



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

1st Session

Day 29

20th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, October 18, 2024

Pages 1135 - 1156

The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker
Hon. Shane Thompson
(Nahendeh)

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland
(Kam Lake)
*Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment*
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and
Investment*

Mr. Richard Edjericon
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Lucy Kuptana
(Nunakput)
*Minister responsible for Housing
Northwest Territories*
*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women*

Hon. Jay Macdonald
(Thebacha)
*Minister of Environment and Climate
Change*

Hon. Vince McKay
(Hay River South)
*Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs*
*Minister responsible for the Workers'
Safety and Compensation
Commission*
*Minister responsible for the Public
Utilities Board*

Mr. Danny McNeely
(Sahtu)

Ms. Shauna Morgan
(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Julian Morse
(Frame Lake)

Mr. George Nerysoo
(Mackenzie Delta)

Ms. Kate Reid
(Great Slave)

Mr. Denny Rodgers
(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Hon. Lesa Semmler
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Minister of Health and Social Services

Hon. R.J. Simpson
(Hay River North)
Premier
Government House Leader
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous
Affairs*
Minister of Justice

Mr. Kieron Testart
(Range Lake)

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek
(Yellowknife South)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Minister of Infrastructure
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power
Corporation*

**Mrs. Jane Weyallon
Armstrong**
(Monfwi)

Mrs. Sheryl Yakeleya
(Dehcho)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Glen Rutland

Deputy Clerks
Ms. Kim Wickens
Mr. Harjot Sidhu

Clerk of Journals
Mr. Michael Ball

Committee Clerks
Ms. Cynthia James
Ms. Katie Weaver Charpentier
Mr. Paul Mercredi

Law Clerks
Mr. Toby Kruger
Ms. Sandra Mackenzie

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
www.ntassembly.ca

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1135
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1135
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 63-20(1): FALL ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE	1135
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1137
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 333-20(1): FISCAL PLAN	1137
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 334-20(1): HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT	1137
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 335-20(1): NORMAN WELLS HUMANITARIAN STATE OF EMERGENCY	1138
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 336-20(1): ADDICTIONS	1138
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 337-20(1): AURORA COLLEGE	1139
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 338-20(1): SHARON FIRTH INDUCTED INTO SKI HALL OF FAME	1139
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 339-20(1): CLIMATE CHANGE	1140
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 340-20(1): HOUSING	1140
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 341-20(1): GRATITUDE TO CONSTITUENTS AND FAMILY	1141
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1141
ORAL QUESTIONS	1141
QUESTION 309-20(1): AURORA COLLEGE POLYTECHNIC TRANSITION	1141
QUESTION 310-20(1): AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MANDATE LETTER	1142
QUESTION 311-20(1): HUMANITARIAN STATE OF EMERGENCY IN NORMAN WELLS	1143
QUESTION 312-20(1): TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS AND SUPPORTS	1144
QUESTION 313-20(1): CLIMATE TARGETS AND NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS	1145
QUESTION 314-20(1): HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES STAFFING, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN MONFWI	1146
QUESTION 315-20(1): SUPPORTS AND SERVICES IN NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SCHOOLS	1147
QUESTION 316-20(1): NAMING OF GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDINGS	1148
QUESTION 317-20(1): AURORA COLLEGE POLYTECHNIC TRANSITION	1149
QUESTION 318-20(1): NET-ZERO CLIMATE TARGETS FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY	1150
QUESTION 319-20(1): HUMANITARIAN STATE OF EMERGENCY IN NORMAN WELLS	1150
QUESTION 320-20(1): ASSESSMENTS AND SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS	1151
QUESTION 321-20(1): AURORA COLLEGE TRANSFORMATION	1152
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1154
TABLED DOCUMENT 193-20(1): 2025-2026 CAPITAL ESTIMATES	1154
TABLED DOCUMENT 194-20(1): PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SECTION II INTERIM NON-CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024	1154
TABLED DOCUMENT 195-20(1): PROSPER NWT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024	1154
TABLED DOCUMENT 196-20(1): FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 186-20(1): ADDRESSING EROSION IN AKLAVIK	1154
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1154
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1154
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1155

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, October 18, 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. Testart, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 10:01 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Richard Edjericon):

Good morning, colleagues. I just want to say thank you to Ruth Carol, the Gwich'in translator, for doing the open prayer today. It's Friday, so hopefully we have a really good day and a good session. Thank you.

I'm going to move on to Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 63-20(1):
FALL ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Legislative Assembly with this fall economic and fiscal update. I will also use this opportunity to outline our progress towards the goals set out in our fiscal strategy.

Our work towards restoring balance through this government's fiscal strategy meant that we started the fiscal year with the GNWT's largest-ever projected operating surplus. We have been trimming longstanding unfilled public service positions, consolidating programs that were inefficiently split between departments, and identifying underspent funds that could be reduced from our budget. We are well underway with the fleet management program and a lease space review.

However, Mr. Speaker, despite these efforts, the fiscal situation facing the Government of the Northwest Territories is dire. Despite the hard work departments have done to find value for money, the actions taken under our fiscal sustainability strategy have not been enough to absorb the multiple fiscal challenges that have arisen since the tabling of the 2024-2025 Main Estimates.

Efforts to maintain the resiliency of the energy grid, rising costs within the health system, and

wildfire expenditures have resulted in our total debt being projected to reach \$1.74 billion. As a result, we will breach the \$120 million buffer below the federally imposed \$1.8 billion limit as outlined in our fiscal responsibility policy. We are, therefore, in the process of requesting a borrowing limit increase from the Government of Canada.

Requesting a borrowing limit increase is necessary to ensure we have the capacity to respond to expenditure shocks that have become more frequent. However, seeking this flexibility in our borrowing room does not mean that we can ease off on our own efforts to ensure fiscal responsibility and sustainability. We will continue to evaluate the value of all programs and services, keep a close eye on public sector growth, and find innovative ways to achieve efficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, we are all acutely aware of the impending diamond mine closures but for now, the Northwest Territories' economy remains stable. Over the last three years, since the 2020 lows caused by COVID-19 restrictions, the economy has broadly recovered. Indicators such as household spending, public expenditure, and resident employment have expanded to surpass pre-pandemic levels. Even after the sharp shocks of last year's severe wildfire season, the economy was resilient enough to fully recover to pre-wildfire levels by December.

Mineral exploration investments and appraisal spending intentions are up 27 percent in 2024. However, exploration spending is no guarantee of an operating mine, and the North remains a higher-cost jurisdiction compared to more southern locations. Further, we are forecasting real gross domestic product to shrink this year due to overall slower activity in the mining and oil and gas sectors. That said, other economic measures remain robust, including high employment and a fall in consumer price inflation to less than 2 percent.

The upside of having an economy heavily weighted toward the public sector across all levels of government is that government spending and public sector employment continue to stabilize the economy. In addition to

the rise in exploration spending, the GNWT supported the new commercial fish plant in Hay River, which is now open. We have also provided financial support to communities affected by the summer wildfires and barge cancellations, helping local economies remain resilient in the face of ongoing climate shocks. We must continue to help all Northwest Territories communities enhance their distinct economic strengths and address labour shortages, both for skilled and unskilled workers.

Mr. Speaker, we finished 2023-2024 in better shape than expected, primarily due to federal disaster relief funding. However, we still ended the year in a deficit position due to the tremendous financial pressures created during the summer of 2023. Although the cash position going into the 2024-2025 fiscal year was an improvement, it did not actually improve the 2024-2025 fiscal situation as some federal funding expected this year was received last year.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that we started this fiscal year with the largest projected operating surplus in history \$294 million. This was expected to fully cover the 2024-2025 capital budget without the need for additional borrowing, and we hoped to use it to pay down some of our short-term debt. It is fortunate that we worked to achieve this surplus because, once again, the fiscal shocks of various extreme events have reduced our forecasted surplus to \$67 million. One such extreme event is the ongoing low water situation. Since the 2024-2025 budget was released in May, the situation has worsened. Marine Transportation Services lost almost \$14 million in revenue due to the canceled barge season, and increased costs associated with resupply challenges are being felt across multiple departments.

Low water has also impacted the Northwest Territories Power Corporation's, or NTPC's, generating costs. These impacts were magnified by reliance on diesel during the overhaul of the original Taltson generating facility, a project that was well overdue. This project was on time and on budget until the 2023 wildfires caused the evacuation of key personnel and damaged NTPC infrastructure. Getting the work back on track has led to cost overruns, which are now projected to reach \$31 million. Between the costs of diesel backup and the Taltson overhaul, NTPC needs to borrow another \$75 million in short-term debt.

While not as severe as 2023, this summer saw yet another challenging fire season, with two communities in the Sahtu evacuated and several others across the territory under evacuation alerts. We also continue to face

significant cost pressures to maintain stability in the health care system, which is treating more patients, many of whom have more complex needs.

In order to absorb all of these impacts, we currently project that we will end the fiscal year with \$700 million in short-term borrowing. This increase in short-term borrowing, combined with the additional \$75 million required by NTPC, brings our total authorized debt to \$1.74 billion, just \$60 million below the federally imposed \$1.8 billion borrowing limit. As noted earlier, we have begun the process of requesting a borrowing limit increase to ensure we have the necessary room to absorb further expenditure shocks.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, and will emphasize again: Even in the face of these challenges, I remain optimistic when looking at the long-term potential of the Northwest Territories economy and our ability to restore balance to the GNWT's fiscal health.

The recent trip to Ottawa with the Council of Leaders highlighted the strength of collaboration between governments in the Northwest Territories. This collaboration does not detract from the many challenges we face at home, but it is through collaboration and cooperation that we can raise the profile and prosperity of our territory.

Commodity markets may be depressed at the moment, but this buys us time to deliver foundational infrastructure that will make the Northwest Territories a stronger candidate for large-scale mineral resource investments. It also allows us time to highlight the investment stability in our co-management regime for land and natural resources. Finally, this time gives us the opportunity to continue seeking national attention for strategic investments in key projects that will support critical mineral value chains.

We are also seeing much needed attention paid to the vast stretch of border that faces international waters toward Russia and China. While this poses a defense risk today, it is also an opportunity for multi-use infrastructure investments that will not only enhance the North's strategic capabilities but also benefit people on a day-to-day basis, strengthening the region overall.

Finally, within our own fiscal house, we remain committed to the Restoring Balance fiscal strategy, but we will take the time necessary to ensure we get it right. We still have promising suggestions from the GNWT's public service in progress, and others already being implemented. While the short-term fiscal

situation is tight, we will avoid kneejerk actions that could unnecessarily disrupt government programs or services causing more severe impacts on residents, businesses, or the overall economy.

We continue to seek opportunities to lapse unnecessary spending in 2024-2025, aiming to end the year in better fiscal shape than we are in now. A key focus as we move forward with Restoring Balance is addressing health care system sustainability, which remains an area of high financial risk and high need. In line with the government's mandate, a large part of determining sustainable service levels is defining our core programs and services. This work is being led by the health care system sustainability unit within the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. They are taking an evaluative approach to the health and social services system, focusing on determining sustainable service levels and exploring opportunities for greater efficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, we knew there would be significant fiscal challenges coming into this Legislative Assembly, and we know we have difficult choices leading up to next year's budget. We are also keenly aware of the obligation and expectation to achieve the priorities set by this Legislative Assembly. Within that priority framework, we remain committed as a government to supporting immediate needs in times of crisis, maintaining core programs and services for residents and communities, while also being vigilant in creating and enabling long-term growth opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you to the Minister of Finance for her Minister's statement. Any further Ministers' statements?

Moving on, Members' statements. Go to the Member from Yellowknife Centre.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 333-20(1): FISCAL PLAN

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to use my Member's statement to come back to some of the matters raised by me and other Members, of course, in the June session.

Mr. Speaker, many of us had some excitement coming into the election almost a year ago and about where the Aurora College was going in the context of transition to a polytech. And, of course, it wasn't until after being elected sometimes when you find out what really is

happening behind the scenes that you find out actually that they're still working on the transition plan but the transition plan isn't funded and things they want to do but they need a mandate. And in our conversations during the June session, it was realized that the new mandate letters were being signed in July of the summer that just had passed. That said, Mr. Speaker, of course, the important part is we want to make sure the Aurora College for the students, for the North, the economic impact, and of course certainly the educational opportunities that will come with a college that transitions into a polytech, are well disbursed and well realized for all Northerners, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the mandate letter as quoted in unedited Hansard was, when I asked would the Minister make it public, she had said she would make it public, she's a fan of transparency based on legislation of course, so obviously if there's something she can't table or make public, I'd like to know why, but I do respect it if that is the case. But that said, there is elements of its mandate letter that could be probably transitioned and hence I look forward to asking those kinds of questions in question period.

At the same time, I'd also asked about funding, and I -- again, I'm not alone on this particular issue but, I mean, as they always say, you know, a vision is just a dream without a plan and if we don't have a plan, you know -- sorry, money -- without money, we don't have a plan -- sorry, is what I was trying to say. And of course to bring it all together; in other words, Mr. Speaker, we need a plan, we need money, and we certainly need a vision, and all of this is for not if it doesn't find a way to coalesce.

So, Mr. Speaker, recognizing that I believe that it can no longer be funded by using leftover dollars from the education program or the diploma social worker program and hoping for those types of dollars, it just won't be sustainable. We need dedicated line items that support this. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions at the time with respect to this particular matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'll move on to the Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 334-20(1): HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 51st Street encampment could have happened anywhere in Yellowknife. It just happens to be in my riding. The encampment started out as a group of folks not being welcomed at various locations prior to staying

in this empty lot. To its credit, the GNWT quickly worked to find a location that they own near the downtown core. The solution is far from ideal at least of all because the site will soon be an active construction site. I want to take this time to thank the residents of the neighbourhood for being extremely patient and compassionate and providing myself and the Premier with your feedback that created more safety and dignity for everyone. I appreciate that the GNWT looked at how to find spaces for precariously housed residents with NGOs who often knew them and their histories and took the time to get to know each one of these folks and what they need. EIA has just sent an update recently that there are two people that remain and one who visits infrequently.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in Yellowknife is part of our community regardless of their access to housing. Everyone deserves dignity and a safe place to sleep. As we have heard from the Salvation Army in their presentation to standing committee, finding safety is starting to become difficult in Yellowknife shelters. When speaking with the Premier and his staff, he noted that the encampment was a point of urgency in finding solutions discussed in the GNWT's Homelessness Strategy. I'm heartened that Cabinet felt compelled to seek more funding for transitional and supportive housing across the territory when they were in Ottawa last week. But some of what I hear from folks who are involved with, or in some cases were not invited to, the working group that were seeking solutions for the encampment is that the GNWT continues to be cagey about how we are working to expand options in a meaningful, timely way. Many folks are also wondering how we got here when we have known for a long time about the lack of sustainable options and spaces that NGOs can provide.

Mr. Speaker, I'm barely scratching the surface of this issue. I'll note that the point-in-time count of underhoused folks that the city of Yellowknife has conducted this fall is not available yet but will be soon. The city's housing needs assessment interim report points to trends that aren't going away. A continued strain on existing housing stock means more people are a whisper away from precarious housing than we want to admit. I'll have questions for the deputy Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 335-20(1):
NORMAN WELLS HUMANITARIAN STATE
OF EMERGENCY

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the town of Norman Wells issued a humanitarian state of an emergency October 15, 2024. Under the Emergency Management Act, a declaration of an emergency would mean the price of fuel could be fixed by the responsible Minister and there may be opportunities for federal support. The following summary explains the trigger mechanism for the declaration and the items in the act that concern the prices of fuel in section 17.

Mr. Speaker, section 17(1), paragraph 1, the Minister may procure, ration, or fix prices for food, fuel, equipment, medical supplies, and other essential supplies.

Mr. Speaker, under section 18(1) of the act, if a local authority is satisfied that an emergency exists and may exist within the community, the local authority may, by resolution, declare a state of an emergency to exist in all or part of the community.

Mr. Speaker, under section 14(1), I will be asking the Minister responsible supporting the declaration and state of an emergency then invoke the Emergency Management Act, the procedures in both the act and management plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to sharing the questions at the appropriate time to the appropriate Minister. Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 336-20(1):
ADDICTIONS

MR. NERYSOO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to inform the Assembly and the residents of the Northwest Territories of a program that is bringing hope to the people who are struggling with alcohol and drug abuse. It has been many years since we have had a program of this nature and that is giving hope to our residents of the North here in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the Gwich'in wellness Department of the Gwich'in Tribal Council has taken the lead in developing this program in the North for Northerners. In the past, I have spoken to a number of people who have expressed interest in attending a treatment program to deal with their personal issues but travelling hundreds of kilometers to a totally different culture was not an option for the select few. This program is being held at the Rachel Ranger Camp, a half hour boat ride north of Inuvik. It keeps the participants close to home and in familiar surroundings.

Mr. Speaker, the addictions program is facilitated by Mr. William Greenland, a Gwich'in who grew up in Inuvik and has worked in the field of recovery for a number of years throughout the North. There are other facilitators who are also involved in one capacity or another, but a collaborative approach will make this program a success.

Mr. Dennis Allen, another descendant of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in who grew up in Inuvik and has worked in the field of recovery, is also available for support. With their familiar surroundings, the people from the region, the participants will be more likely to complete their program successfully.

Mr. Speaker, this past spring the Standing Committee on Social Development had the opportunity to visit and tour the site while it was being renovated. The facility is quite impressive. The Gwich'in Wellness Camp will indeed serve its purpose to the willing participants with great hospitality and comfort for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank and congratulate the Gwich'in Tribal Council and all the funding agencies in meeting the needs of our residents when the need is most needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next on my list here I have the Member from Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 337-20(1):
AURORA COLLEGE

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about change management, and today I want to continue that thread and speak to the state of the Aurora College transition. Despite reassurance from the board and president that they are committed to the transition, every indication and metric I see is clearly communicating that the transition has ground to a halt and, if anything, is in the process of being openly reversed. Responsibility for this lies on both the Ministers and the board's shoulders, but there were a number of critical change management elements missed along the way when GNWT was firmly in control. One is anchoring the change firmly throughout the corporate culture of the organization. It is clear this never happened, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, CBC News shared a story detailing how research chairs were hired, immediately encountered significant internal barriers to carrying out their work and ended up leaving the organization in short order.

Another fundamental change element is clearly articulating a vision, Mr. Speaker, and despite

years of work and some apparent progress, it's clear the vision didn't stick during the hand-over process. This part rests with the Minister of education who is responsible for articulating a mandate to the board. The college's current mandate expired in July, and we are yet to see a new one. The Minister needs to give clear direction about the vision for this project and steps needed for it to succeed. If the direction is that we are proceeding with the transition, we need to be decisive about it. If not, at least tell us that's the case so we can have that unwanted conversation. Personally, I want to be clear that I am not supportive of continuing to fund the college in its current form. We already paid for the analysis. We already found that the college wasn't working. Continuing with status quo is never going to change outcomes, and we owe the students of the NWT better than that, Mr. Speaker.

To end on a positive note, I want to share a glimmer of hope. The former research chair, quoted in the CBC story, noted he still believes there is a lot of potential for knowledge economy growth in the NWT, and I've heard that message from so many people who are working in this field here. The potential is there, Mr. Speaker. The question now is whether we have the vision and wherewithal to grasp it. I will have questions for the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next on my list I have is the Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 338-20(1):
SHARON FIRTH INDUCTED INTO SKI HALL
OF FAME

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take a moment today to celebrate the fact that one of our northern icons, Sharon Firth, will be inducted into the Laurentian Ski Hall of Fame tomorrow during their tribute to Canadian women in skiing this weekend. A world-renowned cross country skier, Sharon was a Member of Canada's cross country team, alongside her late sister Shirley, for an incredible 17 years. Together, they competed in countless national and international championships and had the historic honour of being the first Indigenous female athletes at the Winter Olympics. Not only is Sharon an incredible athlete but she's also a dedicated public servant and activist. She and her sister are also residential school survivors and share the trauma many Indigenous children face growing up in the North.

Born in Aklavik to Gwich'in and Metis parents, Sharon was introduced to cross country skiing at a young age thanks to the territorial experimental ski program, and the rest was

history. Through their hard work and dedication, the Firth sisters constantly trained through the cold winter days, that were all familiar with up here, and would soon come to dominate the sport for decades. They have since become the first Indigenous women awarded the Order of Sport, and Sharon herself has received the Order of Canada, the National Aboriginal Achievement Award, and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal. While Shirley has sadly passed, Sharon has continued to offer her expertise, training, and nurturing successive generations of talent and informing public policy regarding recreation and sport. Thank you so much, Sharon, for all that you've done to bring northern and Indigenous athletes to the world's attention. You are a pioneer, a trailblazer, a role model, and my friend. And I know you still have much more to contribute to the Northwest Territories, and I know we all stand together in this House to congratulate you. Thank you, Sharon.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 339-20(1):
CLIMATE CHANGE

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know that climate change is turning the North into a different world but sometimes we forget that the rest of the world has been dramatically shifting, too, in terms of energy systems, infrastructure, and the global economy. In order to avoid being left behind with dinosaur technologies and costs we cannot bear alone, we have to change with the times. And that means taking more responsibility and leadership in terms of our carbon emissions and setting a climate target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Previously, we had set a target of reducing emissions by 30 percent by 2030. So what's wrong with that? It sounds ambitious enough, right? But that path we were on meant that we could do virtually nothing and just wait for Diavik mine to close. Do we really want our climate strategy to simply be let the diamond mines close? Do we want that to be our economic strategy? The thing is that Rio Tinto has already committed to a net-zero climate target across its global operations by 2050. De Beers has committed to net-zero by 2030. For the critical minerals sector, both private financing and federal government dollars are increasingly dependent on net-zero targets.

Lazy climate targets are not helping industry. Lagging behind on clean energy makes the NWT one of the least attractive jurisdictions for modern mining. If we see mining as a big part of this territory's future, then we have to

embrace a net-zero future. Both the federal government and the majority of Canadian provinces and territories, including the Yukon, have already committed to net-zero by 2050. Increasingly federal funding is being tied to net-zero targets so if we don't set ourselves on this clean energy path, we are missing out and we're isolating ourselves. We desperately need ways to bring down the cost of power, and the NWT needs to commit to a net-zero power system by 2035 for the NWT Power Corporation to benefit from a new federal tax credit.

Back in June, this government committed as part of budget negotiations to set a net-zero target by 2050. This means we have to confront head-on the challenge of facilitating clean energy solutions for transportation, heavy equipment, and industry. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as I was saying, we need to confront head-on the challenge of facilitating clean energy for transportation, heavy equipment, and industry, which together make up 84 percent of the territory's emissions. There are solutions, and I will continue to push this government to pursue them. We can do this, and we must do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Next on my list I have is the Member from Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 340-20(1):
HOUSING

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the future for public housing in the Tlicho region.

Mr. Speaker, it is a priority of the 20th Legislative Assembly to ensure sustainable financial resources for housing programs and projects. When we talk about public housing, we mean programs that provide income-based rental housing for the residents most in need, like elders and families with little or no income. But residents are saying NWT Housing is not functioning the way it is supposed to.

Yesterday, Behchoko Ko Gha K'aodee held a public hearing on housing in Behchoko. Residents had a lot of feedback for NWT Housing. There were complaints that policies and procedures were not being followed; there are not enough tenant relations officers to assist residents; and, the waiting list for the community of Behchoko has over 130 people

on it. Mr. Speaker, one resident put it this way: Why would housing board members have a meeting when there is no available housing to allocate to people? The waiting list needs to be cleared.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Government of the Northwest Territories has different programs in place to help with these types of programs, like the homelessness assistance fund. I know the Minister of housing has committed in the past to reviewing instances where tenants have arrears on a case-by-case basis. We need to do more.

I would like to know the plan for public housing in Behchoko, Mr. Speaker. The housing stock is old. A family of seven in my riding have said that their unit has mold. Other houses are boarded up. With the other problems tenants discussed yesterday, it's too much. People want to know what the plan is. I will have questions for the Minister of housing at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Next on my list I have is the Member from the Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 341-20(1):
GRATITUDE TO CONSTITUENTS AND
FAMILY

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take the opportunity to extend thanks and express gratitude. As we have reconvened for another sitting, I would like to thank my constituents. Without their faith in me, I wouldn't have the privilege of being here in this Chamber today. As I've stated before, I am honoured and humbled to be here to serve all my constituents and all my riding of the Deh Cho.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank family and friends from all over the NWT for their support, calls, and reaching out with when my daughter was hospitalized in Kelowna this past summer. Specifically, I would like to thank Alison de Pelham, executive director, and all the chiefs of the Deh Cho First Nations. I would like to thank Rosa Wright and all the people in Fort Simpson, Linda Kraft, Harry Sapp, and Trish Landry of Fort Providence, and the doctors, nurses, and staff at the Kelowna General Hospital who provided care for my daughter. The love and support that poured out in the community to my family during a difficult time, it really meant the world to me and helped get us through.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my husband Norman, my adult children, my mother, and all our extended family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to item number 4 on the agenda of the day, return to oral questions. I'm going to go to the Minister of MACA.

We're going to continue on. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

DEPUTY SPEAKER: And if we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery. Mahsi for being here.

Acknowledgements. Oral questions. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 309-20(1):
AURORA COLLEGE POLYTECHNIC
TRANSITION

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've just made my statement, so we know what my questions are about. Mr. Speaker, why has the Minister of education not sent a new mandate letter to the Aurora College board?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm currently working on that mandate letter with the Aurora College board of governors. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, is the Minister committed to transitioning Aurora College to a polytechnic university and supporting the college in proceeding with the facility's master plan?

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have said it in this House before, I've said it to the board of governors before, I am absolutely committed to this transition. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; we're keeping it short and sweet today. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister has a textbook on change management on her desk because I handed it to her myself. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister considered employing change management principles in setting her direction to the board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

knows the way to my heart is certainly through books, and I appreciate that. My role within the post-secondary system and through the Aurora College Act has definitely changed between the last Assembly and this one. My role is certainly one of oversight over the post-secondary education system whereas the board of governors really has control and oversight over Aurora College's programs as well as their operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake. Final supplementary.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, considering the board does have that responsibility, Mr. Speaker, what measures is the Minister taking or considering in holding the board accountable for results for the funding they receive from the government for transition, for operation of the college, all of it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly using all of the tools that I have at my disposal. Currently, at the end of September, I met with the board to actually sit down and hear what their priorities are, what their concerns are, how their year in operation has gone, and to sit down and figure out, okay, where do we align and ensure that we align on the transformation of Aurora College. They have informed me that they are certainly committed to this and that they want to be able to continue to work closely together on this collaborative process and to continue to meet regularly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 310-20(1):
AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF
GOVERNORS MANDATE LETTER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Similar to my colleague who had just spoke a moment ago, I want to further follow up on the mandate letter specifically. So it appears we're working well together on this type of concern and initiative. My question would be is that if the former mandate letter expired in July, had the department not been working on it previously? Because it doesn't seem as if there was -- there shouldn't be an overlap period of gap within -- in other words saying there's no mandate or no one's doing any mandate or following any mandate. So I'm asking the question, why wasn't there a transition letter for the transition mandate letter included and started and initiated in July; what is the delay? Can maybe the Minister enlighten the House as to that. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Members for keeping the conversation on Aurora College alive and well in the House. There was no gap, or there is no gap because the previous mandate commitments stand until the new one is stood up, and so the previous one continues to exist until the next one is put in place. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate it's status quo, you know, as in the -- they're using inertia to move forward, but the fact is that we're concerned about the direction, the firm and clear direction of the mandate letter to give them the direction and plan and commitment to do the transition from a college to a polytech. Can the Minister confirm in the House today that it will be absolutely crystal clear that the transition into a polytech is part of the moving forward mandate letter? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the mandate letter that currently stands, that was the previous one that would have expired, so to say in July but still stands today, does very clearly say establish a polytechnic university. As it is very much the will of both myself as Minister of education, as well as the board of governors, I would fully expect for that to be a clear priority laid out in the mandate letter going forward. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would appreciate in the context of transparency if the Minister would share that letter with Members because I don't believe we have it and if we do have it, it's the old government kind of context because I certainly don't have a copy of it. So we're going on what we understand.

Mr. Speaker, the next part of the mandate letter is will it be funded for a transition to a polytech? Because currently, if we're following the old methodology, they're using money left over from the education diploma -- or sorry, education program as well as the social work diploma program. So they're using leftover surplus money to fund something that should have a dedicated line item. So in other words, will it be funded specifically with the target line item that does that needed work? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Member's first question in regards to sharing the existing mandate document, it is available online, and I would be happy to send the link and share it

with my colleagues on the other side of the House.

In regards to the question around funding, I can share with Members that at the meeting between myself and the board of governors at the end of September, concerns were raised about the funding that they do receive for the transformation, and those conversations are ongoing. I need to know from the college what it is that they're looking for. Because any type of additional funding would certainly require me to go and plead that case to the financial management board, and given our fiscal context, we would need to make sure that those asks are weighed against the additional asks of the people of the Northwest Territories and Ministers. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member of Yellowknife Centre for final supplementary.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm not -- I'm familiar with the mandate online but I'm more referring to the mandate letter specifically, just to be clear. So in my view, they're two things but if they're the same thing at the end of the day, then I'll let the Minister clarify.

My last question, just very quickly, Mr. Speaker, is will the Minister be willing to table her mandate letter to the college before the House for transparency and table it in a method that it can be consumed by the public for everyone to fully appreciate what direction and support they're getting from the Department of education. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to both table and share publicly and online the next mandate agreement between myself and the college. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next on my list here I have is the Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 311-20(1):
HUMANITARIAN STATE OF EMERGENCY
IN NORMAN WELLS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have legislation at our disposal. My follow-up first question to my statement is addressed to the Minister of MACA. Will the Minister of MACA accept the humanitarian state of an emergency issued by the town of Norman Wells? Mahsi.

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

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has received the local state of emergency that the town of Norman Wells has declared. To say that we have a documented support of that local state of emergency, we don't, but we are supporting -- as a government, we're doing everything we can to support the region. We have our staff on the ground working with the town of Norman Wells, regional superintendent. We have all our departments -- I can't speak for anybody else, but I will speak for myself to say that our staff have been very engaged in this in trying to help the situation there in Norman Wells. So thank you.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for those comforting words. The residents of the Sahtu very much appreciate the words of support and acknowledgement in receipt of that state of an emergency declaration.

The unique opportunity is here. And my next question, will the Minister of MACA provide this notification to the federal public safety Ministers while they are in Yellowknife today or tomorrow or whenever they leave? Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Declaring a local state of emergency or state of emergency doesn't guarantee us federal funding. My counterpart, Minister Sajjan, Minister of public safety, is not here. And I have spoken to him recently as yesterday in regards to the issue in Norman Wells. We have had discussions on this. Unfortunately, this type of emergency does not fall under the federal regulations or the federal disaster -- federal assistance arrangement. So we are continuing dialogue. And the Minister has committed to reaching out to his counterparts to see if there's any other solutions for the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that reply. Would the Minister provide a briefing or backup documents specific to the state and the discussion happening between his office or this government and the federal government and provide that to my office and the mayor of Norman Wells? Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm more than happy to share any correspondence I've had with the Minister. I'm also willing to sit down with the Minister, give him a briefing on what discussions our department's had with the community, and also any of my federal counterparts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister. That information to the leaders would be beneficial.

Now for the public residents, will the Minister support a press release on the state of emergency and the actions taken and future actions to be taken? Mahsi.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have an issue with releasing any information on the work we've been doing. I think we've been pretty open and transparent right now with everything we've been doing, so I'm more than committed to work on a press release that we could use, both as the MLA for the Sahtu and the department, to share with the residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 312-20(1):
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS AND
SUPPORTS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Deputy Premier elaborate on the plan for the temporary on-the-land healing camp that EIA staff spoke of with the CBC earlier this week? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister of EIA.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the encampment that took place in Yellowknife this summer, and continuing to now, there was an opportunity to engage directly with the community of individuals relying on that for sheltering, and it gave an opportunity for EIA to identify a cohort of folks who are looking for an opportunity to be in a more transitional type of shelter. And so it's with that in mind that -- and in a lot of discussions with the NGO community here who supports folks who are underhoused that they were able to identify an opportunity to use this facility that is outside of Yellowknife, for up to approximately 30 people, provide some limited programming out there. I do want to clarify it's not a healing camp in the way that we might sometimes think of it. It's a much shorter timeframe than that. But it will be offering some programming and be a facility that can at least be on the road towards a transitional type of opportunity for people. Thank you.

MS. REID: Thank you. In terms of the encampment and its residents, I want to note that NGOs really stepped up to the plate with possible solutions. So aside from this camp that

the deputy Premier just spoke of, what, if any, rental options have been pursued with NGOs in absence of any secured federal dollars to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NGOs have been extremely valuable partners. Indeed, the camp that I mentioned earlier as a transitional opportunity wouldn't have arisen and wouldn't be possible without NGOs coming forward and making themselves and their skills available. So there's been a lot of discussions and a fairly exhaustive look at different options here in Yellowknife. It involved not only the NGO community and their facilities, at least one of which is able, with some additional funding, to expand their beds, but also looking at local developers, you know, hotels, large scale landlords, small scale landlords, all -- even territorial parks. So there's been a real comprehensive look at the different assets, but also a look at whether or not those assets would truly be appropriate and serve the needs from a person-centered approach for the people that are requiring supports and assistance in their housing right now. So with that said, it really was an opportunity to look at what's here, to try to be efficient with what's here, and to keep in mind that NGOs, while they're being at the table, can't be expected to step up without some more supports and investment in them. So without, you know, significant new dollars coming in, that was part of the discussion around what could be done with the camp and then also sort of a medium-term solution and longer term solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I caught the words people-centered approach in that response, and that's really good to hear. I'll probably have more to speak about that in the days to come. But as the deputy Premier knows, the folks who are in the encampment do need wraparound services. And that is something that we are limited in our actions right now.

What preliminary actions, then, does EIA see as crucial to address the core need for effective transitional housing in Yellowknife, our regional centres, and small communities? Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is certainly not an easy one, and I want to acknowledge that from the get-go, that the efforts to deal with what became a crisis situation this summer interrupts the ability to plan for the future. And we're well aware that we need to get out of the cycle of responding to crisis in order to actually plan in a careful way to deliver the services we need.

Working towards a place where integrated case management which has become integrated service delivery can be expanded, expanded out of Yellowknife and, in fact, even expanded within Yellowknife, those will provide the opportunities to, again, be person-centered, to be delivering transitional housing in a way that responds to the needs of those who need it and to engage with communities so that when communities are being brought in to an expansion of integrated service delivery, it's with solutions that the communities are asking for and in a way that the communities are ready and with what they need rather than having supports or programs given to them that might not actually meet the needs of their underhoused population. So that focus on integrated service delivery and doing it in line with the ongoing community work, that's where this is starting from. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to Great Slave for your final supplementary.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think the Minister has anticipated what I wanted to say next. So in the Homelessness Strategy, the goal of establishing functional zero of homelessness says that in less than two years that there will be goals set for each community to reduce homelessness. That was a year ago. That gives us one more year on the timetable. So what is the GNWT seeing right now that they want to take steps in the next three years left of this Assembly to help us reach functional zero? Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is similar in some ways to what I had just responded to, that functional zero for each community will be set by each community not for each community. In other words, it's identifying what population is able to find some form of appropriate housing appropriate to where they are at and meeting a person where they are which may mean that there's often going to remain some number of people within a community who are effectively without formal shelter or may be transitioning between shelter. But functional zero ensures that everyone has a place for where they're at in whatever their journey might be. But, again, that does have to happen with communities. So that engagement is -- I understand is underway, and I certainly can commit to providing a more detailed timeline -- I don't have that here, but a more detailed timeline to the extent that we have it and, again, just knowing that that may shift based upon the needs of communities. But we can certainly provide a more detailed timeline from our perspective, and I'll commit to getting that to the Member. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next on my list is the Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 313-20(1):
CLIMATE TARGETS AND NET-ZERO
CARBON EMISSIONS

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. So given this government's commitments to strive towards a net-zero climate target by 2050, what plans are underway for this government to commit to a net-zero power system by 2035 in order for our power corporation to benefit from the federal clean electricity investment tax credit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm quite pleased to talk about the clean energy investment tax credit because it is an interesting thing that there's an opportunity here for the North, for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, to be seeking this tax credit except that we have to make a nonbinding commitment to be on net-zero.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make that commitment. I'm happy to simply make the commitment, but it certainly is going to be pretty challenging for the Northwest Territories or, frankly, probably any part of the non-connected to the North American energy grid communities, the three territories, to reach that. But we could certainly make the commitment if that's what it takes to unlock a little bit of tax credit funding.

Obviously, getting there, Mr. Speaker, is going to take significant investment. We certainly have the opportunity to look at Taltson facility, whether or not it would be operational by 2035 would certainly bring 70 percent of our population onto clean energy. The challenges will be different in communities that are more isolated, through the Sahtu and the Beaufort Delta. And certainly what would it take at that point? Well, Mr. Speaker, at that point, we're going to be looking at probably new technologies, different technologies, and working with Indigenous partners through those regions as to what opportunities they see for investment as well. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So given that the vast majority of our emissions come from transportation and industry, what does the Minister believe are the key opportunities to introduce clean energy into the NWT transportation sector, particularly the

long-haul trucking and the heavy equipment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this certainly is a more difficult area to decarbonize effectively, particularly long-haul trucking. Some of the more heavy equipment machinery used in mine sites, for instance, might be looking to electrify, and there's certainly some efforts to do that underway. Elsewhere, again, challenges in terms of the climate here in the North do impact the battery capacity. One of the more promising opportunities would be in renewable diesel. Once again, though, Mr. Speaker, the way that this has unfolded through Canadian approaches thus far, there's not a strong market for renewable diesel that is Arctic grade. I am happy to say that we are looking at this again and reexamining whether there's some opportunities to help incentivize that market or bring about some of that market here to the North. We would need a supply, and we would need it to be at an affordable price point that doesn't overly displace the fiscal capacity. But that would certainly be part of the modeling that we need to undertake to reach a net-zero. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So on the subject of clean fuels, one of the key federal funding opportunities for clean fuels is the Indigenous clean fuels fund. So what conversations are underway with Indigenous governments regarding those funding opportunities through the Indigenous clean fuels fund? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, let me say I would say not enough conversations. I hope there's more attention paid to these opportunities. It would be expectational to see this kind of funding flow to Indigenous governments here within the Northwest Territories. I know I've mentioned it in passing at Council of Leaders of meetings and in opportunities, for example sitting with colleagues at the Taltson steering committee, and department officials certainly do point their counterparts and colleagues to the 2Y2 Indigenous single window funding portal that exists with the federal government. But, again, any opportunity to raise their profile of this more here in the North, this is a chance to bring money into the North and a chance to bring about economic reconciliation and putting some of those dollars and power into the hands of Indigenous governments. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go back to the Member from Yellowknife North. Final supplementary.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in terms of industry reducing emissions, we have the large emitters fund that industry has already been paying into, and it's supposed to be designed to help industry reduce their carbon emissions. So what have been the barriers to industry fully tapping into and expending those dollars that are sitting in the large emitters fund? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that it's barriers within necessarily that are preventing this. There is some -- certainly some requirement that the funds would have to be, for example, 5 percent change from the baseline of the operation which, if it was for the whole of the mine it might be easier, but when it's for a specific portion of operations that actually can turn into a fairly significant number. And another challenge being that it actually needs to have some sense of provability and not be a test or a trial or a research project. So you know, again, certainly very happy to say that there has been use of this with respect to the solar farm, I believe, recently at Diavik. We're hoping that there may be some interest from one of the other mines in another project and very happy to try to work with them to ensure that there are, in fact, not barriers to advancing the use of this money towards energy emissions in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 314-20(1):
HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
STAFFING, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
IN MONFWI

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us how many tenants relation officers are currently employed in in the region? Thank you.

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

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, in the region -- with the question, does she mean the Monfwi riding? Just need some clarification, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: My Member's statement is on Tlicho region so I'm talking about Tlicho region and in Behchoko. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for the clarification. Based on the information from Housing NWT, with the housing authority in Behchoko we have four maintenance positions and four

administration positions within the authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker for that information. Can the Minister give us the average time a person is expected to be on the waitlist for a public housing unit when we have four maintenance people working there? So thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I can't provide an average time on the housing waitlist. I know there's -- from what I understand with the information, there is over 135 families on the housing waitlist for Behchoko, but I don't have an average time waitlist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have a lot of people on the waitlist for housing, and we know housing is a crisis in the whole of the Northwest Territories. But I think in Tlicho region, we are experiencing the worst, especially in Behchoko, so. And we have four admin staff, four maintenance people, and we have lots of houses that's in great need of housing repair, and we have about at least over ten houses that are boarded up. So with that in mind, can the Minister say how much time or money the Government of the Northwest Territories spends on collecting housing arrears and how much it costs to keep track of all these internal billings? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The time and money to collect and look at housing arrears is something that the work four administration staff do within the housing authority. But to let the Member know that we are working on a territorial housing needs assessment, and this information will hopefully be provided by spring with Housing NWT. But that includes all the unit condition ratings, the information from the bureau of statistics, internal reviews, working with housing authorities.

Something else that we're also doing with Housing NWT in the Member's riding is we're working with the Tlicho housing working group on any housing issues within the riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi on your final supplementary question.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: (audio) that response. So how much money is the department spending on collecting housing arrears to keep the office running? That's what I was trying to get at. Is it necessary for the

NWT Housing to exist? You know, because we're not getting anywhere with them.

So my final one, will the Minister commit to visiting Behchoko to see the conditions in some of the housing stock? Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister, I think it's important that I visit the communities, go into people's homes to look at the existing conditions that they live in public housing, and I have told the Member I am open for a visit and willing to go with her into Behchoko and to go to people's homes to talk to them about their living conditions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next on my list I have is I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 315-20(1):
SUPPORTS AND SERVICES IN
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SCHOOLS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in continuing with my -- with questions to support schools, working families, students, teachers, I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment how the department is working to support schools. And, of course, this requires coordination across multiple departments because there are a lot of requirements so we might jump around a bit, but I'm confident the Minister can answer it.

First off, there's a youth mental health crisis in the Northwest Territories, and our schools are on the frontline. So what are we doing to support them and now that we've tweaked the child -- the youth child counsellors program, we've seen changes to therapeutic -- or to the clinical services offered in schools. We've been taking a look at this. So what are we doing to ensure that these new supports, the way we've changed are working and that if schools need additional support, that it will be there for them? Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, both at the officials level, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has regular meetings with the education bodies themselves, and twice a year I get together with the education body chairs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Therapeutic services are another aspect that is important in schools as there is access to occupational therapists, speech language pathologists. These are highly technical

specialized roles that schools need to provide supports to students. They currently don't have access to these. How is the Minister going to ensure therapeutic services are provided in all of our schools in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret, I think, to anybody in the Northwest Territories that access to therapeutic services absolutely is important part of access to education. However, I'm not the Minister of health and social services. But I will continue to point out the need for the access to therapeutic services within our schools. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. To that point, one of the issues is the referral process that gets kids from the school to the health system. This is going to take someone to streamline that process and make it easier for that to happen. I suggest the Minister's in a good position to figure out who that person is if it's not herself. So would the Minister commit to working with school boards and health authority to streamline the referral process for students to get them the care they need? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a subject area that is very important to me, very near and dear to my heart. I can confirm to this House that the Minister of health and social services and I have started conversations to work through this. We recognize this as a challenge, and I can commit certainly to continuing that conversation. And I am also meeting today with the NWTTA and will continue to meet with education bodies, and I will continue to make myself available. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake. Final supplementary.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister's going to make herself available, but I'm going to keep asking these questions and I hope it's more than availability. We need some answers, we need some solutions, we need to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, another issue is there's no -- currently, the quality of school infrastructure is up to the school -- most school boards to care for in Yellowknife themselves. The GNWT owns those buildings in other communities and for other school districts. But there's no dedicated funding for technical assessments. Since the pandemic, many of those assessments have fallen behind. Will the Minister work with the Department of

Infrastructure, again, to find a way to ensure technical assessments are provided for all schools in the Northwest Territories on a regular basis and that that informs our capital planning? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to talk about technical assessments today with the Member. This one definitely bridges a relationship between my portfolio and one of my colleague's portfolio over in infrastructure. So Yellowknife schools were not originally included in the assessments for many years because they're not technically GNWT assets. However, because the GNWT funds the major capital upgrades, those buildings have been put back into rotation. And I can confirm for the Member that multiple Yellowknife schools are on the assessment schedule for next summer. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go on to my next on the list is from the Mackenzie Delta.

Okay. I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho. No questions.

I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 316-20(1):
NAMING OF GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDINGS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very excited. Mr. Speaker. It would be nice to end today -- well, we're not ending today per se, but, you know, work towards the end of today on a positive note. And the reason I'm bringing this up, in my Member's statement yesterday I talked about the naming of the Whitford building, Mr. Speaker. And there's not a specific guideline through the EIA or housing that says how do we need name buildings that are non-office buildings, but let's follow the office building process and protocol. And section number 5, Cabinet may approve a public engagement process, so may, to solicit name and ideas for owned buildings. But it also says that they could do it on themselves through their own process. And, of course, I want to highlight one sad note which is they only like to name buildings after people who are deceased sadly.

However, that being said, encapsulating everything I said yesterday in my Member's statement and today, would the Minister of housing be the champion to announce today before this House that she will go forward and advocate at the Cabinet table that we name the 53rd Street building, the barrier-free building,

the Whitford building from now and onto the future? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'll go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member puts me in a very awkward position because I want to be respectful to the memory of Mr. Tony Whitford but there is a process that we have to follow. There are policies we have to follow. So I'm willing to have a discussion within Cabinet to talk about this, but I can't make the announcement today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, item -- guidelines, checkbox number 5 says may create a process. So in other words, you don't have to have a process. We could have the political courage and excitement to do the right thing, Mr. Speaker. So I'm asking the Minister if she doesn't want to be the champion today -- that gives you a little bit of room -- maybe she could highlight before this House what process she speaketh of. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd have to look at the information to find out what exactly is the process to naming the building, the step-by-step process. We'll follow that process, and I'll work with the Member to ensure and provide him updates with the process itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife Centre. No further questions? Thank you.

Next on my list here I have is the Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 317-20(1):
AURORA COLLEGE POLYTECHNIC
TRANSITION

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I generally appreciate the rosy disposition of the Minister for ECE, I have to express a bit of confusion. Mr. Speaker, the college is bleeding staff. They're missing milestones. There's no public statements on the indications about the transition so I have to say I'm a bit confused. The Minister seems to be quite confident about the transition, but all the public indications are showing that it's not going well. So, Mr. Speaker, if things are going well, where are the results? Where's the urgency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I didn't particularly hear a specific question the Member wants me to answer other than where is the results. But I want to respond.

Absolutely, it is my goal to lead the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. That is what I've signed up to do, and that is what I'm doing. If I stand here and talk about doom and gloom, I'm not exactly leading people into prosperity, leading people into the next stages. I absolutely support, which is what I have said -- I support the transition and transformation of the Aurora College into a polytechnic, and I will continue to support that project as long as we are funding it, as long as we are -- as a government are funding it and expecting it. And that is through dollars that we approve in this House. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And while I appreciate the answer, the Minister's also responsible for mandate and direction, so it's not just dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard things such as the college has been approached by entities offering to build housing, offering to provide a campus even, and the board has been rejecting these offers. What is going on, Mr. Speaker? How could a board committed to transitioning to a polytechnic possibly want to turn away from such opportunities for this kind of collaboration? Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to accountability. What is the Minister's relationship with the board, what is the Minister doing to ensure that the board is advancing this transition at the pace that we need it to advance knowing that it is already off track? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm in a bit of a difficult situation here where I'm being held responsible, really, for operational items. And I'm not in charge. I do not have the authority over the operations of the college. However, what I do have control over is the mandate agreement which we set together which we're in the process of setting right now. I also have control over the accountability framework which was just put in place and I intend to use. I also do have control over the funding framework of post-secondary institutions and Aurora College, and I intend to use that as well. These are the three key tools that I have at my disposal and have authority over and will use in this process. That accountability framework is a key piece, and that was just put in place this summer. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister concerned about the milestones that the college is facing? Does the

Minister share my concern that the project appears to be significantly off track and that does not appear to be reversing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is always a red flag whether we miss any deadline whatsoever. It is always a red flag. We make deadlines which are commitments to the people of the Northwest Territories and the public. That is definitely a concern of mine. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to Frame Lake for final supplementary.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And knowing that we are seeing red flags, the question I have is, is the Minister willing to take decisive action, if necessary, to move the board forward, to move this project forward, to ensure that it gets back on track in a timely fashion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I intend to use the tools that I have at my disposal to guide Aurora College board of governors and to also support them as best as I can through this transformation. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 318-20(1):
NET-ZERO CLIMATE TARGETS FOR THE
MINING INDUSTRY

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my questions this time are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Still on the subject of net-zero climate targets but specifically with regard to industry and the mining industry. Has the Minister had conversations with existing mining operators, such as Rio Tinto or De Beers about their net-zero climate targets and opportunities for them to better achieve those targets in their NWT operations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to see some of the results of some of the efforts of diamond mines. Reo Tinto is a great example. They have -- as my colleague, the Minister of Infrastructure spoke to, they have their wind and solar farms that they use up at site. And I know that this is certainly not only a focus of theirs but a focus of multiple mining operations. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through those conversations, has the Minister been able to glean or identify any opportunities for further work in other areas, such as transportation, to reduce emissions and have more clean energy in those operations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in all of the conversations that I routinely have with industry, one of the things that comes up quite often is the relationship and significant pairing between clean strategic infrastructure development and attracting investment to the Northwest Territories, which the Member spoke about in their Member's statement today. Yes, absolutely, I am aware of programs that are tied to net-zero. We, in fact, as the GNWT are seeking funding through the critical minerals infrastructure fund that will help us advance clean energy in the Northwest Territories, and we will continue to look for these opportunities in order to not only support our own goals but also support the goals of industry as well. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So on the subject of critical minerals, in the Minister's conversations with mineral exploration companies in the critical minerals sector, have certain barriers been identified to those companies striving towards net-zero in the NWT, and could she enlighten as to what they may have discussed in those conversations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, industry has been very candid and transparent on this one. Their number one ask and barrier for investment attraction is clean energy. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to the Member from Yellowknife North. Final supplementary.

MS. MORGAN: That's okay, Mr. Speaker, I'm finished. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 319-20(1):
HUMANITARIAN STATE OF EMERGENCY
IN NORMAN WELLS

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My follow-up question on my questions earlier is to the Minister of MACA. And before I ask this question, I want to emphasize the crisis that we're experiencing here. I continuously get texts here. The text reads: \$1,500 for 280 liters,

one-quarter of a tank, for my fuel at the house tank. And it's not even the dead of winter yet. That's just one of many that I'm receiving. My question to the Minister is the Minister of MACA willing to invite mayor Frank Pope and proceed on setting up a meeting with the federal counterpart to address the situation in person; would the Minister commit to that? Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be more than happy to have that conversation with the Member to see what we can do. However, I think it's well aware with the Member, also my Cabinet counterparts, the work that's been going on. We've had a lot of federal engagement with the federal Ministers in regards to the situation in the Sahtu. I've received messages every day from the Member in regards to what's going on in the Sahtu. We are actioning it. I know my department's on it just about it every day at the capacity that we have. So I'm more than willing to discuss this with the Member and we could find solutions; however, I don't know what the face-to-face meeting with the federal government's going to do when we've already been there. I know the Member was in Ottawa also discussing with federal counterparts so it's not that they haven't heard us; they've heard us. It's how we're going to address this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister that is willing to look at this situation. Considering the fraction of the cost going for both leaders to Ottawa is critical to what is actually happening on the ground level back in Norman Wells, so I certainly welcome the opportunity to discuss details but that's my position on encouraging the Minister to make a commitment with the company of mayor Pope, proceed to Ottawa. Some things are just best said in person and keeping in mind that you got to also educate the bureaucracy of both levels of government to emphasize the urgent need for relief, that cost is happening now as we speak. So I look forward, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Minister on the details of scheduling. Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next on my list is the Member from Great Slave.

Frame Lake.

Okay, then, I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 320-20(1):
ASSESSMENTS AND SUPPORTS FOR
STUDENTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It must be the air conditioning in here, Mr. Speaker, or the sound of the air moving. It's hard to hear some days or sometimes today. Mr. Speaker, I was going to leave on a positive note but I'll make a list the good but not bad. The next question will be back to the Minister of education regarding supports for students. It's not terrible, but I'd like to hear what the Minister says -- the issue's terrible but not the questions per se.

We were recently at a meeting with both school boards. And I know this applies to all school boards. This is not news to me, I know it's not news to the regions, whether you're in the Delta or you're in the Sahtu. Students are entering the education system unassessed, whether it's their physio, their hearing, or their speech. And, of course, this burden then becomes a problem for the schools which is the teachers, etcetera, support staff, and certainly the financing. So I'm going to ask the Minister what is she able to do in her capacity as the Minister, and potentially working with the department of health, to turn around these non-assessments anymore? Because I'm old enough to remember I went through them as a young person. Other kids went through them as they were going through but they're no longer happening and hence these problems are being forced or dumped on to the school systems to address. So I'm asking her how does she see we could help support the school systems? Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was in the same meeting as the Member and heard the concerns from the school board, and what I can commit to is certainly working with my colleague from health and social services. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually couldn't hear her answer but I'm assuming maybe we could look at this again, is that what can she do as Minister to financially support the school system if the Department of Health and Social Services is no longer doing this. We have dental services -- we found ways to do things. In other words, like, for example, Inuvik does dental supports when it can. I don't even know if they've done it recently. But I've seen seen the room that they've done that to support families on the health care and the young people. So what can the Minister do to ensure that, for example, speech, physio, and health care -- health assessments for young people coming into the school systems are done, or can they facilitate them in the schools to ensure that students have the best

opportunity and the teachers are well resourced to manage these challenges? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said I can certainly work with the Minister of health and social services. These are very important things that we're talking about. Access to therapeutic services is critical for access to education. But, you know, I'm not going to stand here and take over the mandate of health and social services because it's not fair to our education bodies, it's not fair to our teachers. They're not clinicians, and they are not able to take this on, neither are the education bodies. So I'm very keen to work with health and social services on this one, but I'm not keen to also expect teachers or the education bodies to start administering clinical requirements. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard that response loud and clear and I also had the earpiece. That's said, what has been done to date? Because I was speaking to the school boards and their concerns about how much resources they're dedicating to address these particular needs in these students. So what's being done to date and how long has this been going on? The Minister has been Minister for a year, so she must be aware of how we're trying to address the current problem. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the current situation is absolutely there are a number of vacancies, which we've heard from the Minister of health about, in the realm of therapeutic services. I've certainly let my concerns be known. I have met with multiple officials from the Department of Health and Social Services, along with education, culture and employment, with both Ministers present, to share concerns about this one and figure out kind of what are the next steps here. As far as the education, culture and employment department is concerned, what has been done there is really addressing training desires from classroom assistants and education assistants. So one of the things that was brought forward through education bodies was a desire to have more training for classroom assistants. So this past year, we have had our first graduation -- or graduating class from the -- through a partnership with Douglas College, and we have graduated 24, as a start, classroom assistants. And they were able to do their training virtually online, so there was no disruption to the community and the supports available in small communities to students. And then they were able to also take what they were learning through their courses and apply them right away in the classroom. And so that to me is a good news story of one of the things that

education, culture and employment is doing. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife Centre. Final supplementary.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as an example of this burden falling on the school system, which is actually taking money out of the education process that it was intended for, these school boards, particularly in Yellowknife -- and I wish I could speak to the regional communities as well -- but that said they ended up hiring their own speech pathologists, and they were finding they could find them. In other words, they put out advertisements. They were getting people interested in the jobs. They've hired them. And they're funding them within. That really is education dollars for the old ABCs, 123s, but yet they're spending so much energy, time that's inefficient for what they're intended to do. What can the Minister do to support this gap that these school boards are now carrying that is a health problem, as she said earlier in the previous answer to one of my questions? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the same time that I'm meeting with the Minister of health and social services, I'm also doing research on what are other options and what are other jurisdictions doing. That is work that I am doing as a Minister because I recognize that there is a gap here. There absolutely -- I want to say there absolutely is a gap here. I think it's important that we acknowledge that.

Some of this gap is being funded through programs like Jordan's Principle. We currently have a tremendous amount of money coming from Jordan's Principle into the territory into our education system. In addition to that, I'm looking at ways to support education bodies but not by deciding on my own what they need, by actually ensuring that our officials are having conversations about, what about this, what about that, and exploring different ideas about what might work. I don't have unlimited dollars to make something work, but I do acknowledge that this is a gap and one that needs to be addressed. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I have Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 321-20(1):
AURORA COLLEGE TRANSFORMATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join in the line of questioning that several of my colleagues have brought

today around Aurora College. Aurora College says that 83 percent of its milestones have been achieved. The news reporting that the honourable Member from Frame Lake mentioned, if you actually read the reporting, there's some shocking details in there. The former research chair is quoted as saying there wasn't a plan, there wasn't an idea of how we could get the chairs up and running. This was only a year ago. So the Minister is not responsible for Aurora College, but she's answerable to Aurora College on an operational level. When she sees the college reporting that it's got so much done, you know, nearly mission accomplished, we're paused until we can figure out, you know, some new mandates but the staff they're hiring are quitting and saying nothing's set up, not even an office chair for this individual to sit down on, what is she doing to help the college succeed? Saying that it's not my responsibility, it's theirs, and I'm going to work with them, we need more than answerability, we need accountability, and quite frankly in the 18th Assembly that's exactly what we did. That's where this whole process started. We pulled the reins back. We built a transition plan. Is it time to take the reins away from Aurora College, put them back in the hands of the Minister, and get this done right this time? Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really want to see this transformation succeed because this transformation is not just about bricks and mortar. This transformation is about ensuring that we have a quality post-secondary institution providing education that leads to jobs that we need homegrown people to be able to take advantage of, that we need to be able to attract to our knowledge economy, to be able to do research. I believe in this transformation wholeheartedly, and I want to see it happen. I'm prepared to work within my authority to see that happen but acknowledge that this is a relationship that needs to be fostered, supported, and that needs to be able to given the time to grow. I am like the Member, I want to see change right away, but acknowledge that change like this does take time. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they've been given time. They've been given years to get this done, and they're still struggling. So clearly something isn't working. How much more time is the Minister going to give Aurora College to fail? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they have had about a year and a half as a new board.

They now have a new president that they are working with as well. In the last year and a half that the board has been around, they've also now, in November of last year, gotten one of -- it's a trimerical governance system. So one of the additional boards was put in place in November of 2023, and then the Indigenous knowledge-keepers board was put in place in April of this year. And so they are putting all of these pieces together to ensure that they have a functioning trimerical board system and are doing their best not only to make hard decisions about what the future of Aurora College looks like but also go through the transformation process. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, if we can't attract people to help lead the transition from within the institution, then it's not going to work. When we see news stories like this, it sends a signal to the rest of Canada that we are not -- that this institution isn't working and isn't interested in change. So how is the Minister going to change that reputation? How is she going to help the board market their institution as one that's serious about change? That's why we're having this conversation today, because people don't believe they're serious so how is she going to help them do that? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: I'm going to be a hundred percent candid with you, Mr. Speaker, just like I was with the board. I'm going to tell them those exact words like I did less than a month ago. When I sat with the board and they told me what their priorities were, they turned to me and said, what are we missing? And I said, you guys are missing buzz. You guys are missing telling the story about the work that you are doing. So you need to generate that buzz by sharing your excitement and sharing your hard work with the people of the Northwest Territories. And that is the responsibility of the board. I will continue to encourage them to do that. And in the meantime, I will encourage them to do the hard work that we expect them to do. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake. Final supplementary.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister consider putting some accountability measures behind the dollars that we're giving to Aurora College? Change the funding program so they are tied to outcomes and if those outcomes aren't met, they don't get their funding and they have to seek performance elsewhere. That way we can ensure that they're performing. Because if they fail in the outcomes that the government designs that the Minister is accountable for, then they don't get funded. And they're not

going to exist very long if they can't get funded. So will the Minister do that; will she put firm outcomes attached to the funding so this transition will succeed, or the institution will have to change dramatically? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past summer the accountability framework was put in place for Aurora College. This framework is relevant for all post-secondary institutions in the Northwest Territories. It outlines reporting required by ECE each year and helps to identify the financial stability of institutions and if programs are operating effectively. So I look forward to using that framework in years to come. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Members, the time allotted for the oral questions has ended. We'll continue on.

On the item number 8, written questions. Number 9, return to written questions. 10, replies to the Commissioner's address. Number 11, petitions. Number 12, report of committee on the review of bills. 13, reports on standing and special committees. 14, tabling of documents. I'm going to go to the Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 193-20(1):
2025-2026 CAPITAL ESTIMATES

TABLED DOCUMENT 194-20(1):
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES SECTION II INTERIM NON-
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: 2025-2026 Capital estimates and Public accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories Section II Interim Non-Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year ended March 31, 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 195-20(1):
PROSPER NWT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-
2024

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Prosper NWT's Annual Report, 2023-2024. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Go to the Minister of MACA. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 196-20(1):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 186-20(1): ADDRESSING
EROSION IN AKLAVIK

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 186-20(1), Addressing Erosion in Aklavik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Number 15, notice of motions. Number 16, motions. 17, notice of motion for the 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, Tabled Document 193-20(1), with the Member from from the Deh Cho in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya): I now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise today in order to report progress. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. We'll continue on. May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole. Member from the Deh Cho.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MRS. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 193-20(1), and I would like to report progress. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, Members. Do I have a seconder for the report of the Committee of the Whole? Member for Sahtu. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion has

been carried, and the report of the Committee of the Whole has been concurred with.

--- Carried

DEPUTY SPEAKER: 21, report of the Committee of the Whole. 22, third reading of bills. 23, 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 Monday, October 21st at 1:30 p.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
 - Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2024
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

- Committee Report 9-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Bill 8: An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
- Tabled Document 193-20(1), 2025-2026 Capital Estimates

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. It's Friday; everybody have a great weekend.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, October 21st, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

