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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, December 12, 2019

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer**---Prayer**

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Colleagues, this is a special day for a number of reasons. Obviously, it's the last day of the First Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly, and we will take some time to celebrate that later this afternoon. Before that, I'd like to take, first, a few minutes to shed light on the career of the Legislative Assembly's longest-serving and most deeply respected official, Mr. Darrin Ouellette. Early next year, Darrin will retire from a career of over 25 years with the NWT public service and the Legislative Assembly.

Prior to joining our team for the first time as operations assistant clerk during the 15th Legislative Assembly, Darrin served what was then known as the Department of Transportation. He also served in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, as it was then known. In these roles he had the opportunity to travel throughout the Northwest Territories and develop lasting connections with Indigenous and community leaders.

Darrin very quickly developed a reputation as someone who genuinely believed in the inherent right to self-government and the potential of northern families, communities, and governments to build capacity from within and find homegrown solutions to the challenges they faced. He is well known to have little time for fluff or for solutions that were made to gloss over root problems rather than tackle them head-on. Darrin is known as a proponent of real action, actions that actually helped communities to improve the lives of our residents.

In 2011, Darrin came back to the Assembly after a brief hiatus. He joined the senior management team as director of Corporate Services, and later as deputy clerk of Member and Precinct Services. On many occasions he served as acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Darrin had many successes in these senior roles; too many to mention here today, but one that comes immediately to mind is

the leadership he demonstrated following the shooting on Parliament Hill in 2014. While many legislatures went into lock-down mode, Darrin was able to step back and recommend improvements to our security systems that were both effective and responsive, but also consistent with the idea of our Assembly as the place of the people.

Darrin has been involved in the security and upkeep of this building since its inception. In his time as a director and deputy clerk, he has worked tirelessly to ensure this place reflects the culture and unique form of democracy of the Northwest Territories and that it is accessible to all residents and visitors from abroad.

Darrin, on behalf of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your many years of outstanding service to both the government and Legislature of the NWT. You have provided calm leadership through some rocky times and you will be very much missed; by myself, by the Clerk, and by all the current and former Members and staff you have worked with. We will miss your leadership and your wisdom, but most of all we'll just miss you, the great team-building events you organized, your laughter and humble sense of humour, your homemade bannock, golf tournaments on sand and snow, and your always calm and reassuring demeanour.

On behalf of the Members and staff of the Assembly, I wish you and Donna Marie all the happiness and adventures you so richly deserve in the next stage of your lives. I hope you will always consider this place a home away from home and know that you are most welcome to come visit us, early and often. Thank you, Members.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister for Environment and Natural Resources.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 8-19(1):
HUNTER EDUCATION

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hunting has a long and honourable

history in the Northwest Territories. At the heart of this tradition is a deep respect for the wildlife, the environment and the people of this land. Residents of the Northwest Territories have told us they want to make sure these values and practices are passed on to the next generation of harvesters.

During the 18th Legislative Assembly, this government made a commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories to develop a Hunter Education program for youth and new hunters. This new program promotes best practices for safe and responsible hunting. It also highlights how the Department of Environment and Natural Resources works with partners across the territory to manage and protect our wildlife.

Mr. Speaker, as we begin the 19th Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to announce Hunter Education is now available across the Northwest Territories. You can find it online, free of charge, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources website. For those who prefer to learn in a classroom setting, the course can be offered in communities, by request.

This program has been years in the making, and reflects a true partnership between:

- Local and Indigenous governments and organizations;
- Co-management boards and agencies;
- Communities, elders, hunters; and
- The Government of the Northwest Territories.

Hunter Education respects the treaty and harvesting rights of Indigenous hunters, and has been carefully designed to reflect input from Indigenous governments and communities.

Mr. Speaker, as of January 1st, Hunter Education will be mandatory for new hunters before they can get their hunting licences. This includes resident hunters, and non-resident hunters without a guide. Hunters who have been convicted of violations under the Wildlife Act may also be required to take the course.

Hunter Education is not a requirement for General Hunting Licence holders or for harvesters asserting their Aboriginal rights. Hunters who have had a hunting licence in the last five years, or have taken a similar course in other jurisdictions, also don't have to take the course. That being said, we recommend all harvesters take Hunter Education, regardless of experience. Even the most seasoned hunters can benefit from the wisdom of elders and long-time hunters that is reflected in this program.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources remains committed to working with Indigenous governments and organizations, renewable resources boards, and other partners to ensure the wise use and protection of wildlife in the Northwest Territories.

Our hope is that the knowledge shared through hunter education can help keep our wildlife populations healthy and sustainable so the people of the Northwest Territories can harvest now and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 9-19(1):
OPENING OF THE NEW FORT SMITH
CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX – WOMEN'S UNIT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to announce that female inmates have moved into the new women's unit at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex. I had the pleasure of touring the new unit last week. I was impressed by the care and attention that has gone into designing a facility that is tailored to meeting the needs of female inmates in our care and specifically in the Northwest Territories.

The new unit, which has beds for 23 women, is the first correctional facility designed from the outset to meet the needs of women in the Northwest Territories. It offers dedicated areas where women can receive education, training, counselling, and have better access to northern-developed and northern-specific programming.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, by keeping female inmates in the Northwest Territories, they will have the opportunity to stay closer to their family supports, which we know is invaluable to their overall rehabilitation.

Functional program space was central to the design philosophy, to provide inmates with access to social and educational programs that give them an opportunity to turn their lives around. For example, inmates continue to help prepare daily meals, but they can do so now in the new teaching kitchen, where they can work with elders to prepare traditional food together.

Female inmates also now have access to spiritual and cultural spaces in the unit. The new ceremonial room is available for cultural activities like traditional crafts and to hold sharing circles. It is the only correctional facility in the Northwest Territories with a functional air-venting system to allow for on-site smudging. Elders have expressed their appreciation to having dedicated spaces inside and outside the facility where their valuable services

can be more respectfully shared and received within a natural landscape that was considered during the building of the facility.

The new women's unit also has a resident nurse who is now on site and makes it possible for female inmates to come into the facility with infant children. This allows a mother to bond with her child and have appropriate facilities to care for her infant while serving her sentence.

Mr. Speaker, while I was touring the facility, I had the opportunity to meet and talk directly with staff. As someone with extensive background within the legal system, I was pleased to hear the positive response from inmates and staff to the new communal spaces, program rooms, and more natural grounds.

Before the new unit officially received inmates, Department of Justice staff held a public opening in late August, which included tours inside and out. I know that my colleague, the Member from Thebacha, attended those ceremonies along with over 100 other people who took advantage of that opportunity to see inside the facility in their own home community.

This correctional complex has a long history in Fort Smith and has had the benefit of great community support over the years. I would like to thank the residents of Fort Smith for their continued support. This new unit, built with local C.A.B. Construction, will help women with their rehabilitation for years to come.

I would also like to acknowledge the very hard work of the correctional service. They provide an essential public service in our communities. We know that many people who come into our correctional facilities may themselves be hurt, traumatized, or vulnerable. Yet, each day, our dedicated corrections staff work to help inmates in their care become stronger, with the life skills needed on their path of recovery. They are a critical part of helping those who are ready to make positive changes in their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 10-19(1):
911 IMPLEMENTATION

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to provide an update to the House on the launch of the territorial-wide 911 system. On November 4th of this year, the new NWT 911 service will enhance our ability to connect

residents and visitors with emergency services such as police, fire, and ambulance.

NWT residents and visitors are now able to use the universally recognized number, 911, to access the existing emergency numbers in 33 communities of the Northwest Territories. NWT 911 is fully bilingual in French and English, and callers can be connected with interpretation services for NWT Indigenous and other languages. For callers who have hearing or speech communication impairments, technologies are available to ensure the service is accessible.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT 911 program service includes over-the-phone pre-arrival emergency medical instructions such as basic first aid. I can confirm NWT 911 has already provided life-saving medical care over the phone on a number of calls, including:

- instructions on what to do for a heart attack;
- how to address CPR;
- how to stop the bleeding from a serious wound; and
- telling callers how to administer Narcan for drugs and overdoses.

Mr. Speaker, since the previous government committed to implement 911, a great deal of work and collaboration has gone into making NWT 911 a reality. In 2019 alone, there have been several important milestones, including:

- the establishment of new legislation and regulations;
- the creation of an emergency communications centre;
- meeting with all community governments on emergency response plans;
- the recruitment and training of 911 staff; and
- the launch of a public awareness campaign to inform residents and visitors that 911 is now available in the NWT.

I want to thank all those involved in putting the program in place, especially the community governments, for their commitment to improving public safety and security across the NWT. Now that we have launched 911, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will continue to monitor this initiative. The Northwest Territories 911 program includes ongoing quality control procedures, such as improvement and program evaluation to ensure the program continues to meet national standards and accreditation.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that NWT 911 is part of an integrated system that includes community dispatch services, first responders, organizations in communities, and volunteers across the territory. I wish to commend all officials and first responders for their work in keeping our residents and visitors safe.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to speaking to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight to provide a full briefing and update on the implementation of the NWT 911 program. I will be inviting all Members of the House to the 911 call centre for a tour of the facility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture & Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 11-19(1):
AMENDMENTS TO THE EMPLOYMENT
STANDARDS ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our greatest northern resource is our people, and it is our responsibility to invest in and take steps to ensure their health and well-being.

On January 1, 2020, Northwest Territories residents will be able to access new and enhanced types of employment leave to protect their jobs when faced with important or challenging moments in life.

These challenges align with the Government of Canada's amendments to the Employment Insurance program and the Canada Labour Code and allow the Northwest Territories to remain competitive with other jurisdictions by offering employees the flexibility to balance personal responsibilities while maintaining their employment status.

Mr. Speaker, employers understand the complex needs of their employees and are increasingly looking for ways to support them and their responsibilities outside of work.

The birth or adoption of a child into a family is an exciting event and one that should be cherished. To better support parents and provide them with more flexibility, we have extended the length of time an eligible employee can take parental leave from 37 weeks of unpaid leave to up to 61 weeks. Two-parent families, including adoptive couples, will also be able to access an additional eight weeks of unpaid leave for the second parent.

Families sometimes face challenging circumstances, and one of the most difficult times in life is when a loved one is critically ill or injured. When faced with the added responsibilities of

providing support for a family member, residents should be able to both care for their family and protect their job. A new family caregiver leave will provide up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave for eligible employees to provide care or support for an adult family member who is critically ill or injured, and up to 37 weeks for a child family member.

Compassionate care leave will also extend from eight to 27 weeks of unpaid leave each year, to allow employees time to provide end-of-life care for a family member who is gravely ill or at risk of death.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories has a domestic violence rate approximately eight times higher than the national average. Family violence is a serious issue that affects too many of our residents.

In addition to the work by other departments and partner organizations, this legislation is also introducing new family-violence leave to protect employees and allow them time to seek help. This new leave will provide five days of paid and five days of unpaid annual emergency leave for employees experiencing domestic violence. Up to 15 additional unpaid weeks will also be available with prior written notice. This leave could be taken to seek medical attention, attend counselling or legal appointments, access victim services, and for a variety of other purposes.

Introducing family violence leave is an important part of protecting and supporting workers in times of need.

Mr. Speaker, the changes to the Employment Standards Act also include new definitions to recognize family-like relationships and to clarify and better protect youth, those in the construction industry, and domestic workers. Domestic workers, such as nannies or housekeepers, will now be included in the scope of the Employment Standards Act, providing them with an employment-standards minimum and ensuring job protection.

Mr. Speaker, we know many employers are already supporting and encouraging their employees during important life events. It is our intention that these new and enhanced types of leave will provide recognized and consistent guidelines for employers to achieve their goals as they invest in their employees and the Northwest Territories. As well, we want to ensure that employers have the information they need to apply this new legislation to their workplace. We will be conducting an advertising blitz in the new year to inform and update employers throughout the Northwest Territories and ensure a successful transition.

By introducing and strengthening types of leave, the Government of the Northwest Territories is reinforcing worker protection, making it easier for northern residents to take time off work to care for themselves and their families. At the same time, we recognize the work that employers are already doing, and will continue to do with the support of this legislation, to make the Northwest Territories a competitive and attractive place to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go to item number 4 on the orders of the day. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Michele Thoms, vice-principal of Ecole St. Patrick High School, teacher advisor to Students Against Destructive Driving, formerly Students Against Drinking and Driving, and the person who started our NWT chapter of SADD 25 years ago. With Ms. Thoms today are a number of her SADD students, including Kam Lake residents and youth activists Victoria Hamm and Jaslynn Menton. I would also like to recognize in the gallery today Kam Lake residents Sara Minogue and Sarah Kalnay-Watson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my niece, Alexis McLeod, who actually is a resident of Yellowknife, and one of my relatives, Jennifer Mager. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize the students who are here today from Ecole St. Patrick High School who are with the SADD group and who live in Yellowknife Centre, including Evan Round and Delina Berhe. I would also like to recognize my constituent and the leader of this group and congratulate her for all her hard work. That is Ms. Michele Thoms. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to recognize one of my constituents, Brianna Hardisty. She is with the SADD group today. Earlier, we had another Frame Lake Page, Monika Kunderlik. I want to recognize her work. She is a repeat Page, so very pleased to have her here earlier in the sitting. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you for allowing me to jump the queue, Mr. Speaker. I do have some members of Yellowknife South, residents, who are also in the gallery here with the SADD group from Yellowknife South. While I don't see her, I know she is a member, and she happens to be my neighbour, Kailyn Unka. I think she is up there somewhere. Julia Leonardis, Anna Lalonde, Jennifer Mager, and Cullen Snyder, welcome.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize some of my constituents with the SADD group. That would be Jaedenz White, I am sorry if I said your name wrong; Hannah Patzer; and Ellie Taylor. There was one on the list who didn't have a riding. I will recognize James Rose, as well, because I am not sure which riding he is in, so thought I would mention him, too. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three people who I would like to recognize from the SADD group, students from the Range Lake riding, even though one of them is a niece for the MLA of Inuvik Twin Lakes, still lives in my riding, Alexis McLeod, Makayla Lane, and Abigail Beck. Thank you for what you do, and thank you for being here.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to have an audience with us today. Mahsi.

Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPAIRED DRIVING

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, an average of four Canadians will be killed and 175 injured in motor vehicle crashes caused by impaired driving. With the holiday season upon us, I want to remind everyone of the devastating consequences of impaired driving and to acknowledge the efforts of those working hard to eliminate the needless devastation it causes.

Impaired driving ruins lives and tears families apart. Unfortunately, I know this all too well because it has left an irrevocable impact on my own family. Mothers Against Drunk Driving estimate that almost 1,500 people are killed and more than 63,000 are injured every year in Canada in impairment-related motor vehicle crashes.

Families are left to deal with the devastating loss of loved ones, and those who survive often find their lives permanently altered by the lasting, disabling effects of physical and emotional injury. First responders must deal with the carnage on our roads, and communities must come to terms with the loss of valuable contributors to community life.

This year, the NWT chapter of Students Against Destructive Driving achieved a milestone 25 years of advocacy in Northwest Territories. I want to pay tribute to Michele Thoms, vice-principal of Ecole St. Patrick School and the teacher advisor to SADD, for her 25-year commitment to the cause, the safety of her students, and the safety of all Northerners.

As an intern with the Department of Transportation, one of the first projects I was able to work on was the strategy to reduce impaired driving, under the leadership of Minister Michael McLeod.

The project was a testament to the power of consistent and effective youth activism as the St. Pat's SADD group contributed directly to this legislation. For this reason, I also want to express my sincere appreciation to the many youth advocates who have participated in SADD since its inception.

Mr. Speaker, impaired driving is not only caused by alcohol but also by drugs. We have just passed the one-year mark since the legalization of cannabis. I want to ask every Northerner to make the choice not to drive when impaired. Take a taxi, be the designated driver, stay the night at a friend's, or leave your car behind because, even though your car might not be there in the morning, thankfully, you will be.

While impaired driving rates across Canada have continued to decline over the last 25 years, impaired driving rates in the NWT are still five times the national average. As citizens and as a government, we must do more to make impaired driving a thing of the past. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CELL PHONE COVERAGE

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind everyone: 'tis the season to be jolly. Many amongst us may have teenaged children, nephews, and nieces, and we all know what they will want for Christmas.

There are many hunters and trappers eking out a living out on the traplines. This is tough and, most times, dangerous work setting Conibear traps.

There are commercial fishermen out on the frozen lakes, whether by snowmobiles or Bombardiers, to provide fish to the people or restaurants.

We have infrastructure highways employees out on the highways on a daily basis, keeping the roads cleared and safe for the travelling public.

We can't forget about the main person, good, old, jolly St. Nick, better known as Santa Claus, riding with his reindeer and sleigh full of gifts, going from one community to the next and on. Even Santa has company in the skies if the airplanes may be circling his sleigh to have a better look.

This past October, the GNWT rolled out 911 service for our vast territory. This stemmed from the diligent work of the past Assemblies, and for this, the territory is forever grateful.

The range of coverage for cellphone service is limited to the immediate area of the municipalities. When you travel out of the municipal cellphone range, one may get lucky and find a hot spot and may get one bar for a signal on their cellphone, but those are few and far between.

We have to be mindful of the many people who are out on the land, highways, or, in Santa's case, up in the air. They all face dangers related to their profession and do require an avenue to call for help.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Ho-Ho-Ho related to the cellphone range outside of the municipal boundaries. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON VALUE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to end the first session of this new Assembly by thanking the public service. In this House, part of our job is to be critical of government, but I want to

assure everyone who works in our public service that we are grateful for the work they do, and being a government worker can often be a thankless job.

We elected officials must remember that the GNWT is not some amorphous, impersonal machine, but it is made up of hard-working people who take pride in their jobs. It is our nurses who heal the sick. It is our teachers who are raising the next generation of strong minds. It is social workers, policy wonks, scientists, firefighters, road maintenance workers, and so much more.

To all of the members of the public service, I know, at times, that the demands of this House can be difficult. Sometimes you just get that program finally implemented and working, and some MLA tells you to change it, but I ask you to be patient. This leads me to my next point.

We in this House are not the experts. We are elected to lead, but we can only do so if provided advice from those in government who are the experts. We can only make truly informed decisions if we are provided all of the facts and options for solving our territory's problems.

To our public service, I encourage you to know that this is a new Assembly, an Assembly willing to do things differently, and know that we want new ideas. In fact, we want old ideas, too. Perhaps that program that was denied by the last administration, perhaps this is the time to push it through.

I am reminded, when we met our new ombud, that a Member wanted to thank Wendy Bisaro, who served as a Member two Assemblies ago. This is a recognition that progress is often slow, and all of our progress is built on the Members who served before us.

To our new Ministers, I encourage you to get into your regions, talk with your front-line workers, hear their concerns, and let's give them a few early wins. You must trust your senior management, but you must also remember that a department is so much more than its headquarters. It is more than its senior bureaucrats, who often have a lens that may be risk-adverse and not exactly a reflection of what is happening on the ground.

I ask all of us, and mostly, I thank the public service, and I encourage them to feel bold, feel empowered, and let's deliver programs and services that our Northerners need. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR ADEQUATE AND AFFORDABLE
HOUSING

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you are aware, housing is a basic necessity that everyone needs, especially here in the North, where temperatures swing dramatically. Recently, we received the NWT Bureau of Statistics 2019 Housing Indicators Community Survey. Shortly after that, CBC released a new story in which it was outlined, and some have called housing here in the North a crisis. This is not the first time in recent memory that this term has been used or hinted at to describe our housing situation. Last year, a housing summit was held in Inuvik where similar issues were raised.

Housing in every community throughout the Northwest Territories is getting worse, Mr. Speaker. The 2019 NWT Community Survey says that 42 percent of all houses in the territory have at least one major problem, and this is up from 20 percent in the 2016 federal census.

CBC compared the results of the 2019 NWT Community Survey with the 2016 census results and found a dramatic change in the number of households with core housing needs, a term used by national housing authorities to determine the number of households that are too expensive for residents and are not suitable in other ways, like overcrowding or the need for major repairs.

In Inuvik, we have had some new additions to housing that was done in partnership with the Inuvialuit, but this was just replacements. It was done with the Inuvialuit, but this is a far cry from what the actual need is in my community. This is a great example of GNWT working with Indigenous governments to bring more housing online in the communities. More of this type of collaboration needs to occur.

We have had people waiting for housing and have been on housing lists for years because the demand for housing is simply too much for our current allocations. We also have prices of homes in Inuvik that simply put owning a home out of the reach of many of my constituents. We need to find creative ways to help address this issue and help our residents have adequate affordable housing.

We need to fix this, Mr. Speaker. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for housing as to what this government is going to do to address this issue, because it is clearly getting worse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIFE DAY SHELTER POLICY

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I live downtown in my constituency, and the operation of the combined day shelter and sobering centre is a focus for many of my constituents and, indeed, for Yellowknifers in general. I am committed to making downtown a safer place for everyone to be.

I have spoken in this House about the gains made downtown by having both GNWT and the City of Yellowknife invest in programs for people who are intoxicated and/or homeless. These programs have produced good outcomes for clients, including keeping them safe and connecting them to housing and treatment services, but, as a recently completed evaluation shows, the day shelter's mandate is unclear.

Mr. Speaker, the operator of the combined centre, along the territorial health authority, has attempted to answer this question by banning people with homes from the day shelter. This change was poorly communicated, with a sign on the door a couple of days before the new rule was to come into force last month.

Clients and other service providers responded negatively to what they perceived as a surprise change, and one that may be dangerous to clients, especially in the winter. In the latest attempt to get the messaging right, the operator paid for two full-page ads in the newspaper to make its case.

Mr. Speaker, there are some simple lessons to learn here. The first is to share and discuss the evaluation findings and proposed changes with other service providers. I am unclear of why that didn't happen, but it obviously should have.

Second, service providers need some kind of forum to discuss services for clients because, in many cases, there is an overlapping client group who access a number of different agencies. Other communities have interagency committees. Why doesn't Yellowknife? Is this work that the Health and Social Services authority could facilitate?

Third, people who have housing shouldn't be treated as if shelter is their only need.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. I have met people at the day shelter who go there to socialize, to take a break from escalating violence at home, or to get something to eat. I am unclear how these needs are going to be met now. Having made this change at the day shelter, the department needs to come up with a plan along with the new interagency

committee about how to meet the complex needs of people who do have housing.

Mr. Speaker, this change comes at a time when the weather is a serious risk to those without homes. I appreciate they can go to the day shelter for warmth and safety. Now, we have to turn our attention to the population who are no longer welcome there. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to focus on how we should empower our communities and our people. This is part of the discussion we had on our priorities and mandates of the Northwest Territories. We need to allow communities to build capacities and start making their own decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the largest Indigenous community in the NWT. The population of Behchoko is around 2,500. Over 90 percent are Tlicho citizens. Behchoko is a fast-growing community, with highly educated community members. More than 200 individuals have post-secondary education. These statistics show that Tlicho people have the education and ability to take on positions within the GNWT. We have the ability to assess our own community needs and manage programs based on those needs.

Twenty years ago, Mr. Speaker, I was a community empowerment coordinator in Behchoko for MACA. At that time, all the MACA positions were housed in Behchoko, including the superintendent. This department was working at full capacity, with all positions situated in Behchoko. Twenty years later, there are seven positions serving the North Slave region. North Slave includes all Tlicho communities. Four of these positions, three of the most senior positions, are based out of Yellowknife. Headquarters is making all of our decisions about our communities, from Yellowknife.

How is this decentralization? How is this community empowerment?

Not only this, Mr. Speaker; I have been told that, in the past, the North Slave superintendent rarely came to Behchoko and local staff were required to accommodate him in Yellowknife for meetings. It is my understanding that there is a new superintendent also working in Yellowknife today. Perhaps she will be able to spend more time in the community.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about communities taking ownership and being their own decision-making authorities, we have to start empowering them. GNWT positions need to be in a community or regions to serve the needs of our communities. We have to move away from a top-down approach and allow grassroots people to make their own decisions. This will be a true reconciliation. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF 2019 ABORIGINAL SPORTS
CIRCLE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. For my Member's statement today I'd like to recognize three constituents of mine who were recently awarded the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the NWT for their achievement in sports.

The name of the first individual is Bayleigh Chaplin of Deninu Kue, who won the Langugae and Culture Award. Cabin Radio wrote a great story about each of the winners, and wrote this about Bayleigh:

Bayleigh is always willing to lend a helping hand and, despite hard times in life, she always puts on a strong face and takes part in cultural activities and events. When she isn't on the field, training in her own sports and activities, such as archery or Dene Games, she is constantly making an effort to be out on the land. She also loves to participate in cultural events such as bannock making, assembling fish nets, cultural crafts, making dry meat, and storytelling.

Mr. Speaker, the second individual I'd like to recognize is Dianna Beck of Ndilo, who won the Community Builder Award. Again, a piece was written about Dianna and had this to say:

Dianna Beck and her family are well known in the dog mushing community. She is recognized for her hard work, dedication, and active involvement with the Canadian Championship Dog Derby in Yellowknife. Dianna does a lot of work with the Dog Derby, namely her efforts behind the scenes that often go unnoticed, until now. Dianna's efforts keep this tradition alive. All of her success and accomplishments are a result of her incredible compassion and love for sport.

The third constituent I'd like to recognize is Aaron Plotner, who works at Ndilo's K'alemi Dene School and won the Coach Award. Once again, this was said about Aaron:

Aaron Plotner plays a huge role in the after-school activities by coaching a variety of sports teams. He

recognizes the importance of building relationships with students and encouraging them to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. Aaron attends every day with a goal to make a difference for the students at the K'alemi Dene School. Aaron is an outstanding coach and a fantastic role model through his actions and encouragement for students to live their best and healthiest lives.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate these three constituents for their outstanding contribution to the communities and the world of sport. I hope to see each of you continue to prosper in these areas and beyond. With that, I'll have a few questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASE FEE INCREASES**

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to talk about the issue of recreational land lease rental fees being increased on cabin owners who reside on territorial land in the NWT.

On April 1, 2018, the Department of Lands increased the minimum land lease rent fees on all cabin owners and subsistence harvesters who have recreational land leases on territorial lands. The fees went up 560 percent, going from an annual amount of \$150 up to \$840. This is an extraordinary fee increase to impose all at once. These fee increases have disrupted many people, not only in Fort Smith, but people in all regions across the territory, as well.

I know that our new Minister of Lands is well aware of this issue, because he made numerous Members' statements on it and asked the former Minister of Lands about these fee increases many times during the previous Assembly. In fact, I counted at least 31 occasions during the 18th Assembly where the Member for Nahendeh spoke and asked questions about land leases, so he is familiar with the file and the issues these increases bring to people. Having said that, now that he is Minister of Lands, I am wondering if he is going to make any changes regarding these large fee increases for recreational territorial leases.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister holds considerable discretionary power over these types of issues, and, with this being a new Assembly with different priorities, I see potential for a change in course on this file, so I urge the Minister of Lands to reconsider these exorbitant fee increases and to instead modify the increases to a lower amount. I'm not asking the government to scrap the increases altogether, but rather listen to the people and make

responsible decisions, because this decision affects all the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will have questions for the Minister at the right time. Thank you so much.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
STRATEGIC OIL AND GAS LTD. LIABILITIES IN
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On August 20, 2018, I made a Member's statement on the environmental liabilities related to the Cameron Hills oil and gas field owned by Strategic Oil and Gas Limited. From the questions I asked the then Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, it appears the GNWT is on the hook for any shortfall between the roughly \$3 million in financial security currently held and the unknown liability which the court-appointed monitor appears to have estimated at over \$12 million, and possibly much, much higher.

Despite having a clear mandate from the 18th Assembly to develop "a sound financial security system to prevent public liabilities," this shortfall happened under our watch and there does not appear to be any way to turn this back to the federal government, as we accepted the site under the devolution agreement.

How many more contaminated sites are lurking out there, where there is a significant shortfall between what we hold in financial security and the actual cost of environmental remediation? Such shortfalls amount to public subsidies that place the taxpayers of the NWT at unnecessary risk. So much for responsible development, Mr. Speaker.

What has happened since I last raised the issue in August? The GNWT appears to have legal counsel participating in the receivership proceeding, which is a good thing. The company has again applied for an extension to its creditor protection, until January 31, 2020. Efforts to sell the Cameron Hills property and assets have not produced a buyer to date, so the future of the operation continues to be in considerable doubt. The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board is now reviewing a long-overdue fourth version of a conceptual closure and reclamation plan finally submitted by Strategic Oil and Gas. The company now says that it will not be submitting a revised cost estimate for reclamation of the area until June 2020. This is a field that has not operated since 2015. Although GNWT has raised the issue of the need for a revised cost estimate, it has not made that as a direct request to the board itself.

Needless to say, I will have questions for the Minister of Lands on why GNWT's post-devolution resource management failed to protect the taxpayers and the environment in the case of Cameron Hills. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOUSING ISSUES IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents of public housing in communities across the Northwest Territories, especially in my riding, have challenges created by the Housing Corporation's Public Housing Rent Scale. Something has to be done urgently to help the people who we serve, Mr. Speaker.

The Housing Corporation's website says to the public, and I quote, "The rent scale is designed to help reduce your cost of living in Northwest Territories communities, to increase your personal responsibility for your shelter costs, and to encourage your participation in employment, if employment is available in your community." I am here to tell you that it is doing the exact opposite.

People are afraid to work for the fear that their income will put them over the top and that they will lose their home. When those who work seasonal employment hand in their T4s every year, they get prorated. That has to change, Mr. Speaker, to monthly, bimonthly. People are having to make choices based on their highest levels of income. Even if they're not working all year round, they still have to pay.

This government needs to show compassion and understanding for its less fortunate citizens in the territory, where there is no work. We should not be putting people in positions where they have to make the impossible choice of paying rent or buying food and clothing for their children. We need to stop this practice of evicting people in the winter, Mr. Speaker. In fact, eviction should be an absolute last resort because of the effects, not just to the rent-payer, but to the entire extended family, including dependent children, elders, and family members, who have to take them in, overcrowding. We need to make it easier for our elders to access repair funding and cut out requirements like insurance and homeownership courses before they are able to get that funding.

Mr. Speaker, I am angry about this, but I feel that these problems are because of decisions made long ago by previous governments. This is a new Assembly, one that is committed to working together. I am inviting the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to

work with us, to work with me, to identify the barriers in their policies that are causing undue stress and worry for our people in our small communities, Mr. Speaker, for the people who are already dealing with difficult circumstances of no work and no jobs in the communities. There is nothing going on in the Beaufort Delta.

Let's make this the government that is on the record for listening to the people and responding positively to their concerns. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EULOGY FOR LINDSAY JAMES ST. LEDGER
WAUGH

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the time of year for celebration. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to honour the passing of Lindsay James St. Ledger Waugh. He was the first-born son of James St. Ledger Waugh and Ella May Taylor. He was born in Palmerston, South New Zealand, on October 7, 1946. He was followed by six siblings and spent most of his time in Waiati, a village outside of Dunedin.

His stories of childhood and adolescence involve working hard, taking the steam train to school, working on cars and motorcycles, smoking and drinking beer, and having the best time with his best mate, Gray. He was blessed with that friendship his whole life.

He also marked June 5, 1971, as an important date, the date he quit smoking.

After becoming an electrician as a young man and living in other parts of his home country, his sense of adventure took him across the ocean by boat to Canada. He still has those shoes he wore on that journey, and by the way, he was never a guy to throw anything away that had sentimental value at all.

Soon after his arrival in Canada, he found his way to Mayo, Yukon. He met Patricia Keyes, and they married on August 31, 1974, with their son, Bruce, by their side. Tracy arrived a few years later, and they made their move to Fort Simpson, where he started Kiwi Electric. They welcomed Jake and, later, Vanessa into the family. Victoria became an addition to the household, along with Dwight and other young people along the way.

He had an amazing work ethic and still worked the Kiwi Electric phone right up until he passed away in October.

He loved his community in the Deh Cho region. He was passionate about music, singing, and song writing. He always kept a small notepad in the pocket of his shirt in case of getting hit with inspiration for a new song. The family were so grateful that he accomplished his dream of recording his music and has left this legacy for his friends and family to continue to enjoy.

He was so proud of his business, his apprentices, his fellow musicians and friends, and his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He was most proud of his wife, Pat Waugh, whose strength, patience, and sense of humour kept the whole ship afloat.

He took great joy in all of his children's accomplishments, was there to listen when they stumbled, and sent the best text messages ever. He loved to put aside chitchat time and talk about self and life and big ideas and balanced it out with being a total goofball at times.

Lindsay had a way of connecting with people and getting them to share their stories and collected many true friends along the way. He brought light and music and laughter to many cancer patients on their tough days and lived his motto, "Progress, not perfection."

Kiwi's presence in our family, community, and the Deh Cho will forever be missed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, acknowledgements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2-19(1):
HILARY JONES – RETIREMENT FROM MINE
TRAINING SOCIETY AND RECIPIENT OF THE
NWT & NUNAVUT CHAMBER OF MINES
SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT MAX AWARD

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize the career and achievements of Yellowknife North constituent Hilary Jones. Leading up to her recent retirement, Hilary was the general manager of the Mine Training Society. Hilary's exemplary work in her field has been recognized by the Chamber of Mines, and she has been awarded a Special Achievement MAX Award.

Working with industry, Indigenous, and government partners, she delivered mining programs that helped facilitate the growth of the Mine Training Society into a Canadian leader. I thank her for her contribution to the successes of so many in our community.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. I, too, have an acknowledgement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 3-19(1):
SHEILA MACPHERSON – RECOGNITION AS
ONE OF CANADA'S TOP 100 MOST POWERFUL
WOMEN

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to recognize Sheila MacPherson, a partner at the legal firm of Lawson Lundell and our very own law clerk. Sheila has been recognized as one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network. The WXN awards were created to recognize the achievements and leadership of women in Canada. Ms. MacPherson was recognized for her more than 30 years of experience as a leader in the north.

Sheila, I know you serve many clients in your law practice, but we certainly have benefited from your leadership here at the Legislative Assembly, a place I know you hold dear to your heart. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 23-19(1):
STRATEGIC OIL AND GAS LTD.
ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In my statement earlier today, I noted that the publicly available end-of-life obligations for the Cameron Hills field as prepared by the court-appointed monitor appears to be over \$12 million. The actual figure is probably much higher, and that leaves a significant shortfall from the \$3 million held as financial security. My questions are for the Minister of Lands. Can the Minister explain how our government failed to ensure that financial security held for Cameron Hills does not at least equal the liabilities, and who will make up the difference? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Strategic Oil and Gas was, at the time of

devolution, transferred an operations site which has gone through an environmental screening and regulatory process and met the criteria for a release site. The site has an owner that is responsible for clean-up and environmental liabilities. Canada transferred the securities associated with all operating sites on April 1st, 2014. Adequacy of security is the subject of continual review and revision as part of the modern regulatory process in the NWT.

At the moment, Strategic Oil and Gas, although it is in creditor protection as it attempts to restructure its operation, is still responsible for remediation obligations related to its sites in the NWT. Under our current system, there are a number of authorities that address securities, including the independent Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Security is required as part of the land tender authorization, and, in the case of oil and gas, operation securities operate to address operations and safety. I believe that the Member will agree with me that there is room for improvement to better ensure that the environmental liabilities are borne by the developer who is responsible for creating them and that adequate securities are put in place to address them when operators become insolvent and unable to continue their operations.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that detailed information. It didn't really still answer the question of how this happened under our watch. More than five years after devolution, it appears our government still doesn't have an early-warning system on operations like Strategic Oil and Gas, that place taxpayers at significant financial risk. The commitment to develop a financial security system to prevent public liabilities remains unfulfilled from the 18th Assembly. As GNWT is a big promoter of oil and gas development, can the Minister tell us what the plans are to prevent future public liabilities from these activities?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The Department of Lands, and Environment and Natural Resources prepared security estimates to cover environmental liabilities for new projects as well as existing operations. The process to review and amend securities is directed by the regional land and water boards, which have the legislative responsibility to set the securities amount in water licences and land use permits. If there is change to the project or authorization, a new security review process is initiated by the regulatory boards. Making sure that the right balance between protecting the environment and allowing for investment is a challenge for all jurisdictions. I think it is fair to say that this is a particular challenge when we see industry like oil and gas struggle. While we will not always be able to anticipate when operations will run into difficulties meeting their obligations, efforts are made to review existing securities, to mitigate

the risk associated with this development. This is something that I can say I believe we can work on as a government and improve.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. This is something I have been working on for most of my adult life here in the Northwest Territories, over 30 years, so I look forward to working with this Minister to try to get this where it needs to be. Strategic Oil and Gas, in preparing its conceptual closure and reclamation plan, relied on something called "Guidelines for Closure and Reclamation of Advanced Mineral Exploration and Mine Sites in the Northwest Territories." More than five years after devolution, our government does not appear to have put in place a coherent policy and regulatory framework for closure and reclamation of oil and gas. Can the Minister tell me, Mr. Speaker, when we are going to have a robust framework for closure and reclamation of oil and gas development in the Northwest Territories?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The "Guidelines for Closure and Reclamation of Advanced Mineral Exploration and Mine Sites in the Northwest Territories" were developed jointly by the land and water boards of the Mackenzie Valley and the Government of Canada, now CIRNAC. These guidelines outline the requirement for closure and reclamation plans and stress that closure objectives and criteria be established for the site. Although these guidelines are designed to cover mineral explorations and mine closure, the concept of guidelines apply to all development projects in the NWT. These guidelines were used to guide development of the closure and reclamation plan for the Imperial Oil production facility in Norman Wells and have been used to guide the development of the revised closure and reclamation plan for the Cameron Hills facility. This was submitted to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board in August 2019. Given the predominance of mining in the resource-extraction sector of the NWT, it is understandable that the early focus of the work between the Board and Canada was focused on mining. I believe we can continue to work on this with the board and Canada to provide more direct guidance related to oil and gas.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. We have had devolution now for five years, and we don't have a proper, robust regulatory framework for closure and reclamation in place, five years, Mr. Speaker. It is my view that the government doesn't really have a great track record in managing resources in the post-devolution world. In an unprecedented move, the Minister turned back a decision on a water licence amendment, following a request from a

diamond mining company. Then unilateral changes were made to measures arising from an environmental assessment of the Tlicho All-Season Road. Financial security gaps still exist for the Prairie Creek mine and now for Cameron Hills. Can the Minister tell the House whether there has been a systematic review of all operations for which we are now responsible, to ensure that we have full financial security in place, and, if not, when is this going to happen?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Before I answer the question, I would like to thank the Member for Frame Lake for bringing these questions forward. I understand his passion as we try to work on these issues.

The GNWT conducts a review of reclamation securities when there is a new licence, a licence amendment, a revision of the closure and reclamation plans, or a change to the project that would result in changes to the environment securities. These reviews are meant to ensure that the liability associated with these projects are covered in the securities held by the GNWT. I think it is fair to acknowledge that the current system might be improved and that a more comprehensive review is something that should be considered in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 24-19(1):
DAY SHELTER ACCESS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement, the operator of the day shelter has adopted a new policy of serving only the homeless population. The population with homes are not welcome. My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is: how does the day shelter staff determine whether clients are in fact housed when they come to the door? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Operating the sobering and day centre is not without challenges, and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services authority and the operator of the centre are working hard to make sure these changes to ensure programming is meeting the needs of the clients who are homeless and not receiving services from any other service providers. I would like to let the Member know that the day centre and sobering centre have been allowing people to come in and warm up during this cold snap. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister. In fact, my question to the Minister was: how does the day shelter staff determine whether clients are in fact housed when they come to the door? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: I have been there. I have had a tour of the facility myself. When clients come into the centre, they are asked, and it is a self-assessment. When you come in and you say, you know, that the operator will ask if you have, if you are homeless or if you are here for what type of service, and if you self-declare that you are homeless, then you will be provided, and you will be allowed in the centre.

MS. GREEN: I thank the Minister for that answer. The origin of this change in policy is the recent evaluation of the combined day centre and sobering centre. Can the Minister say when that evaluation is going to be shared with service providers and with us, so that we are all on the same page? Mahsi.

HON. DIANE THOM: The program evaluation was recently publicized, August 2019. All those providing services to the clients who visit the sobering and day centre would have been able to review the evaluation recommendations. The evaluation recommendations were added to the RP released over the summer for a service provider for the sobering and day shelter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. As the Minister is aware, the evaluation says there is a lack of understanding about the shelter's mandate and about the target audience as well as a need for partnerships to extend programming. Will the Minister commit to facilitating the creation of an inter-agency committee for this purpose?

HON. DIANE THOM: The department recognized there is a need for the inter-agency group. The NTHSSA will formalize an inter-agency group with the mandate to monitor the impact of the new admission policy and establish regular meetings. This collaborative approach will create a formal venue for all parties to meet regularly, to raise issues, and to address concerns related to the operation of the centre and public safety.

In October, a Good Neighbour Agreement was signed between NTHSSA, sobering and day centre, other stakeholders, including the City of Yellowknife, the RCMP and Department of Justice, and individuals and business owners in the direct vicinity of the centre. Meetings with the community service agencies are ongoing as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 25-19(1):
HOUSING NEEDS

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned in my Member's statement, my questions today are for the Minister of Housing. The housing situation and supply in the NWT is getting worse. How is the department planning on dealing with our housing situation that is on the records of getting worse in Inuvik and the rest of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The majority of our budget currently goes towards supporting one of every six households in the Northwest Territories with quality affordable housing through our public housing programs. One of our major challenges is to find funding so that we don't lose the units that we currently have. In our regional centres like Inuvik, we will need to work collaboratively with the municipal government and majority landlords in order to develop more affordable housing.

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, what changes to the GNWT housing strategic or plan that they currently have is the Minister looking at to deal with this issue as the current strategy plan clearly is not working to improve the housing situation? As the study has shown, it has gone backwards in the last ten years.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The Northwest Territories alone has a majority of the housing problems and a majority of the housing issues in our territory. Right now that I have been through the briefings, I have looked and met with the department, a lot of the infrastructure that is there, the houses that are there, are not 100 percent owned by the NWT Housing Corporation, but then, going forward, I want to work with the report that has already been completed in the last sitting, and then I want to start working with the regions to establish a stronger front to come forward and to start working with our Indigenous groups, partnerships, and to see what the needs are, the core needs, in each of our regional centres.

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to being bold and lead her department to try and find new ways to increase the total number of housing units and get people off these waiting lists and into actual housing?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, I am committed to work towards our rental scale and looking towards to get people into their own housing units but also

working in partnership with Indigenous groups. I am new to the position, but I am really for Indigenous partnerships and would like to see community-owned infrastructure.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to hear that because it kind of leads into my next question. Will the Minister again commit and be bold and lead her department with working with Indigenous groups to lobby the federal government to supply appropriate, long-term, sustainable funding to address our housing deficits in Inuvik and the Northwest Territories as a whole?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, the Housing Corporation will commit to working with Indigenous groups. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (reversion)

MR. SPEAKER: Members, before we continue, I would like to recognize some of my constituents in the audience with us today. We have Jordan McLeod, the chair of Aklavik Community Corp; Dean Arey, recently elected as a Hunters and Trappers Committee member; also Ella Archie, Mary Ruth Meyook, Jimmy Meyook, Lori Anne Elanik, and Ella Archie. Ella and Jimmy Meyook actually went to school with Diane, and it was similar in the Grollier Hall. It is always good to have Members with us in the gallery. Thank you. They will actually be performing for us later today as well. Thank you.

Okay, where were we? Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 26-19(1): EVICTIONS FROM PUBLIC HOUSING

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I have my questions for the Housing Minister in regards to working together. Mr. Speaker, would the Housing Corporation and the Housing Minister take lead to stop the evictions for the next six months so we could work together with the clients in the Beaufort Delta in my riding of Nunakput to get them back on track on a go-forward basis, so cutting out evictions and people with medical having to be moved to other houses? She could take lead right now to say "yes" to me, Mr. Speaker, and make it right. Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation, eviction is the last resort. It could take about a year for an eviction to process, so the tenant has numerous chances to change their behaviour that is causing the problem. In most cases, evictions occur because tenants have been warned but continue to make disturbances that affect the other tenants.

Also, we carry a large, I don't want to use the word "debt", a large debt, I guess, like the return of income for our housing clients, and I am wanting to work with our housing clients, wanting to work in the regional levels, to recover that outstanding debt that our current public housing clients hold. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: The question I asked was: could the Minister stop the evictions in the Beaufort-Delta and across the territory for the next six months? Because Christmas is coming. The last thing we need to have our constituents worrying about is being evicted and having a roof over their head when, at the end of the day, this government has to provide housing shelter over our constituents.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: In regard to the eviction process that we currently do have, I really would like to acknowledge the safety that is among the units, the public housing units, and the activity that carries on, but then, yet, we do have a high rate of outstanding debts that are carried by the public housing tenants. I am wanting to work with the tenants and wanting to work with the eviction notices and try my best to really exercise my department to use that as a very last resort.

MR. JACOBSON: As the Housing Corporation across Nunakput, I know the rent scale is out of whack. We have to sort that out for the people. The T4 system is not working. The high rates, the cost of the units that we're providing, which is 42 percent problematic since the last census, there are problems in every unit that we have. There is overcrowding. People are suffering, Mr. Speaker. We need to make the residents, my constituents in my riding, they have to have a place to stay. Would the Minister answer me, yes or no, if she could provide the answer to stop the evictions for the next six months so we can review this with the department?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you to the Member for his question. I will have to work with my department in order to make this decision, and I would like to work with each of the clients in the local areas and try to recover the debt that is required and try to understand why the eviction is taking place, but I would like to go forward and like to deal with these evictions on a case-by-case basis. I am open to further discussion.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to this go-forward on the rent scale, I'm giving notice now, Mr. Speaker, if I'm unsatisfied with the Housing Corporation, I'll be bringing a private Member's bill to bring forward for the next sitting of this House to provide our own rent scale, but I want to work with the Minister in regard to working on that rent scale and for the people in the Northwest Territories. This is not only my riding; this is across the whole territory. This rent scale has to be sorted out, because people who want to work, people can't work because they are penalized if they do, paying that rent right through the whole year when people are only working four or five months a year, Mr. Speaker. So I give notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister, I'll give you a chance to respond.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you to the Member for your questions. This is an ongoing issue that is throughout the Northwest Territories. I would also like to acknowledge, coming from a smaller community, that I do see this at the grassroots level. I do see this in the smaller communities, and I am committed to review our rent scale program right now. I do realize and I recognize that it's not working throughout the Northwest Territories, but yet we need to work with the local housing authorities and societies to recover and try to work effectively and efficiently in our smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 27-19(1):
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASES

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, the concerns regarding the recreational land leases have been a very hot topic in all different venues with Indigenous and municipal governments, including members of many of our communities. My primary concern is for the residents of Fort Smith. My question for the Minister is: how is your department going to undo a major, poor decision of the 18th Assembly that should not have happened without proper consultation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will have opportunities to revisit the mechanisms used to set the rent and fees, and it will be part of bringing our Public Lands Act into force. We are starting to work on it. It's part of a

process. It's not going to be fixed overnight; it's going to take some time. We are in the process and there are mechanisms in there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: The Minister's response to my office regarding land leases which he sent out on December 9, 2019, is unacceptable. After bringing forward concerns well over 31 times in the 18th Assembly, I want to know why the Minister of Lands is stalling to address these concerns in a positive and proactive manner that will work for all the NWT residents, especially the residents of Fort Smith dealing with this issue.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The department is not stalling. We're trying to work on this. It's critical that one of the main focuses for the Department of Lands during the life of the 19th Assembly is to do the work on regulations needed to bring into force the Public Lands Act. This work needs to be done in advance of further changes to lease pricing.

It is important to note that, although there was an increase to recreational land lease fees, there was a decrease to the lease fees for residential leases where people's homes are in communities of Commissioner's land. This was part of the result of my questions 31 times that the Member talked about, when I was speaking to the Minister of Lands in the past.

MS. MARTSELOS: I am also concerned about the contents and tone of the multiple letters I've seen from constituents who received letters from the Department of Lands stating that, if the new lease fees were not paid within a specified time, the residents would need to bring the land to its original state. Does the Minister of Lands agree with bureaucrats and civil servants writing these letters to the people we represent as MLAs?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The letters that come from the department are letters that support legal contracts such as lease agreements. They need to be clear. They are not meant to carry a specific tone, but to ensure that there is no misunderstanding of the points that need to be communicated. If a lease fee remains unpaid and there is no intent to continue use of the parcel of land, it is the responsibility of the department to ensure that the land be left in an acceptable condition. This often means a condition that is as close as possible to the original state. I agree with the principle when addressing public lands outside the municipalities.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: The turnaround for inquiries to any Minister by MLAs is five days. Why did it take

the Minister and his department 17 days to give me a response, which was the same response given in the 18th Assembly by the former Minister of Lands, which you questioned when you were a Regular MLA?

MR. SPEAKER: Just a reminder, please direct your comments through myself as Speaker. Thank you. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, if I recall, we had the opportunity to meet, at which time I arranged a time to discuss your concerns immediately. I believe that we had a productive discussion, and I have followed up on the matters that you raised. I realize that my responses may not be the ones that you would like to hear at this time, but I can assure you that I will continue to work on this matter with my officials. We do have further work that needs to be done to ensure that we have a modern approach to land management in the NWT, including around fees. I have mentioned a big part of this is getting the Public Lands Act into force, though the work has to be done on regulations. I look forward to work with you and the community and other MLAs as we work on this process. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister, I am over here, just so you know. It was brought to my attention. Please direct your comments to me. I know everybody is a little nervous today. It is okay to look at the person you are talking to every once in a while. Just a reminder. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 28-19(1):
CELLPHONE COVERAGE OUTSIDE OF
MUNICIPALITIES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement was on extending the cellphone range outside of the municipalities. It was appropriate that the MACA Minister updated us on the 911 service to the Northwest Territories. My reference to the Minister of Ho-Ho-Ho, it is appropriate that the Minister is wearing a Christmas-themed sweater. Also, the fact that with the housing questions, she did answer "yes" a couple of times. I believe that the Minister is on a roll.

The cellphone range service is a concern to our communities. I think it goes right across the whole territory, too, because we are only allowed the service within the municipality. The range is not very far there. We have lots of highway travel. We have from Providence to Yellowknife and Hay River to Fort Smith, and both of those have a large bison population that traverse the highway system. We have had accidents on those highways many times. Also, too, to cover the Dempster Highway, which is

a long, forlorn highway that comes up from the Yukon, if people are stuck or get into accidents or anything, they will have some way to communicate with someone along the highway.

And I believe 911 service, you had a partner. I don't know if it was Northwestel. You had a partner, anyways, who delivered the program. I believe the NWT would be pleased with the increased range. My question to the Minister is: does the department have an initiative in the works to see if that cellphone service range is extended beyond municipal boundaries? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Good Member's statement. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member for his comments. The program is quite new, and we have just established and implemented it. It went live this year. As a part of the implementation of the Northwest Territories 911 service, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will continue to work in partnership with the GNWT departments to explore opportunities for future expansion of cellular services along the territorial highways. The GNWT has highlighted increased cellular service along the major roads and highways as a priority to the CRTC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: The Minister must remember I said lots of nice things about her today. My question is: can the Minister provide a timeline as to tasks undertaken to enable this service coming into being in the very near future?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I am sorry, but I don't have a timeline right now. The program is so new that I can't make a commitment as to when the expansion or further to the program.

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

QUESTION 29-19(1):
TRANSFER OF MUNICIPAL LANDS TO THE CITY
OF YELLOWKNIFE

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, the municipal government of the City of Yellowknife only controls 9 percent of the land within its municipal boundary. In order for the City of Yellowknife to access any of the additional lands beyond their land planning, an application has to be made to the Department of Lands. This process has become so burdensome and so difficult to navigate that the City of Yellowknife made it one of their election priorities that all of the vacant Commissioner's land be transferred to the City of Yellowknife within their municipal boundaries. My question is to the Minister of Lands of whether he

can commit that that Land will be transferred to the municipal government.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT has met several times to discuss with the city initiative, including two meetings with the city to date. Work has been focusing on ensuring clarity on what Lands initiative will include, ensure clarity on the process to carry out the initiative, and identification of milestones accomplished throughout the initiative and who is responsible for each. The department is focused on ensuring the initiative is carried out in a timely manner that ensures the transfer is done right. A meeting with the city is scheduled for next week to continue working with this initiative moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I would ask the Minister to update this House on the result of those meetings. Also, my hope is that following the kind of paternalistic nature between the Department of Lands and the City of Yellowknife, after these lands are developed, perhaps some of those employees at the Department of Lands can begin working with other community governments to transfer the land. Can the Minister tell me what conversations are happening with other municipal governments to transfer land within their municipal boundaries?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: The department continues to work with all the communities in NWT to address their individual land needs. Lands is not in any discussions with communities at this time than a minor transfer similar to the initiative currently being worked on by the city.

MR. JOHNSON: Can the Minister clarify whether any other municipal governments have asked to have the Commissioner's land within their boundaries transferred to them?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Lands has not been in any discussion presently. There may be some conversations at a regional level. Right now, we haven't seen anything at headquarters.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the problem here is that the City of Yellowknife feels that the current process set out by the Department of Lands is so difficult that they can't actually develop vacant land, and it has harmed economic development. They are asking for a solution because the process has become so difficult, which in turn means our other communities are also dealing with this process. Will the Minister commit to reviewing the current process for

transitioning Commissioner's lands when a community wishes to use them? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Can't make a commitment right now because right now, we are trying to work on our Public Lands Act. Part of it is our regulations right now. What I can tell the Member is that the city, MACA, and Lands are in the process of working together on this issue. Any other municipality that wishes to work on this issue, we are more than willing to work with them to address this. Again, we have to get our regulations in place. The Public Land Act was passed in the last sitting, but we now need the regulations in place to be able to deal with this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 30-19(1):
ENFORCEMENT OF IMPAIRED DRIVING

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Northwest Territories, the RCMP enforces impaired driving laws. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice. I understand that the RCMP uses a combination of practical technologies, like mouth swabs, and subjective analysis, like driver inspection by an officer trained as a drug-recognition expert, to assess a driver's level of intoxication and that concerns have been raised about the accuracy of these tests. Can the Minister describe for the House what the experience has been for drivers in the NWT with respect to the detection of drug-impaired drivers since legislation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Justice.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At present, there certainly have been efforts made currently to expand the use of drug recognition, both in terms of the field sobriety testing and in terms of devices. At present, I can say that, as of the current year, there actually have not yet been any drug-impaired investigations that yielded results of being, in fact, drug-impaired. All of the impaired driving continues to be alcohol impairment here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: In August, the federal government announced funding of just under \$1.5 million to improve drug-impaired testing in the NWT. How, specifically, will this money be used, and are our smaller communities included in this plan?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, the Department of Justice has had an opportunity to

make use of funding from Public Safety Canada. There is currently \$1.45 million in funding that is directed here over the next five years. That is going to be used to help expand standard field sobriety testing training and to ensure that the officers remain current with that training. There are also going to be efforts for drug recognition experts so that they can be ready to support impaired driving investigations.

As far as supporting smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly confirm that there are officers trained in 11 of the 20 detachments here currently: 20 in Yellowknife alone and several more in our larger regions, all currently certified to conduct standardized field sobriety testing in the Northwest Territories.

MS. CLEVELAND: Has the RCMP conveyed any concerns to the Department of Justice about enforcement related matters, and if so, what is being done to assist the RCMP to better do their enforcement work?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: At present, there have not been any concerns raised to the Department of Justice. I have had the opportunity to meet with G Division's headquarters, as well as to attend several of the detachments already throughout the Northwest Territories, and I have not been privy to any concerns. Obviously, our office remains very alive and very welcoming. If there have been other concerns raised, I would certainly want to hear about that.

As I have said, though, at present, what I have been told is that, although the officers are becoming trained in drug recognition and increasing and improving their ability to detect roadside alcohol impairment, at present, there have been very little in terms of drugs and no concerns raised following the legalization of marijuana.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of Justice confirm if reducing the levels of impaired driving is still on their business plan for the Department of Justice? Thank you very much.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Reducing impaired driving isn't a specific policing priority, but it certainly remains, obviously, a priority for the Department of Justice. I could certainly say that it would be ideal if every patrol vehicle in the Northwest Territories could be equipped with the relevant alcohol or drug screening devices and operating officers able to use them.

That may be a long-term goal. That is not a goal that is likely to be achieved in the short-term, but it is one that I believe the RCMP are alive to and

working towards and one that the Department of Justice is alive to, and so we will be continuing to seek funding where it is available in order to realize a better goal of having better enforcement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 31-19(1):
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
POSITIONS IN BEHCHOKO

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I previously made a statement regarding this. The government that works in our communities, when we look in the offices, there are a lot of employees. Looking at the Behchoko offices, I want to ask a MACA question. I have three questions for the Minister of MACA. [Translation ends]

To the Minister of MACA, Municipal and Community Affairs, as compared to other communities, as well, comparable to probably the size of the population as well, if she could provide a breakdown of the number of positions, whether it be in Hay River or Inuvik, in comparison to those allocated to my community of Behchoko. Masi.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department has a significant amount of services that we provide at the community level. They are in comparison to what is offered in Behchoko, but Behchoko is two communities, Rae and Edzo together. We do have some of the employees in Behchoko and some of the employees in the North Slave office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LAFFERTY: That is another issue that stands on its own in Behchoko: Rae and Edzo. It's a separate community, but we provide funding to one community. That will be addressed in this House as well. It is a real challenge for the community of Behchoko, but that is another story that we'll talk about later on.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that accessing housing in Behchoko could be a challenge for staff coming from Yellowknife. It is great that I am talking to the Minister of Housing as well. There are a number of professions who commute to and from Behchoko every day. Carpooling is another option.

In the spirit of capacity-building, can the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs commit to having these seven positions moved to the community of Behchoko and plan or put in place to empower the

people of the community to eventually take over these positions?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you to the Member for your questions. I just wanted to give a little bit of the current status and current update for Behchoko, because it is a very unique community. It is one of the largest communities that we have in the Northwest Territories, with a significant growing population.

MACA was structured 20 years ago by so much change that has happened in this community. In 2005, the Tlicho Community Government Act was passed and implemented, giving all communities more authority and control over local decisions. Then, in 2007, MACA became an implementation of the new deal for the Northwest Territories communities, flowing a capital and gas tax fund to the community governments in order to plan and build their own infrastructure. MACA employees at the regional and headquarters level, in many ways, exercise more authority and control than they did 20 years ago.

MACA now supports community governments to complete strategic plans in their communities, develop and implement capital plans for infrastructure developments in the communities, and identify and build capacities of staff and elected officials in the communities.

MACA does support seven communities out of its North Slave office, and it is the only region that has an office that is divided between two communities, in Yellowknife and in Behchoko. In order to be able to hire and accommodate staff and facilitate their travels and support the communities in the regions, the superintendent does reside in Yellowknife, but the assistant superintendent is located in Behchoko and is a Tlicho citizen.

MR. LAFFERTY: It's great that the Minister made a statement on the current situation, but I don't really see any capacity-building happening in Behchoko. Yes, we do have an assistant superintendent, but most senior staff are in Yellowknife headquarters making decisions for the community of Behchoko. Where is the empowerment? It's a top-down approach. It should be at the grassroots level.

Mr. Speaker, I disagree with what the Minister is saying today. I am a firm believer that we should have capacity-building in place, and I will be pushing that, not only today, but going forward. If I don't get answers today, then obviously, it will come up in this House again.

Next question would be: what are the short-term or long-term plans for the Behchoko MACA community regional office to build capacity within senior management?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. I always like to reflect that I do come from a regional level. I do understand and see the capacity-building in the smaller communities and in the smaller local areas. I am willing to work with the Member. I would like to travel into Behchoko and take an assessment of what our office also provides, but also look at the quality of service that we offer in that community. That would be my priority right now, to make sure we are meeting the needs of the residents of Behchoko. Then, in regard to looking at the community and looking at Municipal and Community Affairs and their staff who are located in the North Slave and, in comparison, can we actually accommodate then in Behchoko, I'm not too sure at this time, but I do commit to looking forward to getting into the community and doing an assessment.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, this is an area of interest for the community of Behchoko. There have been certain requests from community members, as well; seeing as the superintendent in the past hasn't really set foot in the community, it is a challenge in the community. Now, we have a new superintendent; I'm not sure if she's been in the community yet, but obviously I'd like to see more of that. Part of that would be community relations through Municipal and Community Affairs, working with the community government of Behchoko, so I'm glad the Minister is willing to work with me on this. I'd like to see a plan in place. When could we see the plan? We can talk all we want in this House, but I want to see an action-oriented plan going forward. I'm hoping it's early in the new year. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member, for your comments. I'd just like to acknowledge that we do have the office that administers Behchoko for Municipal and Community Affairs. We do have to recognize that we do have additional communities that the North Slave office administers, and there are seven of them, including the two here in Yellowknife. Looking at if we were to relocate our North Slave Municipal and Community Affairs office to Behchoko, there are factors that we have to explore, but then I am wanting to work with the Member and look at how we are going to deal with this going forward so we know that each and every one of our communities are going to be fairly recognized, and that we continue services throughout the North Slave region, and that it's equally served. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 32-19(1):
NURSING IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NORN: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Roles such as nursing and social work are demanding, physically and mentally, especially in small communities. I believe everyone in this House who is in here should give them all the support and tools they need to help them do a good job and be successful. That being said, my worry is that we are putting inexperienced staff, nursing staff specifically, to the detriment of those who need the care the most, i.e. special needs. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services: are there certain aptitudes or a minimum amount of experience that nursing staff must have before they are stationed in our small communities? If so, what are those requirements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recruitment and retention of registered nurses and specialized training in rural and remote locations is a current challenge and a priority for the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services. Nurses stationed in the communities are community health nurses, CHN; nurses in charge, NIC; and nurse practitioners, NP. All three categories are nurses with specialized and advanced education after graduating from the basic nursing program. Community health nurses for smaller communities require, at a minimum, two years' experience. Nurses in charge require more experience.

During the hiring process, we consider both skills and experience to screen candidates for interviewing. During the interview process, we ask questions to test their suitability for working in small communities. Before a job is offered, references are checked. At the reference check stage, we are again checking for suitability for smaller communities. All candidates, upon hire, go through the orientation to confirm their skills match the need in the work environment and, if a gap is identified, the employee works towards the required education. Ongoing performance of staff is evaluated through the performance evaluation process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NORN: I want to thank the Minister for her response. I want to just voice my frustration. I've been speaking with constituents, and this has happened several times, where they always say, "There is not enough training for nurses; we always have to go to another community, over to a bigger centre to get help." With that, my next question is: will the Minister commit to having an experienced nursing staff placed in communities such as Lutselk'e and Deninu Kue?

HON. DIANE THOM: Previous experience is a key hiring criteria in our community health centres. The nurse in charge or the nurse practitioner positions require a certain amount of experience in order to successfully carry out the responsibilities and mentor new nursing staff.

MR. NORN: I have another question for the Minister: is there a job shadowing program in place for recent post-secondary graduates for nurses and social workers in the NWT?

HON. DIANE THOM: We offer placements for students through the Summer Employment Program, where students from the nursing program can gain on-the-job experience. New graduate nurses are hired into entry-level positions where they have an opportunity to work with more experienced colleagues, while having lesser workload, a development plan, and education plan.

Social work students have an opportunity to work as summer students, family preservation workers, and case aides, which allows them to develop the skills and experience as part of their education. Newly graduated social workers are also hired into entry-level positions, which support them to get comfortable with the role while they get experience. They will have smaller workload, an education plan, and mentors.

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

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the response from the Minister. My last question: will the Minister commit to having a homecare nurse in Deninu Kue? Mahsi cho.

HON. DIANE THOM: The homecare nurse position was posted last summer in the Member's community, with no successful candidate. The department will continue to recruit. In the interim, we have a relief nurse who will be working in the community starting in January. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 33-19(1):
EMERGENCY WARMING SHELTER IN HAY
RIVER

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Hay River, we are in dire need of an emergency warming shelter for the homeless, so the questions I have are for the Minister of Housing and the Minister of Homelessness, which is the same person. I would like to ask the Minister if her department is prepared to provide assistance to a group in Hay River, a non-profit group, to assist

setting up a temporary emergency warming shelter? Thank you.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your comment. Right now, I'm not in a place to make a commitment to look at, I guess, the homeless shelter. I don't know; I'd have to look at what our plans are for Hay River, what money we have committed, do we have infrastructure that actually exists in that community, and what is the program development. I'm not familiar with what are the non-profit organizations that actually exist in Hay River, but I am wanting to work with the Member to find solutions to address this concern. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Well, I guess it's an emergency warming shelter because what's going to happen here is we've got people on the street and, with these temperatures, we're going to end up having somebody freeze, here. I guess what we are looking for, or the group is looking for, is some assistance. I don't think they are looking for anything too much, and we just need some, or they will need some, assistance from the Department, if possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. The time for oral questions has expired, but I will let the Member continue. Minister.

HON PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your comment. I will have to identify funding sources that are available through the Housing Corporation, that would meet the needs for the homeless shelter that wants to be established in Hay River. I do understand the needs throughout the Northwest Territories, and one of the ideas that I had, I am not going to commit to it, but I wanted to establish or have a homeless shelter in each of the regional centres because it is becoming a growing issue in our Northwest Territories. I am willing to work with the Member, but I need to find funding or available programs that would meet the need for the shelter in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South. Okay. Thank you. Members, that brings us to a close on oral questions. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 27-19(1):
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING
\$250,000
(APRIL 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2019)

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the "Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 from April 1 to September 30, 2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 28-19(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the document entitled "Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Annual Report 2018-2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 29-19(1):
AURORA COLLEGE CORPORATE PLAN 2019-
2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 30-19(1):
AURORA COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORT 2018-
2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 31-19(1):
2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT ON OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents. "Aurora College Corporate Plan 2019-2020"; "Aurora College Annual report 2018-2019"; and "2018-2019 Annual Report on Official Languages." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Thebacha.

TABLED DOCUMENT 32-19(1):
LETTER TO MURRAY SCOTT AND GARRY
SCHWARTZENBERGER DATED OCTOBER 29,
2019 REGARDING A LAND LEASE

TABLED DOCUMENT 33-19(1):
EMAIL FROM THE MINISTER OF LANDS DATED
DECEMBER 9, 2019 REGARDING LAND
LEASING PRICING

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents. A "Letter to Murray Scott and Garry Schwarzenberger dated October 29, 2019"; and an "Email from the Minister of Lands dated December 9, 2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 34-19(1):
MEMBERS' ABSENCES REPORT FOR THE
PERIOD OCTOBER 25, 2019 TO DECEMBER 9,
2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 35-19(1):
NWT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PENSION PLANS
ANNUAL REPORT MARCH 31, 2018

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Tabling of documents. I, too, have two documents. Pursuant to section 21(1) of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table the "NWT Legislative Assembly Pension Plans Annual Report, at March 31, 2018." Pursuant to section 5 of the Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the summary of "Members' absences for the period October 25 to December 9, 2019."

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, motions. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 2-19(1):
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 3, 2019-2020

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had its first reading.

First reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 2-19(1):
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 3, 2019-2020

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2019-2020 fiscal year and sets out limits on supplementary amounts that may be borrowed by the Commissioner on behalf of the government and authorizes the making of disbursements to pay the principle of supplementary amounts borrowed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had its second reading.

Second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 1-19(1):
AN ACT TO AMEND
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member has requested a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

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

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

The results of the recorded vote: 17 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 1 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 2-19(1):
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 3, 2019-2020

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request for a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The Minister has requested a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

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

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote are: 17 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills.

Colleagues, with us today we have our Grand Chief and President of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Ms. Bobbie Jo Greenland-Morgan. Welcome.

Colleagues, today we will conclude the First Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly. The Second Session is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, February 5, 2020. Since election, we have spent many hours working together as a Caucus, as committees, as Cabinet, and in this House. For many of us, it has been a new experience, and we have learned a lot. I know I have and I know we all have a lot to learn as we prepare for the next session.

I would like to thank each of you for the positive and respectful tone of the proceedings during this short session. As legislators, we directly influence the well-being of all residents of the territory. We will not always see eye-to-eye, but, when we work together in a respectful and collaborative manner, we have the ability to positively affect our people and our shared future.

As this House will not sit again until the new year, I would like to take this time to wish all of you and your families a very merry Christmas and best wishes for the coming year. I hope that each of you will have the time and opportunity to celebrate with your constituents, family, friends, and loved ones during this holiday season.

Colleagues, I would like to thank the Pages who have been with us in the Chamber during this sitting, the interpreters who have been with us each day, and everyone else who has contributed to our shared success. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and we appreciate your dedication and professionalism.

Finally, I would like to invite you to join me in the Great Hall at the rise of the House for a small reception and a performance by the Aklavik drummers in celebration of the prorogation of the first session of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the honourable Margaret Thom, is prepared to enter the Chamber and prorogue the first session of the 19th Legislative Assembly? Thank you.

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

seated. Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. [English translation not available.] Mahsi. Thank you. It is always a great pleasure to be in this great hall, this great Chamber, and to be in the presence of such an amazing team who works diligently for the betterment and for the quality of life for all Northerners.

It gives me great honour to announce that a new deputy commissioner has been officially appointed by the federal government. Our new deputy commissioner is Mr. Leonard Kenny from Deline in the Sahtu region. Mr. Kenny will be officially sworn in on Tuesday, December 17th. We applaud this appointment and send congratulations to Mr. Kenny and his family.

I believe that we are the first government in Canada to have such a large proportion of women elected to a Legislative Assembly: nine women of 19 Members. You have also chosen a woman to serve as our Premier for just the second time in the history of the Northwest Territories, the only female Premier in Canada. Congratulations, Premier Cochrane.

It is extra special during this festive busy season that we take the time to stop and feel grateful and to give thanks. I say with a grateful heart, mahsi cho to each and every one of you, along with your staff and the Legislative Assembly staff, for your hard work for all of the Northwest Territories residents since the October election.

Last, but not least, I wish you all the love and joy of the holidays along with the festive season. I wish you the gift of quality time with your families and loved ones, to share family values and traditions. I wish you all good health, happiness, and hope for the coming new year.

ASSENT TO BILLS

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

- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
- Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriations Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020

Prior to proroguing this First Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly, I wish to announce that the Second Session of the 19th Legislative Assembly will convene on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

Prorogation

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the First Session of the

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho. Thank you. Quyanainni. Merci beaucoup. Quana.

---PROROGATION

The House prorogued at 3:50 p.m.

