian North couldn't land in Yellowknife, went to -- couldn't land in Norman Wells because there was no fuel, ended up having to -- I think they ended up in Fort Smith at that time. So, again, to me we have to come up with a solution. It's not something we can delay. It's not something we can say let's reach out to Ottawa and see if we can get funding for, Mr. Speaker. It's something we need to do now. And I'm happy to support this motion. I'm hoping that as a government we step up, we look at precedents, we look at money we've spent previously on similar situations, and we get it done and make sure that when the minus 30 hits in about a month here, that people are not paying that much money to heat their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll speak really quick. I rise to also give support to my colleague in the Sahtu region. We're talking about the fuel crisis at issue that was brought into the community for the Sahtu region on an annual basis, but to pay \$6,000 for

a fuel tank is just -- it's just not acceptable. Beyond our control through climate change, this year the water levels are really down. Because of that, MTS was cancelled and all the barges that were earmarked for the Sahtu region or to deliver fuel and groceries and all the goods and services have been cancelled. So, Mr. Speaker, the -- and on top of all that, there was a forest fire in the Sahtu region that, you know, had a huge impact in the Fort Good Hope area. And while that was happening, it also took up a lot of the fuel that was needed in the -- from Norman Wells to Fort Good Hope and so on. But right now, the high costs the GNWT replace the fuel that's in this community just to get us by until the winter road kicks in. But right now, Mr. Speaker, it's -- to pay at a higher cost and then pass on those costs to the consumers in the Sahtu region is just not right. It doesn't sit well with me. I'm deeply concerned about that. And at the same time, you know, we have to figure out a way as a government to step up to give support to my colleague in the Sahtu region and all the members that are there. Sometimes we have to put our differences aside, and we have to come together as a government to give support. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Sahtu region. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, we'll take a brief two-minute break.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Richard Edjericon): Thank you, colleagues. I will continue on now with the debate. Next on my list I have is from the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my colleague from the Sahtu. The people of the Sahtu are hard hit right now, specifically in Norman Wells.

I find the Member for Sahtu words quite chilling, it could be your community next. And I think -- and that's, of course, not disparaging against my honourable friend but I think the point is very well felt. After, you know, an unprecedented season of wildfires where 70 percent or more of the territory was evacuated, I think we all have that shared sense of anxiety that we are -- our lifestyles in the Northwest Territories are balanced on a knife edge, and all it takes is one shock to tip the scales one way or the other. \$6,000 in fuel costs. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker? I certainly can't. I couldn't afford to be in the Northwest Territories if that happened. And it's not just -- this is a crisis. There can be no other word for it, and a humanitarian crisis. This isn't a political stunt or a rhetorical flourish. This is a humanitarian crisis, the kind of magnitude that we see after a

hurricane or an earthquake. The chaos that people feel in their community and the sense of unease. That anxiety isn't going to be solved by finding someone to blame. What we need now as the Member -- as my friend said, are solutions. And the solution is quite clear to me: We need to bail out this community. We need to provide that financial relief.

And when you think of it in real terms -- I did the calculations -- the total request is -- we have the -- the government has brought forward \$1.8 million in a relief program for businesses, which is welcomed. But the \$6.6 million that the community's now asking for is 0.3 percent of our total budget. 0.3 percent. Of course, all these things add up, and we have to prioritize. This is something I'm happy to prioritize. And we are -- we have the convenience of sitting right now and being able to bring forward appropriations on an emergency basis. I mean, you could spend via special warrant as well. But what's required now is not to apportion blame. It's to provide relief to the people of Norman Wells otherwise the people aren't going to stay in the community. I've spoken with my friend, and he tells me people are saying they will leave, and they will not look back. Because they can't. It's not that they want to leave. They can't stay. And no one should be forced into that situation in the Northwest Territories.

Everything is local in politics, they say, and in the Northwest Territories things are even more local. It doesn't matter that we live in such a vast territory. We all know each other in communities. We all feel the same thing; some more than others. And this affordability crisis, there's so many words we've heard that apply to it. Unacceptable, unimaginable, unthinkable, unprecedented. And all these things are true. And now the onus is on us as leaders of the territory to solve this crisis.

And you know, this discussion started yesterday behind closed doors, and I think it was a good discussion, and I'm glad we're doing it out on the floor today outside of the caucus Chamber. We have great discussions all the time where everyone jumps in, both sides of the House, but the public doesn't get the benefit of hearing them very often. This is a rare opportunity for all Members to speak and to share their perspective. And I hope we hear about the challenges that our friends on the other side of the House face in executing their duties as Cabinet Ministers. I know it's hard to balance budgets. I know it's hard to be responsible for those portfolios. But when there's a crisis, you must rise to meet the moment. And this is a crisis. This is a humanitarian crisis. There's no other words for it.

The Member from Sahtu has been raising this with us, his colleagues, for months now. This is not new information, but it has steadily gotten worse and steadily gotten to the point where we can't ignore it anymore. I hope that our colleagues and our leaders in Ottawa are listening and that they look at Hansard, and they see the unprecedented nature of this debate. This hasn't happened in recent records to have an emergency debate. And this matter, this crisis, is being elevated to that point for that exact reason, that we need people to listen, we need people to understand the crisis, the dire circumstances that Norman Wells and the people of the Sahtu are in. And it doesn't matter that where -- you know, and it's all the -- all the territory has to come together. It doesn't matter what constituency we represent. It matters that we are standing together when people are in need. And I know that if my -- that my constituents in Range Lake were faced with a similar crisis, that my friends up and down the Valley would be standing at my side shoulder to shoulder to help them as well. And that is what the North does best, we come together in a crisis, and we help people. You know, our compassion knows no bounds and our resilience knows no bounds. We can overcome this, and we can find the resources. And if it means we need to readjust other priorities, then so be it.

But as I say, now is not the time to apportion blame. Now is not the time to ask another level of government to solve the problem. We need to rise to the challenge today and deal with it now, deal with it urgently. We can figure out how to pay for it later. Whether it's a shift in other priorities or projects that have to be scrapped, but now is the time for that relief to flow. We don't need to overthink this. Let's cut a cheque. Let's cut it today. Let's give the people of the Sahtu the relief they desperately need and save a community. Because that's where we're at. That's what a humanitarian crisis is. We do not want to see another community destroyed by climate change. Maybe not physically, but the fabric -- the social fabric of that community is under threat right now. And we can't afford that in the Northwest Territories, not again. And I won't be privy to it -- or I won't be a part of that if I can help it. And although these are just words today, Mr. Speaker, I hope they find -- they meet the mark and meet the moment and encourage our decision makers at all levels of government to make the right choice and to provide the relief that's so desperately needed for Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member, to the debate. I'm going to go to the Member from YK Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think if I remember correctly, I was going to try to look it up, but there's the Chinese character that refers to crisis, and comprises of two words if I remember correctly. It refers to danger but it also refers to opportunity. And to me, that's some of what we're facing here, is there's a lot of danger going on there but there's an opportunity to change that story to avert the further humanitarian crisis. I honestly don't think that that's an overstatement. It resonates with me. It resonates with anyone I talk to about this particular situation. And I think that, you know, when you're at the grocery store here in Yellowknife and you're bumping into people and they're talking about Norman Wells and how they afford food in Norman Wells -- I mean, we could talk about all communities but I mean, when they're talking about it right now, that tells me it's an important issue even in Yellowknife. I mean, you don't have to go very far to run into people to talk about this. But the point I'm making is people are talking about it.

I mean, when Norman Wells called a state of emergency and they need the department to help exercise that ability to get those authorities and opportunities that it creates. And I want the government to get behind them. They -- you know, and I think Member -- the Member for Sahtu is right. I mean, you know, we can continue to define the problem but we actually know what the problem is. We should be talking about, really at the end of the day, who is bringing what to the table.

I'd like to use the famous analogy I'm trying to keep alive which is if we were talking about kilometers and highway, currently right now as it's scheduled at just over \$6 million, \$6.6 million, whatever the number round about there is, it's really about two to three kilometers of highway. Who wouldn't support helping the families, the businesses, the community at large, for two to three kilometers of highway in the Northwest Territories? It resonates in a manner that really hurts and scares. You know, the fact that we're discussing it today is an enormous opportunity for all of us to address and send the message to the people of the Sahtu.

I've heard -- I've had some people tell me -- that people are considering the option of leaving Norman Wells. It's not because they think the town has -- they don't want to be there. It's not a case like that at all. The fact is they just can't afford to be there anymore. I mean, I don't think you have to -- like the old -- for those of us old enough to remember -- unfortunately, I'm starting to be one of them -- I remember the town of Pine Point having the sign when the town closed up. Now, it closed for different reasons but I get that visually -- visual

statement of someone spray painting a sheet of plywood saying last one here, turn off the lights. I worry, affordability, it's going to be the last one here to turn off the gas type of thing.

I mean, as my colleagues have all said -- I mean, I could run through the House, but we've already heard it, \$6,000 to fill up a fuel tank, and we know you have to fill at least one a month when it gets cold, who has that kind of job that can pay for that? That is just completely beyond any measure.

I like to think about numbers, Mr. Speaker, and one of the things that I often think about is, like, how do we reflect on this? Although I don't have the specific number at my finger when I want to say this, so let's view it in the essence of context as opposed to absolute accuracy. But we know that the Jackfish plant, because of low water, has been running, and someone has to foot that bill of the gas, and how long has that been going. And often I've heard -- although I haven't inquired because it didn't really matter -- it's a bad situation. But I've often heard that it's \$50,000 a day in fuel, and they have to have three sets of trucks constantly rolling through on the road to do that. So, again, not worrying about necessarily the absolute accuracy but the principle of it is it would only take three to four months of running Jackfish to equal the cost that the people in the Sahtu need in the sense of relief.

This Assembly votes for subsidy programs all the time. We don't like to call it that sometimes, but we do. We subsidize education. We subsidize health. We subsidize seniors. We subsidize people who need public housing. Like, it comes in many forms. That's what public governments do. And it's important that we use our resources as wisely as we can to try to help as many people as we can. And would we not be able to find this type of money within our budget? As rightly said, it represents point 3 of our current budget. I mean, it's -- it's well within an easy threshold, if not a rounding error, on our budget. We could do this. And I would say that it would be a shame if we didn't rise to the occasion.

So I go back to this: What are we bringing to the table?

The urgency of discussion is saying, folks, collectively, let's get excited to say what I could do and you can do and we can do to help the people of Norman Wells. Because without that, there will be one person who spray paints that sign and says last person out, turn off the gas.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to emphasize that we could probably talk about this as the proverbial cows come home. The

problem is we can't wait anymore. The people of Sahtu can't wait anymore. The people of the Northwest Territories want something done. This is not a perfect solution so please don't think it is, but sometimes you got to accept good at the cost of avoiding perfect because we know perfect can take a long time and it can threaten it. And as I can see right now -- I'm just shown a picture, sorry, Mr. Speaker, I still have time. I'm seeing a picture on a text that there's no more fuel in Norman Wells. So whatever resources they're in a competitive market and have just become way more expensive. And when you're flying fuel in to fly it out, in other words flying fuel in for planes just to fly out, I mean, it gets pretty expensive. So if the town no longer has fuel, based on this text picture I just saw, it's a real crisis and we need every hand on deck saying what can we do with housing, how can those folks help there, how can we direct energy, what can the folks in MACA do to bring to the table to find solutions? What can ITI or education do from their point of view? What can the Minister of Finance find ways to find money in budgets or redirect things or even say can we delay things so we can help respond this? What can ECE do? You know, that's the type of attitude, everyone has to say we're willing to give something up to help people in the Sahtu region. Everybody's got to find something. And I think if we all recognize that, that our goal is to collectively solve this problem, I think we're halfway there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Member from YK Centre. Next I have is the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will add my voice to support the Member for Sahtu and the community of Norman Wells. Much has been said already, and I'm going to keep my comments brief.

About a year ago I was talking to people in my riding during the election campaign and we spoke endlessly of chronic and persistent cost of living issues then. I think my key message was the cost of living is skyrocketing, and people are struggling to make ends meet. The Sahtu's crisis puts this into stark perspective, Mr. Speaker. This is an exceptional problem in our territory that deserves immediate action and relief. Others have already said much about solutions, and I think the MLA for Sahtu's voice should be the loudest in what we're contemplating today.

I also want to echo my colleague from Range Lake's note that he hopes that the federal government are listening. Norman Wells is a canary in the coal mine for exponential costs that we are facing due to crises that are

hastened by climate change. I fear that this is a preview of more to come without proper resourcing, and I would urge us to act quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there any other Members from this side of the House that -- I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think, you know, a lot's already been said as the previous Member said. I mean, I don't want to fully reiterate comments that are made but certainly offer my support to my colleague from the Sahtu and the people in Norman Wells. I know this is a difficult -- a difficult situation to be in and I can't imagine, you know, facing costs like that and trying to figure out how you're going to balance the bills because the bills don't balance.

Something I wanted to speak to that I haven't heard much of yet, so I thought I'd just add some points rather than kind of reiterating ones that have been made is just, you know, the Member for Sahtu kind of spoke to the need for short-term solutions and need for long-term planning, so I wanted to speak a bit to the long-term because it's something I have been thinking a lot about. And I think long-term, we really need to be thinking hard about what we're doing to help build resiliency of our small communities, particularly the ones up the Valley, and reduce dependency of these communities on these barge shipments, reducing dependency on the need for all this fuel coming in from the south, because ultimately that's the problem that we're facing here is this dependency, and we need to be building the independence of our communities. So I've been thinking about what we have or perhaps a better way of putting it is what we haven't been doing to prevent things like this from happening. So in my mind, I think, you know, speaking to the current crisis and the low water levels, perhaps that isn't something we could have predicted, but the high cost of living, climate change, these are things that we've known about for a very long time.

You know, I think back to when I was a young student at Aurora College, I did a tech project where I was investigating the biomass potential of the Mackenzie Valley and I was out, you know, with my equipment measuring willows and trying to quantify, using some software, the amount of biomass potential in the Mackenzie Valley, and it's enormous. We have huge potential for heating fuel here in the North, and it's a local source. And that's something that I think is really important. And I really wish when we're facing a crisis like this that have put a bit more time and thought into -- and maybe some urgency behind putting solutions like that in

place so that these communities don't end up in these situations. So that's something that's really been on my mind. I think that looking forward in the long-term, we've got to be forward thinking and not be getting caught off guard by these things that I think, you know, the low water levels was unpredictable, but the fact that cost of living was going to come to a head is predictable. It is. We know that this has been an issue for a very long time. It's an issue in my community also. And, you know, I spoke to a lot of people at the doors during the election. A lot of people were raising concerns about the carbon tax, about cost of living, about, you know, the pressures that they're facing and the decisions that they're having to make, the difficult decisions that they're have to make when they're looking at their bills and having difficulty making ends meet. And I still hear from residents about being able to make ends meet, and it's really difficult to hear, and it definitely gives me a sense of urgency. And you know, when I think about the carbon tax revenues that are currently being brought in, I think the first and fairest and best use for these, these kind of revenues, should be used to help people transition away from the fuels that are providing the high cost in the first place. And when I think about the potential for biomass and other solutions in the Sahtu, in the Mackenzie Valley, you know, there's opportunities here to build community resiliency, reduce living costs, reduce dependency on shipments from the south, and create permanent jobs and an economy that's centered locally with local resources. That's a huge opportunity. That would be a really positive thing for many of our communities, and it would also help us build resiliency against crisis because I think that we need to be thinking as leaders how can we prevent crisis, not just respond to it. That really needs to be -- we need to be ten steps ahead as opposed to playing catch-up. So I -- you know, right now, we're not in the position of being ten steps ahead. What we're talking about is a moment of having to catch up. But what I want us to get to is a spot where we are saying we saw this problem coming, we know that there's solutions that we can put in place, these are solutions that could build resiliency in our communities, and we are putting the work in to making sure that that happens.

So that's really all I wanted to say was that's kind of what's on my mind when I'm thinking about long-term solutions. You know, there's -- there's advantages and disadvantages in the territory, and both of them have to do with the size of communities that we're dealing with in a lot of cases. It's very expensive to service communities over a vast land mass, but one of the advantages that we have is that the communities are quite small

and so solutions like district heat are, relatively speaking, easier to put in place in smaller communities than they would be in huge cities. You know, when I think about the challenges that, you know, giant cities are trying to face in terms of building the kind of resiliency I'm talking about, it's a huge challenge. In the Northwest Territories, we're talking about relatively small communities. So I think actually think there's a lot of opportunity there, so we need to grasp those opportunities, help communities build their resiliency, help build up the economy of these communities locally, and I think that that's one of the long-term solutions. So that's one of the things that was on my mind.

But I did want to say that I'm supportive of us getting solutions in place. I think the situation that the people in Norman Wells are in is just simply untenable. You know, Mr. McNeely's been very eloquent and very determined in making sure that MLAs are well aware of this mounting crisis, and as the MLA for -- we're all forgetting the different districts today. The MLA for Range Lake pointed out the -- you know, the MLA for the Sahtu has been very vocal about this, has been, you know, e-mailing Members all through the summer. Like, this is not something that he's been quiet about. So all credit to that MLA for representing his constituency while he certainly hasn't been silent. And I do support us taking whatever measures we need to support people in Norman Wells and make sure that their costs are covered. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to thank the Member from Frame Lake speaking to the debate. Next on my list, I got Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this press news release of October 16th from the Government of the Northwest Territories, it states: Climate change is a serious threat to our territory's economic, environmental, social, and culture held with the NWT. Experiencing rapid warming at up to four times the global rate and an increase in extreme weather event.

And I do sympathize, Mr. Speaker, with my colleague and the people from the Sahtu region where with the high cost of living. A lot of people that I know, they're working really hard. They're working to pay bills. And a lot of them do need fuel for heating and to provide food for the family to offset the costs. And living in the small communities, in the small remote communities, it's difficult for a lot of people. Even in my region, I have two communities, two fly-in communities. You know, with Wekweeti -- with the community of Wekweeti, the ice road was opened for one week and not enough time to bring in a lot of

supplies. So for long-term solutions, what I would like to see is that -- yes, I will -- I do support this motion. But what I would like to see is that for long-term solutions, we need to start doing -- think about what to do with connecting the whole of the NWT where possible because even if we built more roads to small communities, we won't be in this crisis situations. We need to do more for small remote communities. And, yes, I do agree with a lot of the comments that were made where just because it doesn't affect me, doesn't mean that, you know, we cannot help and support. I do help and -- I do support and sympathize with the people of the Sahtu region because a lot of them are our friends and a lot of them are our families, and they're families with kids. You know, we have to think about that. And I do agree that I don't think I would like to see Norman Wells where at one time it was a thriving community just like my colleagues have said. We don't want to see it become a ghost town. And if it happens to that, how many other communities are going to follow? Especially the fly-in communities that rely on winter -- on the ice road, on the winter road. So therefore I really do support all-season road, and I will -- as long as I'm here, I'm going to keep advocating for all-season road to all the remote -- to the small remote communities. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. To the debate, next on my list is the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too are in support of my colleague from the Sahtu region as he speaks. As we are here, the Sahtu is dealing with the crisis, like my colleague just stated that the town of Norman Wells is out of fuel, so the residents need this government to step up and deal with this crisis.

This summer when Fort Good Hope was experiencing wildfire, Fort McPherson residents stepped up and they provided food and other essentials, and they boated it down to Fort Good Hope to assist them. That's the kind of help that we provide for each other no matter what region we are from. So we have to put all those aside. Just imagine the full-time employees are having a hard time dealing with having to pay for fuel. They can't make ends meet. These circumstances are different too because we have people in that region who are on the fixed income, the elders and the disabled who can't even meet this arrangement. So we have to make every effort to have our government meet these needs of the Sahtu.

It's evident that the Sahtu region will be losing resource people because they can't afford to stay within the Norman Wells or other communities in the Sahtu region. These are

essential people that the residents of the Sahtu need on a daily basis. So, you know, with the low water levels over the past two years, there should have been a contingency plan put in place so we can deal with -- have something ready, readily available for any region that may have to deal with some emergency measures such as Sahtu's dealing with now. We knew about the low water levels a couple years ago and something should have been in place at this time. Every day we wait, we put the lives of the residents of the Sahtu in jeopardy. So we need all levels of government to step up, and starting with the Government of the Northwest Territories, to start making plans to help the residents of the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. To the debate, next I got on my list here is the Member from YK North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker -- Mr. Substitute Speaker. Okay, first, I want to acknowledge that definitely this is a crisis. When people in Norman Wells are in danger of losing their housing because they can't afford to heat it this winter, we already have enough of a homelessness crisis and a housing crisis in this territory. We certainly cannot afford to make it any worse. But to avoid repetition, I just will try to focus on some points that haven't been mentioned yet by my colleagues.

So there are two different issues here. First is the issue of how we provide immediate relief to residents and businesses that are based in Norman Wells; and second, what is the longer-term solution going forward so we assure that we don't get ourselves into this situation again. I would argue that the two issues are actually linked because the way we choose to respond now to the immediate crisis will set precedents that do impact our longer-term options impasse. And I want to emphasize this is not about blame, but we need to understand how we got into this situation before we can figure out how to get out of it and how to avoid repeating this crisis.

So while the GNWT was planning ahead for projected low water levels and was trucking in fuel to all the other Sahtu communities over last year's winter road, Imperial Oil, the main fuel supplier to Norman Wells, apparently did not have the same incentive to plan ahead. Undoubtedly, they incurred significant extra costs by flying in fuel but we don't actually know, we can't verify, we don't have a regulatory mechanism, to help us know exactly what those extra costs were and to ensure that price increases are kept to the bare minimum rather than adding to Imperial Oil's profits. And we know there's a long history of large corporations that are in monopoly positions

taking the opportunity during crisis situations to jack up prices and not lower them again. We saw that during the COVID crisis with grocery stores significantly raising food prices, and they have not gone back down. And even our federal government still has not been able to hold them accountable for those increased prices.

So the problem that I see with cutting a cheque to Imperial Oil is that we have no way to guarantee that they still won't unfairly raise prices from what they were previously while pocketing some of the government's subsidy as profit. They could cite all sorts of reasons that they need to raise their prices at any time, such as inflation, anything else, and how would we know if those reasons are valid? So I fear that we wouldn't have any recourse if the prices still go up even after full government subsidies to any increases that we expect at this point. And if we signal to a private company that's in a monopoly position that this government has bottomless pockets to subsidize whatever is necessary in terms of fuel costs, we are putting everyone in a very dangerous situation. So whatever we do, we need to set clear limits on the subsidies we can provide to Norman Wells.

In terms of the longer term solutions going forward, as I indicated earlier in my Member's statement, we do have opportunities to more ambitiously support, first, energy efficiency and conservation measures, as well as the transition to renewable fuel such as the wood stoves and pellet stoves that could help end the community's dependence on oil and diesel. And to prevent the situation from occurring again, I would propose that the GNWT could, and perhaps should, take over fuel services for Norman Wells and any other community where there is a fuel monopoly. The GNWT fuel services division already provides fuel to communities where there is no private market, where no private suppliers would step in and offer that fuel. I would argue that there's also no private market in communities where there is a monopoly. Because a monopoly is not a market. So when it comes to a product such as heating fuel that is needed to meet people's basic needs, it's such an essential product, the GNWT cannot continue to be put in the position of needing to bail out a huge multinational corporation that is in a monopoly position and controls people's ability to meet their basic needs simply, perhaps, because that company has failed to plan ahead and that has such a huge impact on the opportunity and its ability to meet its basic needs.

So I don't in this moment have all the solutions to this crisis and certainly we didn't have much notice of this particular debate, but those are the thoughts that I wanted to offer by way of

caution as we move forward and try to figure out a way out of this crisis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Member from YK North. To the debate, next on my list here I have is the Member from the Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too -- I lived in Norman Wells a few years ago, and people probably know that I lived in Norman Wells, and even back then the cost of living was high. So I cannot imagine what it's like today. And to know that right now that Norman Wells has run out of fuel, that's a crisis, that's an emergency situation. And there's no time to play around with people's lives today right now, to try to figure out -- wiggle around and figure out whether or not this company's doing that, that company's doing this. There's no time to figure that out. If this was your family, what would you do? That's what I'm -- that's what I'm thinking about. So \$6,000 a month for fuel, no water, no barge. Norman Wells is a predominantly independent community. They don't -- people there are probably the most independent people. To ask for help, takes them a lot to ask for help. People know that, know that about Norman Wells. So if they could fix it, they would. They're in a crisis now. This has been going on for six months, no barge, no -- it's been unheard of. So right now, if you had no food, if you have no gas, if you have no oil, you're going to starve and you're going to freeze. It's cold outside. Not everybody's using propane or pellet stoves. And I'm not going to ask people to go out and cut wood in this day and age. We have to ask fuel -- it could be done, it could be delivered. So I'm not going to ask people to go out and cut wood today. It's cold out, it's getting cold out. So we have to have a discussion. We have to have this discussion. It's an emergency for the people in Norman Wells. Let's look at setting some clear limits, seeing what we can do, how we can do it, and when we could do it, not -- it's got to happen soon. That's -- this is the reality of this crisis situation right now. That's what I'm seeing.

I will support Norman Wells. I'll support the people of Norman Wells. They're asking for some help. I'll do that. They're -- it's just like us, I would do that for us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Member from the Deh Cho. Next on my list, I got the Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not everyone might be watching would have seen although they would have heard the vote. I do want to note and make the point that Cabinet although didn't speak initially to the motion did make a choice

together that we would stand and support having this motion brought to the floor. We wanted to have this opportunity for everyone, including Members on this side of the House, with me, as an opportunity to speak to voice the recognition of what is happening in Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, everyone is voicing support for Norman Wells. I hope there's absolutely no doubt that everyone supports Norman Wells and has concern for the situation. I want to lay out a bit of the work that is happening already within government and some of the steps that I think are coming on the horizon of what will be happening next.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is not only a crisis in Norman Wells. Norman Wells, of course, is the hub community. They service the region of the Sahtu. When they are affected, the entire Sahtu community is affected. And I made that point to Imperial Oil when I spoke to them this morning, to just lay out that context, that this is going to affect the entire Sahtu. The more that one region is impacted, others are as well. Just as we saw last year with the evacuation of wildfires. This territory is deeply interconnected, and something that's affecting one small community affects us all.

Mr. Speaker, this is not as easy as just saying write a cheque. A cheque to whom and a cheque to what amount? Mr. Speaker, we want to find a solution that supports residents so that they can stay in their homes, stay in their homes comfortably, heat their homes through the winter, and do so in a way that is sustainable until we get the winter roads in for the resupply. But this is a crisis. It's a crisis that's affecting the whole of the Northwest Territories. It is having a huge financial impact on the Northwest Territories. Low water is affecting us in terms of the barge season. It's affected us in terms of there being a \$14 million loss in terms of the revenue we would normally get. But it also affects us in terms of the ferries that have struggled this summer, in terms of roads that are struggling. In every single corner of this territory, there is a need to repair permafrost slumpage up to Tuktoyaktuk, challenges on the Dempster. It impacts the delivery of programs and services and contracts. We are in a dire situation right now in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, and we are feeling it financially.

NTPC is feeling it deeply right now in terms of what's happening with low water and the costs that are being incurred by the government just to try to keep power rates at the rate that they're at which is the highest rate of anywhere in Canada. We're subsidizing folks down to being at a Yellowknife rate. And I know this isn't

necessarily about power rates but, Mr. Speaker, if Imperial Oil pulls out of Norman Wells, I'll tell you it's going to be about power rates real past because NTPC's going to be asked to supply. So there's all sorts of crises, and there's so many of them that are interconnected, and the players are interconnected. We can't just look at it as one thing as government. It is our responsibility to look at the whole of the territory, the whole of the crisis, how did we get here, how will we get out, and what's going to happen next. So I wish I could just simply stand and say don't worry, we're going to solve it tomorrow. But there is a real situation happening right now that we have to look at holistically as a government to make sure that we get this right, and we get it right into the long term.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do want to lay out a little of what we've done right now to date. It started lasting year. It started almost a year ago when we first saw that because of the barge situation in 2023 we were going to have to airlift, and it was the Government of the Northwest Territories that scrambled, that coordinated, and that found a way to make sure that the fuel got into Norman Wells and to the Sahtu region after that barge season so that nobody ran out of fuel before we got the winter roads in. We then were able to accelerate the winter roads and beef them up and make it so that we could plan for more trucks, more deliveries, we got the fuel deliveries into all of the fuel services division serviced communities. Fort Good Hope had to have an airlift because they were at the front lines of a wildfire yet again this year. That cost is being borne through the disaster assistance fund, no change. So the other Sahtu communities are seeing no change to their fuel rates since the June update after the winter road season. All of their fuel rates are expected to remain stable until they get the winter roads in this year.

We're already planning for the winter roads. And all of this costs money, Mr. Speaker, and it's costing extra money right now because everything's -- everything's been challenging and to bring those roads up to the level that they're at to be able to have more trucks on them, heavier trucks on them, more loads go in, it took a lot more work.

Mr. Speaker, we remained in contact, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Department of Infrastructure specifically, remained in contact with Imperial since last year. We had a lot of good meetings with them when we were still coordinating the airlifts last Christmas. Those contacts were very helpful. We've maintained them, and we stayed in touch all the way through our resupply last year up to the time when the barges were cancelled and

leading to the moment when the barges were, in fact, cancelled right to the very end as we were getting information from the coast guard, from our senior captains, we were not delaying in getting that information in to any of the other partners. So folks in the Sahtu region, again, a lot of them had already planned through the winter road season, the different stores and suppliers had planned to try to get as much up as they could. And we tried to in every way possible to provide that assistance.

And then, Mr. Speaker, that brings me a little closer to now. So we certainly have known as of this summer that there was likely going to be a resupply by air going in this -- going in sometime this fall. Quite frankly, I would have expected it would be much later in the fall. I'm saddened that it is this early because that extends the period of time that we're going to be dealing with the cost of fuel coming in by flight and not having been able to wait until the winter roads. So ITI's met a number of times in the community, talked to a number of the suppliers, tried to identify a way where we could provide a relief package that would keep the costs down in the community, keep the costs of supplies down in the community, and that's where the \$1.8 million program came in so that we could offer that to folks, to the business community, and they can then pass that on by keeping their costs down rather than passing all of their costs on to residents. We've also now are in a position to say that the rates for the senior home heating subsidy are going to be going up monthly so that ensures that all seniors who qualify for senior home heating subsidies will continue to see fully 80 percent of their costs covered. And in addition, Mr. Speaker, the income assistance programs are going to ensure that they will be paying actual heating costs and making sure that their measurements are attaching to the local market basket measure which is going to need to be adjusted when these costs go up. So those things are happening for the residents in the community as well.

This summer, Mr. Speaker, we airlifted 90 loads into Tulita to continue the work on the Tulita health care centre. Not only do we need that project, but we need the jobs to keep everyone employed and keep community employment up in the region. All of this comes with costs.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about how easy all this is, and it should be simple, but, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about responsibility.

It is not about blame. There are residents who need to heat their homes as we're heading into winter. It's not about blame. But, Mr. Speaker, there is some responsibility here, and we

certainly have, as a government, done everything to make sure that we were supplying the communities that we're responsible for, communicating with the contractors for the communities where we're not. We want to ensure, and we have to ensure, that we use public dollars responsibly. As I've said, our fiscal situation is dire. Climate change challenges, emergencies, crises, continue to befall us every year, every summer, in multiple communities at a time, and we have to have the capacity to respond. So when we do respond, we need to ask ourselves, who am I going to get that cheque to? Is it going to be on an income threshold? Will it be different if someone has used energy efficiency? Will it be different if someone has mitigated their costs? Do I provide cheques to companies that are going to continue to earn a profit on the sale of fuels? Or do I find some other pathway forward by which we can ensure that people are heating their homes?

Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't want to be seen to be blaming Imperial Oil overtly. I do want to question responsibility. I do think we've asked some good questions here today. We did have a good call with them today. We put it to them that this is a time to step up. As someone who's been in that community for 40 years drawing oil out, and now we need that oil to go back in. And, Mr. Speaker, they did take this away, and I'm expecting -- we've asked to meet with them again. I expect we'll be meeting with them again in the next few days when they've had a chance to go and see what opportunities they might have.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is actually a government -- the only government, not this government -- that's made any profit or any royalty off the Norman Wells oil field over the last 40 years. And, again, to their credit, they marshalled last week Members from multiple departments to meet with myself and Minister Cleveland and MLA from the Sahtu. We sat with them for a long time, talked through the challenge, talked through the problems, put to them the estimate here of \$6.8 million, but really putting to them the idea that they need to help us find a path forward to support the residents who are going to be affected. Again, we've seen some follow up from them already just as of today, but I'm expecting that more is to come in the days coming.

So, Mr. Speaker, with all of that said, I'm left, again -- I want to emphasize for the residents that there is a lot happening. There is a lot of plates that are in the air. We are keeping them spinning. It is urgent. That's -- we all stood today to respect and the fact of its urgency. The asks are in. But I am looking to some sense of

responsibility certainly with the federal government in particular. We are in a dire state, and the idea of moving a project and cancelling a project, Mr. Speaker, this budget was -- is very difficult to say where we cut a project, which project do we cut, which program do we turn back on. We are in dire need up here. Every project is urgent. Every project is on a risk base scenario. There's not an easy one to move or to cut, and so I am looking to colleagues in the federal government and to partners in Imperial Oil, and I want to assure them that -- the members of the Sahtu -- residents of the Sahtu, we're going to keep looking to them, keep working with them until we find a path forward. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Minister of Finance. Any other Ministers want to speak to the debate? Seeing no further hands, okay, thank you. Seeing no further wanting to speak, I will adjourn the debate and return to the orders of the day. I want to go to written questions. Written questions. Seeing no written questions. I'm going to go to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two returns to written questions. I have a return to Written Question number 6-20(1) which was a question asked by the Member for Range Lake on May 30th, 2024, regarding agency nurses.

X

Mr. Speaker, I have a response to Written Question number 7-20(1) asked by the Member for Monfwi on June 5th, 2024, regarding housing debt among elders and seniors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

X

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to continue on now. I'm going to go to replies to the Commissioner's address. Seeing none. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees on the review of bills. I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act.

Bill 8 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 12th, 2024, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. Through the committee's review, the committee received 11 written submissions from Northwest Territories' students. We also held a public hearing in Yellowknife where we heard from the bill's

sponsor, one member of the public and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. All in all, the committee heard overwhelming support from the public for this bill.

The committee held a clause-by-clause review on October 8, 2024 and, Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Bill 8 stands referred to Committee of the Whole.

Reports of standing and special committees on the review of bills. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Oh sorry, I wasn't sure if I should wait for the clock. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2024.

Bill 7 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on June 12th, 2024, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. The standing committee held a clause-by-clause review of the bill on October 2nd, 2024, with the Minister of Justice. The committee moved to amend four clauses in Bill 7 at the clause-by-clause review. The Minister of Justice concurred with all four motions.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2024, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to reports of standing and special committees on the review of bills. Thank you.

Bill 7 stands referred to -- sorry, Bill 8 stands to referred to Committee of the Whole, and Bill 7 has been referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Reports of the standing and special committee. And the Member for Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Committee Report 9-20(1): Standing Committee on Social Development report on Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to the

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. We'll take just a short break.

--- SHORT RECESS.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its report on Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, and commends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, is a Private Member's Bill that proposes one change to the current Act – to amend paragraph 10(3)(8) of the Student Financial Assistance Act by striking out "\$60,000" and substituting it with "\$90,000". The change is proposed to allow for students to be able to borrow up to \$90,000 in loans from the Government of the Northwest Territories student financial assistance program, instead of \$60,000.

The bill sponsor, Robert Hawkins, MLA for Yellowknife Centre, brought Bill 8 forward to the House in the June 2024 sitting of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Bill 8 received second reading on June 12th, 2024, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. This report summarizes committee's review of Bill 8, including three recommendations:

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Between June 2024 to August 2024, committee engaged the public. Committee hosted one public meeting in Yellowknife - Somba K'e - on August 20, 2024. At this public meeting, committee heard from the bill sponsor, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and her staff, and one member of the public. Committee also sought written submissions on Bill 8. Committee received written submissions from 11 members of the public. The Minister's presentation and written submissions are included in Appendix A.

Committee appreciates those that offered feedback at public meetings and in written submissions. All written submissions received were written submitted by students, and they all welcomed Bill 8 as a positive and needed step to continue their access to education, help them in returning to the Northwest Territories post-graduation, and fill needed positions in the NWT such as veterinarians, doctors, dentists, and lawyers.

At the public briefing, some of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's main concerns were legislative changes to the revolving loan fund if higher individual loan limits were to be introduced and concerns about students taking on too much debt. The department provided committee with an analysis on the 2023 SFA program changes and noted that by updating average tuition costs and living costs to 2023, it was determined that the average single student would be able to access remissible and repayable loans to complete a 4-year program and a 2-year graduate program with a loan limit of \$83,850. They also noted that students with more than two dependents would need an increased loan limit of \$89,200 to complete a 4-year program. The department highlights the need to make administrative updates should Bill 8 receive assent.

Committee would like to see more NWT students advancing themselves and therefore is in support of Bill 8. Further, committee would like to see more supports going to Indigenous communities, particularly to improve the education outcome for Indigenous students in the NWT. Committee is pleased that there were many changes to the SFA program in 2023 that benefitted Indigenous students, including the removal of semester limits for the supplementary grant and remissible loans and unlimited access to basic grants.

Although, committee would like to know that there is a guarantee that reversals to these changes will not occur, keeping in the spirit of steps towards reconciliation. Committee therefore presents the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories increase education funding to Indigenous communities and Indigenous students in the NWT to improve the education outcome of Indigenous students.

Recommendation 2:

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories make a public commitment to guarantee continued reconciliation efforts in regards to education outcomes for Indigenous students, such as the removal of semester limits and increased access to funding under the basic grant.

Committee found that in its discussions around NWT students moving forward with post-secondary education, committee could not

ignore the many aspects of the education system that need to be improved to provide NWT students and, in particular, Indigenous students, with the tools they need to be ready for post-secondary education. Committee believes this needs to be addressed from all angles of the school experience. For example, the government should ensure that every student in every NWT school has access to a lunch program. Committee believes that students in small communities who show desire to pursue post-secondary education should have access to enrichment programs or streams to nourish their potential. Committee also believes educational outcomes in the NWT cannot improve until access to mental health supports in schools and therapeutic interventions such as speech therapy are properly funded by the government.

Committee would also like to highlight the findings of the 2020 February Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly entitled "Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories - Department of Education, Culture and Employment" as this report focused on evaluating the department's delivery of equitable and inclusive education programs and services that reflected Indigenous languages and cultures, to support improved student outcomes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike.

All of these aspects to the school experience and many more contribute to a student's success in their educational career, and many of these services and programs are lacking in Indigenous communities. As such, committee recommends the following action to the Government:

Recommendation 3:

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories study the disparity of educational outcomes between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students and put forward a plan with solutions to ensure that our Indigenous students are not left behind no more.

CONCLUSION

On October 8th, 2024, committee held a clause-by-clause review. Committee passed a motion to report Bill 8 to the Legislative Assembly as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the Standing Committee on Social Development's review of Bill 8.

Recommendation 4:

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response -- sorry, I apologize. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do apologize.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Committee Report 9-20(1): Standing Committee on Social Development report on Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to the Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member from Monfwi has moved that the report be received and referred to Committee of the Whole. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? One abstaining. Two, three, four -- the whole Cabinet. Thank you. The motion is carried. Committee Report 9 has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

--- Carried

Next, I have is tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the Minister of ECC.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following seven documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 29-20(1): Municipal Block Land Transfer; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 205-20(1): Climate Change; Additional Follow-up letter for Oral Question 205-20(1): Climate Change; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 216-20(1): Guardians of the Land Program; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 278-20(1): Disaster Assistance Programs for Traditional Cabin Owners; Conference of Management Authorities Species at Risk Annual Report 2023-2024, and Northwest Territories Species at Risk committee Annual Report 2023-2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the acting government House leader. Tabling of documents.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Premier and the Minister of Justice, I wish to table the following 14 documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-20(1): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Bill 2: Missing Persons

Act; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-20(1): Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Information and Privacy Commissioner; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 5-20(1): Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 6-20(1): Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 17-20(1): Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Tabled Document 27-20(1): Petition: Demand a Public Inquiry into the Hay River Enterprise Kakisa Wildfire; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 31-20(1): Cross-Border Crime Reduction Forum; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 32-20(1): Increasing RCMP Response in Hay River; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 34-20(1): Supporting RCMP Response to Mental Health; Department of Justice Corrections Service Annual Report 2023-2024; Annual Report on the Activities of the Rental Officer April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 202-20(1): After-Action Review of the 2023 Wildfires; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 233-20(1): Food Security; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 254-20(1): High Cost of Food in Northwest Territories; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 256-20(1): Nutrition North Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the acting government House leader again.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health and Social Services, I wish to table the following seven documents: Additional Information for Return to Written Question 6-20(1): Agency Nurses; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 215-20(1): Use of Agency Nurses; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 244-20(1): Transitional Housing Pilot Project; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 249-20(1): Clients' Medical Records Required for Medical Travel; Follow-up for Oral Question 280-20(1): Apply for a Name Change; Follow-up for Oral Question 284-20(1): Mental Health Training; Follow-up for Oral Question 297-20(1): Wellness and Addictions Recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. To the Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following nine documents:

Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 7-20(1): Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 public accounts; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 37-20(1): Mackenzie Valley Highway Business Case Renewal; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 28-20(1): Consideration for Elders and Seniors in Debt Elimination; Response to Petition 2-20(1): Improved Fertility and Family Planning Supports in the Northwest Territories; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 175-20(1): Marine Transportation Services 2024 Season Cancellations; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 213-20(1): Government of the Northwest Territories' Asset Security Package; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 243-20(1): Forgiveness of Debt for elders and Seniors; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 266-20(1): Burial Sites in Taltson River Area; and Follow-up for Oral Question 289-20(1): Extending Government of Northwest Territories Employee Training to Non-Governmental Organizations Staff. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the Minister of MACA.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the following three documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 33-20(1): Municipal Funding Gap; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 33-20(1): Municipal Funding Gap; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 35-20(1): Emergency Plan Support for Municipalities and Community Governments, and Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 38-20(1): Consideration for the Hamlet of Enterprise to Receive Top-Up Federal Funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the Minister of ECE.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 4-20(1): Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following seven documents: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion

21-20(1): Taking Action to Address Housing as a Human Right; Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 30-20(1): Maintaining Northwest Territories' Housing Stock; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 158-20(1): Collaboration with Indigenous governments on Home Renovations; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 184-20(1): Affordable Housing for Elders; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 196-20(1): Housing Units Destined for Sahtu; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 245-20(1): Housing as a Human Right; and Follow-up letter for Oral Question 264-20(1): Elders' Home Inspections. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the Member from YK Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table in this form. They didn't qualify to be tabling of normal petition so hence, this is the other option is just table them as a public document.

The first petition, Mr. Speaker, I'm tabling this petition to update the Cannabis Products Act to allow LPEE is to farm gate. And the second item I wish to table, Mr. Speaker, is a petition. It's called A Fair Deal for Fort Simpson Housing Authority Workers. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Colleagues, pursuant to section 40.23(1) of the Public Servants Act, I wish to table the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Equal Pay Commissioner for the Northwest Territories. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 21 of the Human Rights Act, I wish to table the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 68 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I wish to table the Office of the Northwest Territories Information and Privacy Commissioner 2023-2024 Report. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 23 of the Official Languages Act, I hereby table the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner. Tabling of documents. I hereby table the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly 2023-2024 Annual Report. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowance Act, I wish to table the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowance Fund financial statements for the year ending March 31st, 2024.

Continuing on with the agenda for today. Item number 15, notice of motions. Number 16, motions. Thank you. Continuing on. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Thank you.

Item number 18, first reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Reports of the Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills.

Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, October 18th, 2024, at 10 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 297-20(1):
Wellness and Addictions
Recommendations
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
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

This House stands adjourned until Friday, October 18th, 2024, at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:56 p.m.