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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

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**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**  
(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**  
(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**  
(Sahtu)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**  
(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*

**Ms. Julie Green**  
(Yellowknife Centre)

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**  
(Yellowknife North)

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

**Hon. Katrina Nokleby**  
(Great Slave)  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Mr. Steve Norn**  
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**  
(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**  
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**  
(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**  
(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

**Hon. Diane Thom**  
(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**  
(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Justice*

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 11, 2020****Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr, 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, I would like to congratulate one of my constituents, Ms. JenniLee Vaneltsi-Pascal, on becoming a contestant on the Food Network's new show *Wall of Chefs*, which aired last night, February 10, 2020. Along with four other home cooks from across Canada, she competed in a cook-off for \$10,000. Originally from Fort McPherson, JenniLee, a busy mother of three, is currently living in Tsiigehtchic overseeing the daycare. Taking part in this series, JenniLee has drawn awareness to the protection of the Porcupine caribou herd as well as the protection of the Peel River watershed. It is a great opportunity for one of our own to be selected for the *Wall of Chefs*. JenniLee has encouraged others to reach for their goals and will be using the skills that she has gained to further her cooking abilities. Once again, congratulations, JenniLee.

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

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 9-19(2):  
CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS UPDATE

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories knows that climate change is an important issue to Northwest Territories residents and all Canadians. That is why strengthening the government's leadership and authority on climate change and ensuring climate change impacts are considered when making government decisions are two of the 22 priorities identified by the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Climate change affects our environment, our economy, and the traditional way of life. Our communities continue to face impacts to their winter roads, shorelines, and harvesting practices. A long-term and coordinated response in collaboration with all of our partners is needed to address climate

change in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is proud to lead this work.

The 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework sets out our government's long-term plan for addressing climate change. This includes actions in response to the 2017 report of the Auditor General of Canada. The framework was developed with input from Indigenous governments and organizations, NWT residents, and stakeholders, and is a government-wide response to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that this work is well underway. Last April, Environment and Natural Resources released the first five-year climate change action plan under the framework. Ninety-five percent of the actions led by the Government of the Northwest Territories are either on track or completed.

As well, in the last year, the Government of the Northwest Territories has:

- released a Sustainable Livelihoods Action Plan to support access to country foods and being on the land;
- funded a number of projects focused on climate change research, monitoring, and adaptation;
- worked with our Indigenous partners to establish two NWT protected areas; and
- delivered a course to bring climate change into community decision-making.

This is in addition to the Government of the Northwest Territories' work to implement the NWT 2030 Energy Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, these are important accomplishments that the Government of the Northwest Territories and our partners should be proud of. Still, we know that there is more to be done. That is why, over the next year, we will continue to work with our partners on the climate change action plan. We look forward to releasing our first annual progress report, alongside annual reporting on the 2030 Energy Strategy. Our government will continue to show

leadership on climate change throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, including the establishment of an NWT Climate Change Council with our Indigenous partners to help guide government actions.

Mr. Speaker, relationships are key to advancing this agenda. This means honouring our partnerships with Indigenous governments and organizations and sharing what we know about climate change across northern and southern jurisdictions. It also means continuing to advocate for federal funding to address climate change and build strong, resilient communities. Environment and Natural Resources remains committed to its leadership role on climate change. We will report on our progress and work together with Northerners to ensure our unique way of life can continue in a changing climate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, for my Member's statement today, I would like to address the Department of Health and Social Services on their medical travel policy. In the past week, I have dealt with two separate cases for intervention; one case dealt with a stage 3 cancer patient, and another patient with possible serious outcomes. Both patients were approved for medical escorts by a doctor, and then overturned by the medical travel staff here in Yellowknife. This is a very concerning situation for the residents of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the policy is quite vague when it comes to medical travel escort criteria. Worry and trauma for a patient who is authorized for an escort by a doctor should not be interfered with. Providing the best care for people of the NWT should be our priority.

Compromising people's well-being is unacceptable. Many people, when facing serious medical problems, do not want to face and fight the department for what they believe is a right. Compassion and respect for a doctor's authority must be respected and honoured. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HOUSING RENT SCALE AND INCOME TESTING

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Northwest Territories, there are 2,400 people living in public housing units across our 30 communities. Most of these people are good, hard-working people who require housing assistance in the most difficult circumstances. I believe that our job as a government is to lift these people up and to help improve their situations, not sit in judgment of them to contribute to the stigma that is attached to social housing.

Mr. Speaker, because public housing rent is geared to income, public housing tenants are required to prove their income to their local housing organization, or the LHO. A number of my Nunakput constituents in public housing are frustrated with the NWT Housing Corporation's practice of using T4 slips to confirm their income.

As you know, employers provide T4 slips once a year, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of that T4 slip is to show what the income was the previous year, and not the current situation that they are in.

The practice of using T4 slips has a result of clients being assessed at a much higher level on the rent scale, based on past income when unemployed or seasonal and not making nearly as much income as in the current time period. To make matters worse, if they want to appeal the LHO's decision, Mr. Speaker, it takes 20 days, in writing, before the decision can be made.

As an MLA, I am getting mighty tired of hearing complaints from my constituents who are running into bureaucratic red tape. The Minister says a lot of nice words about the GNWT and how it is working for the people, but in the front lines, Mr. Speaker, it's a different story. This government acts like it has the authority to sit in judgment of the poorest, most vulnerable citizens of our territory. It seems like everything can try to prevent people from accessing services, rather than helping them.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for the Ministers sitting across the floor to commit to putting the concept of service back into the public service. I urge my Cabinet colleagues to show the leadership needed to ensure that all GNWT employees put public service first and remember at all times that they are working for the people of the Northwest Territories. That's who we serve, is the people of the Northwest Territories, and not the other way around. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION ON PUBLIC  
HOUSING PROGRAMS

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has a number of housing programs for the benefit of residents. If you have access to a computer, one only needs to look on the internet to find the NWT Housing Corporation website and continue navigating to see the various programs and services available. This is, if you have access to a computer and are computer literate.

Mr. Speaker, for the people who don't understand how to navigate the internet, or even have access to a phone, it is very trying and frustrating, to say the least, in finding what the NWT Housing Corporation has to offer in terms of their programs and services. I understand that, a few years ago, the local housing organizations were funded by the corporation or a programs advisor position. This person assisted people with information on the programs available, the services, and provided assistance with the various applications and forms. Sadly, the positions were phased out of the small communities, at the same time losing much-needed local employment.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the housing Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS  
WOMEN AND GIRLS CALLS FOR JUSTICE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are closing in on nine months since the final report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released. In that report, Mr. Speaker, are calls for justice that are crying out to be fully implemented and for real action to be taken by all levels of government in order to have the calls for justice realized.

The final report speaks to many issues that we have already been discussing in our 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly:

- Indigenous rights in section 1; our priorities list settling land claims and implementing UNDRIP.
- Indigenous culture and language, in section 2; we are losing our language and our own people are being forced to answer the phones in our government departments in French.
- Health and wellness, in section 3; equitable access for all in our communities.

- Human security, in section 4; we have a lack of shelters and transitional housing in our communities, with the North having the highest rate of violence against women.
- I'll jump over to section 11, which talks about education and educators to be teaching Indigenous history, law, and practices from Indigenous perspectives, and the use of Their Voices Will Guide Us with children and youth.
- Section 12 speaks to child and family services, which at this time has 100 percent Indigenous kids in the care of the NWT.
- Correctional service; in this section, 100 percent of the women incarcerated in the NWT are Indigenous and, from the recent CBC, we know that over 80 percent of the males incarcerated are Indigenous. How can we integrate them back into the community with supports?

Mr. Speaker, the full implementation of the calls for justice is key to helping to ensure that our women and girls are safe and protected in Canada and here at home in the NWT. The report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls cannot and will not be put on a shelf or referenced with just words, Mr. Speaker. It demands full implementation and respect to those families who put their trust in this inquiry, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women later.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SOCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAM FOR SENIORS  
IN YELLOWKNIFE

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The largest population of seniors in the NWT lives in Yellowknife, and their numbers continue to grow. In fact, elders are the fastest-growing segment of our population. Services for them have not kept pace with growing needs. As an example, we are now in our fourth year without a social inclusion program for older adults.

I am going to provide some background on this issue. Loneliness is a major issue for older adults. For all kinds of reasons, including health, mobility, income, and transportation, seniors may spend a lot of time at home alone. Some may choose to feel more connected to their community by taking part in social activities. Providing social activities is a key support for elders who want to stay in their own homes. Assisting seniors to age in place is a priority

of this Assembly, but they need additional supports to make this a reality.

Adults who need this service are generally divided into two groups; elders who are physically frail are one group, while those with cognitive issues such as dementia comprise the other group. Avens used to host a program that got elders out of the house to enjoy activities and companionship and gave their caregivers a few hours off, but Avens found it difficult to serve both groups at once and decided to close their program in 2016.

Since then, the Department of Health and Social Services has been working on a replacement. One non-profit offered an adult day program for a few months before deciding it wasn't feasible for them to continue. The department has advertised twice for a service provider but got no takers. The latest initiative was a survey of seniors about their social activities that took place in August.

I am part of the target group, so I completed the survey as well. The questions were simple and focused on how much social activity I wanted and what activities interested me. As I was sitting at my computer, I wondered how many older adults, who may be much older than I am, have a computer and filled in the survey. I also wondered how many with dementia would be able to complete the survey.

Mr. Speaker, the previous Minister was committed to finding a solution to helping older adults meet their social needs. I am hopeful that the new Minister will make that same commitment to Yellowknife seniors. I will have questions for her. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2013 NWT economic opportunity strategy prepared by this government, it identified the Great Slave commercial fishery as a priority opportunity to advance regional economic development and diversification. The 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly then followed up with developing a strategy for revitalizing the Great Slave Lake commercial fishery.

The strategy from the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has the expectation that lake production will increase by encouraging Northerners and Aboriginal persons to enter the fishery, and further through the relocation of new fishing assets and fishers from Alberta to Great Slave Lake with the promise of higher prices.

Currently, we have several grant and contribution programs to assist our NWT fishers. These programs are designed to assist NWT fishers who require financial assistance with various business components that include costs related to start-up, freight, equipment, packaging, marketing, and capital investment.

Mr. Speaker, these grants and contributions are for our NWT commercial fishers: fishers who reside in the NWT on a permanent basis. Access to the program is clearly set out in the GNWT's own commercial renewable resource use policies.

The policy states that only a northern resident may access the program and goes on to define a northern resident as a person who has been ordinarily residing in the NWT for at least three years. I am pleased to see we have set this residency requirement of three years as it does provide some protection for the limited funding available to our NWT fishers. It is important that we protect that funding from fishers who do not meet the residency requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I look to this government to first promote and support Indigenous peoples and Northerners who want to enter the commercial fishing industry in the NWT. This is who the contribution and grants are for. They are not for southern fishers who reside in the South or do not have a bona fide interest in the NWT.

If we want economic diversification, then, let us reach out to the Indigenous peoples of the NWT and our northern residents, to encourage and support their entry into the commercial fishing industry, and not continue to look south for the answer.

I would request that this government take care of its own by following the policies it has established. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RETENTION OF SURPLUSES BY EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

**MR. NORN:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. We are at a time when schools are facing budget shortfalls and need to either cut services or programs. I really do not understand why ECE does not allow for budget surpluses to be carried over and utilized by schools at the start of a new fiscal year. Presently, when the fiscal year is coming to an end, and there happens to be monies left over that was not spent, it is mandatory for all school boards to hand back all of their money to the Department of Education,



Culture and Employment, or to the FMB, depending on the surplus amount.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly disagree with this way of doing business. I believe that we could be better utilizing our leftover education dollars. Why not allow schools to spend this leftover money to use how they see fit? After all, these allocated funds were budgeted for their use, so I don't see why we can't allow them to carry over any unspent money into the new fiscal year.

If schools were able to carry over these surplus funds and spend it as they saw fit, I believe that our schools would be better off because of it. Just think of it. Schools would be in a better position to plan for long-term spending on things like new support staff, funding bus services, or for simply buying new classroom supplies, such as computers for students.

In closing, we had this scathing auditor general report on education in the North. I think that we need to be innovative, and we need to use the spirit of our youth to assist in whatever we can. With that, I will have some questions for the appropriate Minister in a short while. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiillideh. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ULTRASOUND POLICY AT STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. In March 2017, the Department of Health and Social Services released its Caring for Our People Strategic Plan for the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services System. The vision laid out in that document is "Best Health, Best Care, Best Future" with one of the goals being "care and services are responsive to children, individuals, families, and communities."

Following a complaint from a constituent, I was advised by the Minister of Health and Social Services that, in July 2019, Stanton Territorial Hospital changed its practice with respect to support people accompanying pregnant women in the ultrasound room. The support person was no longer able to accompany a patient into the sonogram room. I was told that this change was based on the Sonography Canada Professional Practice Guidelines, which were updated in September 2018.

I have reviewed that document and could find nothing against the use of family members as chaperones. The guidelines state: "A chaperone will ideally be a member of staff, but in some

departments and circumstances, a member of staff with chaperone training may not be available, and institutional or facility policies may allow a relative or friend of the patient to be used as a comforter, care, or informal chaperone if this is acceptable to both the patient and the practitioner involved."

Given that our healthcare system is supposed to be client-centred and moving towards cultural safety, the current practice of excluding family members, especially fathers, during ultrasounds would seem to run counter to our stated vision and goals.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the policy and practice of ultrasounds at Stanton Territorial Hospital which is in my Frame Lake riding. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY HOUSING PLANS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, for the last 40 years, Canadians have determined core housing needs based on adequacy, suitability, and affordability. Core housing refers to a national set of measures developed in collaboration with the United States. Based on core housing metrics, in 2019, over 50 percent of housing in small communities required major repairs; and in Yellowknife, our greatest challenge was affordability. One in three Yellowknifers are spending more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs. Over 900 people are currently on the waitlist for public housing across the NWT.

Things are getting worse, Mr. Speaker. In 2009, 32 percent of the NWT had at least one housing problem. In 2019, a decade later, that number has risen to 43 percent. Our needs are growing. Our housing is aging and becoming inadequate, according to core measures.

Understand that what is measured defines the crisis. When housing, community wellness, economic prosperity, education, and personal health are all linked, are we really measuring the right things? When northern housing is now linked to the National Housing Strategy, to human and Indigenous rights, and to global sustainability, are we really measuring the right things?

While Canadian jurisdictions raced to be the first at the table for billions in federal housing dollars, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chiefs-in-Assembly started creating their own modern self-determined housing strategy. This strategy will define housing needs based on community values and priorities and will

work toward creative community-based solutions to solve the housing crisis. This strategy was born in response to housing programs that are not meeting their needs today, have not addressed future needs of changing demographics, and do not promote or create community wellness. This acknowledges that a more holistic approach to housing is needed. This holistic approach challenges the narrow metrics of the core housing policies and includes new, more meaningful data. This approach focuses on how everything is connected.

Our four-year mandate recognizes a half-dozen initiatives related directly to building homes in thriving communities. To increase effectiveness, to save money, to focus our efforts, these initiatives must work together. On Friday, the Premier acknowledged conversations committing this Cabinet to work with the Indigenous governments to secure funding from the federal government. This is a great beginning. We must also work across all levels of government, all sectors and NGOs, to tell a new story of dwelling in this land. I seek consent to continue, please, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. CLEVELAND:** This is a great beginning. We must work across all levels of government, all sectors and NGOs, to tell a new story of dwelling in this land. We need robust funded plans to achieve it, through integrated community land use stewardship, community renewable energy plans, housing and community wellness metrics, and reconciliation planning, with our whole social system engaged at the table, facing new issues in a new way. We need to start measuring what matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IRON LAW OF BUREAUCRACY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about the iron law of bureaucracy, a term coined by Jerry Pournelle, a researcher on legacy institutions. The law states that, in any bureaucratic organization, there will be two kinds of people: those who work to further the actual goals of the organization and those who work for the organization itself. Examples in the GNWT would be those who work hard and sacrifice their time to serve our public, and I thank them for that, versus those who avoid accountability, consider their main role to push paper, and ensure that they hold the department record for being cc'd on the most emails.

The iron law states that, in all cases, the type of person whose primary goal is to climb a bureaucratic ladder, as opposed to serve the public, will always gain control of the organization and will always write the rules under which the organization functions. This is the challenge of legacy institutions, Mr. Speaker, such as government. If government were a business, it would have failed long ago. It would have been forced to declare bankruptcy and try again with new ideas. Yet government bankruptcy, despite what our fiscal situation might say, is not an option.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to clarify: government can't be run on profit motive, and all of our goals in this House is to have the GNWT succeed, not fail; but, if we are not speaking honestly about problems that persist in any legacy institution, then we cannot serve our citizens.

This is not me speaking, Mr. Speaker. There is no shortage of research on solutions on how to address systemic problems in public service institutions. One way in which the iron law is solidified is the avoidance of making decisions, also known as "paralysis by analysis." The reality is that we all have to make decisions in uncertainty. There will always be trade-offs. We can't pretend that we live in a perfect world with all of the data. If you are in a department and the sixth briefing note on a subject has been requested, perhaps it is time to just make a decision.

Mr. Speaker, I struggle with this because, on this side of the House, we constantly ask for more power, for more input, for more information, yet we all have to realize that the goal here is to empower the experts in our departments to make decisions; to empower those on the front line to serve our citizens. It may be time to ruffle some feathers, but it is our job to make those tough decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TLICHO ALL-SEASON ACCESS ROAD CONTRACT

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I'd like to speak on the winter road and all-round access road. They signed the agreement last year; that was February 14<sup>th</sup>, that they signed this agreement with the GNWT and the Tlicho government, and also the company that is going to do the work. It started last fall. I want to make a statement on that. [Translation ends]

Mr. Speaker, on February 14, 2019, on Valentine's Day last year this week, the NWT government

signed an agreement with the Tlicho government and a project company for the construction of a 97-kilometre road that will connect Whati to Highway No. 3. The construction costs for the road are expected to reach \$213.8 million, while the overall P3 contract to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain it will cost \$411.8 million over a 25-year period.

To date, there are 137 workers on site, and there are 49 Tlicho citizens working there. Out of these, five were hired as heavy equipment operators, two as mechanics, 23 in the general labour area, and 18 as truck drivers. There are also 18 northern workers from the Yellowknife community and, get this, Mr. Speaker, 70 non-NWT workers at site. That's 51 percent of 137 workers being non-NWT, from the South.

Mr. Speaker, the construction site is located in the heart of the Wek'eezhii Boundary and Monfwi Gogha De Niitlee Boundary. By rights, the contractual agreement should directly benefit the local Behchoko and Tlicho communities, as opposed to a southern firm and southern, non-NWT workers. As my former colleague would put it, it's a crying shame to allow outsiders to take all the benefits. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR  
WOMEN IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,  
ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that anybody who has known me prior to this role in my life is not going to be surprised at the topic of my Member's statement today. On December 22, 2015, the United Nations passed a resolution to declare February 11<sup>th</sup> the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. This is a topic that is near and dear to my heart. As an engineer, I have worked tirelessly over the last decade to promote and advocate for women in STEM, so I just wanted to share with the Members and the Assembly some statistics around women in STEM in Canada.

In 2016, women made up 34 percent of STEM, which is Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, bachelor's degree holders, and 23 percent of science and technology workers among Canadians aged 25 to 64. In my specific professional area of engineering, women only account for 12 percent of professional engineers.

Most women who departed from STEM did so early in their studies. By the start of their second year, 17 percent of women in STEM had either switched to

non-science-based programs or left undergraduate degrees altogether. Between then and the start of the third year, another 10 percent left.

Among Canadian-educated workers aged 25 to 34, 54 percent of women with a bachelor's degree in computer and information sciences worked in science and technology occupations, compared with 74 percent of men.

Despite extensive research and a high degree of policy concern, Canada's progress on improving women's representation in STEM is very uneven. In 2016, women's representation among Canadian-educated STEM bachelor's degree holders was 36 percent for 30-year-olds, similar to 37 percent for 40-year-olds, and then both figures were much higher than with women's share of 22 percent for 65-year-olds.

Women, though, one stat that is in our favour is that we graduated faster than the men did from STEM programs, regardless of the field of study. For example, 27 percent of women and 16 percent of men who started out in computer and information sciences completed a STEM degree within four years. I just wanted to take the opportunity to mark the day as it is something that I feel very passionately about. Again, as we have all been hearing a lot throughout this session and the first one, I am very proud to be part of such a radically changed Assembly and showing a new face of governance in Canada. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members, I would welcome those who are tuned in on television and on Facebook. We are gaining more and more people following our proceedings. Thank you.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, report of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 45-19(2):  
TLICHO ALL-SEASON ACCESS ROAD  
CONTRACT

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier about the Tlicho All-Season Road to Whati. I would like to ask the Minister of Infrastructure: just how certain is the Minister that the contractor has met all

of the requirements for Tlicho construction labour and Tlicho business operation as outlined in the contract signed between the three parties? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding from the department that the contractor is meeting all of their requirements under the negotiated contract or the contract for employment of hiring of Tlicho citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** That leads into my next question. I understand that there have been some changes in catering contractors at the site. How is it that the catering contract at the site wound up in the hands of an American firm, the Aramark American catering company, that is on site right now?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I am not 100 percent sure of the question. If it is just to ask why an American company has ended up on site, it is my understanding that the way the contract was worded, it was about employment of Tlicho citizens, not of that specific company. However, I could clarify that for the Member and return with a written answer if he would like.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** We are talking about two areas: the hiring and, also, business opportunity. This is a business opportunity for Tlicho companies, local companies, but they missed their opportunity.

I will move on to a third question. I am assuming, as with any other government contract, that the process will follow to favour northern hires, northern businesses. What was the process that allowed a non-Tlicho, not just a non-NWT, but rather an American firm to service the Tlicho All-Season Road project, especially when they are operating in Monfwi borders?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I would agree with the Member that we have all had lots of discussions around ensuring that northern businesses are used on northern contracts. I can't speak to the specifics of knowing, in this particular contract, details, but it is my understanding from the department that this has all been within the contract that was set forward and negotiated between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tlicho as well as the third party. It is my understanding that that was all decided upon together as a group. I am concerned to hear of businesses that are coming from not only southern Canada but from the US and taking work. It is definitely something I spoke to during my campaign. All I can do is commit to the Member that we will look at this and learn lessons from this and move forward.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. I still can't believe, in this day and age, that we are allowing an American firm operating on our traditional land. It is very difficult to accept. I would like to proceed with the next question. Is the project meeting the commitments to use the minimum participation rate of northern and Indigenous participation? Who is monitoring this? Masi.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** It is my understanding from the department that, yes, they are meeting the requirements of the contract for northern and Tlicho engagement or employment. However, I will commit to the Member, if he would like to have a further discussion with the department, we can bring departmental staff, and we can have a conversation about the monitoring that is happening to assure the Member that we are committed to engaging and working with northern companies and northern employees. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 46-19(2):  
HOUSING PROGRAM DELIVERY IN  
COMMUNITIES

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are related to the NWT Housing Corporation program delivery to the communities and directed to the housing Minister. Can the Minister ensure district program advisors are visiting the communities on a more frequent basis to advise of the housing programs and services that are available to the people? Mahsi.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Member, for your statement. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to having my programs' advisors who visit the community offices going forward. We do have a significant amount of programs and services that we do deliver as the Housing Corporation. Right now, we are going forward, and we are looking at advertisements. Then we are able to meet the needs of the Northwest Territories through our program delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member, for your question.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. We have had program advisors visit the community recently, before the holidays, but they weren't taking down specific information on people who approached them for their program delivery. That wasn't being followed through. Can

the Minister ensure district program advisors are available to assist potential clients with the onerous applications process?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Member, for your statement. I am quite surprised to hear that the programs' advisors are not seeing the applications thoroughly and that they are not meeting the satisfaction of the clients coming to the programs' advisors. I will ensure to the Member that, when the district officers come into the community, that we do end up with a status report. I want to know what those community visits were like. I want to know how many applications were received and if they were completed or else if there was some information that we are missing. I will ensure that the programs' advisors are following up and that we are accountable as the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Member, for your comments.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** In my Member statement, I alluded to the fact that the LHOs had program advisors previously. Can the Minister advise as to when we may see program advisors continue back into our communities?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Member, for your question. Going forward, I have realized that we have increased the population within our communities, and program delivery in our increased public housing units means that there is a need for more positions within our communities. I will be looking into this question because it is a concern to me that we do have a number of units on the ground, but the number of employees that we have currently, we need to review that. Going forward, I will follow up with the Member with the changes that we will be making throughout the community offices, the local housing authority.

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

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi to the Minister for stating that she will look into the position. Every year, we are always having problems with seniors and other people not being able to access a lot of the programs. There is no advertising in the communities or on the radio, and we are always having the staff of the LHOs directing clients to the Hay River office because we don't have anyone in our community to help with those. Because it's important for the seniors; they are always missing the end dates, or it's too late in the winter for servicing furnaces, and whatever else is required, so it's important to have those staff people on the ground in their communities who can help, maybe go door-to-door to really assist people. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. I didn't hear a question, but if the Minister wants to respond.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Member, for your comment. Going forward, I am looking at the program services that we offer at the local housing authority and the district offices. I guess it is kind of disturbing to hear that all of the programs are not being met and that we're not getting out to the clients who require the services that the Housing Corporation has to offer. I have instructed my department, the district offices, to be meeting with the local housing authorities monthly and going forward and looking at that, and wanting to meet the needs of the community membership; looking at the seniors, as well, and the programs; and looking at the dates that they are missing.

I would like the Member to provide me with names of the clients, and I will have my department follow up with that as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for your question.

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

QUESTION 47-19(2):  
ULTRASOUND POLICY AT STANTON  
TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Can the Minister tell this House what the current policy and practice is for ultrasounds at Stanton Territorial Hospital with regard to family members being present during the procedure? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, family members and support persons are being allowed into the ultrasound room, unless there is a specific medical reason for which this would not be appropriate. Stanton has committed to continue to monitor the situation to ensure that this approach is being applied consistently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that, because I have a constituent who confirmed to me as recently as December that was not the case, so I look forward to the Minister carrying out the new practice. In July 2019, the practice of allowing family members was changed so that family members could not be in the same room as a patient who was getting an ultrasound, so why was that practice changed in July of 2019?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The change was based on updated Sonography Canada Professional Practice Guidelines and feedback from the diagnostic imaging staff. This approach is evolving to become the standard practice in Canada and, at the time it was implemented, it was viewed by the diagnostic imaging department to be an internal procedural change. It is recognized, however, that this was short-sighted and did not necessarily anticipate the viewpoint and concerns of the public. As such, Stanton has committed to properly engage with practitioners, patients, and community stakeholders to discuss the intent of the practice change and impact that it may have.

Ultrasounds are medical exams that require full attention of the sonographers. Additional people in the room can make the exam more challenging. The intention was to allow the sonographer to complete the medical portion of the exam first, before inviting the patient's family into the room to show them and provide them with a photo of the baby.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that explanation. Look, it's great that our staff are -- and I know that they work very hard at Stanton Hospital, but clearly, when a policy like this is decided internally, it's probably not in the best interests of the patients. I have reviewed the Sonography Canada Professional Practice Guidelines; in fact, I quoted from them in my Member's statement. They were released in September of 2018, and there was nothing in there about northern healthcare or any specific guidance to exclude family members during an ultrasound. Would the Minister confirm that the guidelines that I just referenced, and she has referenced, do not prevent family members from being present during an ultrasound?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Sonography Canada Professional Practice Guidelines are considered a best practice source of information to inform and to guide the development and/or revision of the NTSSA policies and procedures with respect to the provisions of ultrasound in Stanton and throughout the NTSSA.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Clearly, the practice of excluding family members during an ultrasound is contrary to Best Health, Best Care, for a Better Future; that's the vision of the strategic plan we have in place for the NWT health and social services system, and the concept of cultural safety. There is nothing in the guidelines that prevent family members from being there, so what is the Minister going to do in terms of developing a policy for chaperones for patients

undergoing an ultrasound in the NWT, and how soon will we see that in place? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Stanton's diagnostic imaging department will be working to engage and communicate this change to external stakeholders, such as practitioners, patients, and community stakeholders, such as the Centering Pregnancy Program, to ensure that all points of view are captured. This engagement in communication is expected to be completed in spring 2020, and feedback obtained will be taken into consideration when developing policy that allows the sonographer to complete the obstetrical ultrasound in a manner that allows them to provide the best medical results and patient care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 48-19(2):  
RETENTION OF SURPLUSES BY EDUCATION  
AUTHORITIES

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This question is directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I spoke a little bit about budget surpluses in my Member's statement, and my question is: in the spirit of getting our district education authorities more budget autonomy, will the Minister commit to let any DEA surpluses in our riding to roll over this year? Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member bringing this up. It's good to get this type of information out to the public. I know that, when I was a Regular Member, and even now as a Minister, there seems to be difficulty communicating with the people on the ground, with the boards, about the roles and responsibilities and the rights of education authorities.

The policy that the Member is referencing was enacted to ensure that money that is provided by this Assembly for education is spent on education, and it allows for surplus carryover that is either 7 percent of audited revenue or \$250,000, whichever is greater. If this amount is exceeded, the education body has to put forward a plan on how they are going to reduce that, and that plan comes to me.

I want to let the Minister know that I am very flexible in how I am going to administer this. If there is a real need for an education authority to set aside money in order to do something like purchase school buses, then I will have that conversation. They can write to myself, write to the department, and we can begin that process. We don't really claw

money back. There has never been a situation where ECE has decided we are going to take money back. Every plan has been approved so far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NORN:** I don't know if there is any foreshadowing here, but did I just get a promotion to Minister? No? I just want to make sure. Thank you to the Minister for his response. I just want to make sure that there is more communication as well, and to have more meetings with our DEAs, just to make sure there is the open line communication, to make sure that I don't have to come back and ask these questions, and to work as a team.

My next question: would the Minister be open to working with our DEAs to grant their wishes and find ways to keep their surpluses?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I thank my colleague. That's why I try and say "colleague" all the time because we're all equal here. There are no promotions. We are all here to represent the public. I am happy to work with the education authorities to find ways to ensure that they can use their funds to deliver education in the best possible way. We also have to look at the fact that the funding from ECE is provided to the education council, and the education council is the one that then distributes it to the education authorities.

There is another level here that we have to look at, and perhaps the way that it's distributed by the education council leaves some authorities with more funding than others. It is not so black and white. Like I said, I am happy to have those conversations and to the Member's points, or to my colleague's points, I am trying to do a better job of communicating directly with the DEAs.

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

QUESTION 49-19(2):  
MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS  
WOMEN AND GIRLS CALLS FOR JUSTICE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and before I get started with my questions, I just want the Minister to know that I have read the "Doing Our Part" initial response to the final report of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Can the Minister advise us if she has read the calls for justice? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Member to know that it has been printed, it is on my desk, and I will start reading it. Thank you.

**MS. SEMMLER:** I thank the Minister for being honest. Can the Minister tell us what steps the GNWT is taking to fully implement the calls for justice outlined in this Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** An interdepartmental Missing and Murdered Indigenous working group was set up to coordinate the GNWT's response to calls for justice. This working group is chaired by the special advisor to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and it includes appointed representatives from departments such as Justice, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment, as well as the Housing Corporation. Other departments are invited to attend to the meetings as required. This working group will be doing an in-depth review and analyze the calls for justice. A time frame has not been established for the completion of this review, but it is anticipated that it will require detailed discussions.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Has the Minister had a chance to directly speak to those who are responsible for the national action plan since being elected to ensure appropriate, sustainable, long-term funding is available to the GNWT to fully implement these calls for justice, and if not, will the Minister commit to this government and all Ministers to lobby Canada for their federal counterparts to ensure long-term sustainable funding is provided to ensure full implementation for calls to justice?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I have attended the provincial-federal-territorial status of women, and in the meetings, we talked about having commitment to look forward, going through the review.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of this new issue, with the government being a minority government, I am afraid that if we don't get moving on this issue sooner than later, that if there is a chance that the next government, if our minority federal government changes, we may not have good strength and movement on this. I would like the Minister to commit that she would push harder and get more familiar with this so that we can get commitments from our federal partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Absolutely. That is my intent, and the Member has brought it up in the House several times, and also made it her commitment,

and that is something that I will commit to looking into. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 50-19(2):  
PROOF OF INCOME FOR PUBLIC HOUSING  
CLIENTS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the NWT Housing Corporation Minister. Can the Minister confirm that LHOs have been instructed to use T4 slips to do tenants' assessments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the housing corporation has been instructed to use T4 slips for their rental scale. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Are there any forms of proof, such as current pay, current ways of paying using pay stubs or monthly income support for more accurate rental payment assessment for that month?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I would like to advise that I would encourage the client to go into our local housing authority office to receive rental assessment, and to make sure that they remain consistent, but it is the client's responsibility to make sure that, if they have any changes in their income, that they report it to the local housing authority.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Where can the public find this, because I couldn't find it, Mr. Speaker, in the NWT Housing Corporation's policies, to show all the bureaucratic requirements are clearly understood in regard to the T4s? Where does it show in legislation that that is to be used?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The details are outlined in our policy. I don't have my information in front of me to reference it right now. We do not work through legislation. The Housing Corporation works through policy.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is pretty tough when people have to come in and do T4s because they do seasonal work. You are working, probably, four months, and then, they come back home, and then the assessment that they are given, they still have to pay for the whole 12 months at that higher rate, where people are

having problems paying power, food, clothing for their kids. We never did this before in the past, Mr. Speaker, in the policies. Where does it show in the policies in regard to T4 slips? It doesn't show. Can the Minister provide that information to the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** In regards to the policy of outlining the T4 slips in our rental scale, I will have to get back to the Member and provide him the information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 51-19(2):  
ADULT DAY PROGRAM FOR SENIORS IN  
YELLOWKNIFE

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement, helping seniors to age in place is a priority for this Assembly, but we need to improve supports for them to make this priority a reality. One area that needs work is helping Yellowknife seniors to get out of the House and socialize, whatever their physical and cognitive abilities. The Department of Health and Social Services surveyed seniors about the kinds of activities that they would like to take part in. Today, I have questions for the Minister about the results. First of all, what did seniors say they need in order to participate in social activities? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The results indicated that older adults in Yellowknife are active and want to remain physically and socially active. All the age groups identified transportation, affordability of activities, and a lack of information about social activities as a barrier to social engagement. By far, the biggest concern was transportation: city bus not being available when activities are scheduled, routines are not close enough to home, and numerous challenges with the Yellowknife Accessible Transit Services. In addition, those 75 years and older identified lack of accessibility within buildings and lack of supports in physical and mental health needs as barriers to social engagement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** That is good information from the Minister. Can the Minister give us a sense of what kind of response rate they got to the survey and particularly from those who are over 80 and those who may have cognitive limitations?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** We did not ask individuals whether they had cognitive limitation, so we do not have that data. The age group set up for the survey



allowed us to capture information for individuals 75 to 85 years old and 85-plus years of age. Forty-five individuals 75 years and older responded to the survey; that was 10 percent of the survey respondents. Forty people were 75 to 84 years of age, and eight people were 85 years and older.

**MS. GREEN:** I am a little concerned about how the needs of people with cognitive issues were taken into account in this survey. How were they engaged in this survey?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** At this time, I don't know the data on the limitations, but it is something we can look into and get back to the Member.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the Minister knows that the primary barrier to people being involved in social inclusion is transportation, what are her next steps to bridge this gap? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The department will use the information to develop programming that will put in place support for older adults in Yellowknife, and that includes transportation. We are in the early stages of designing the program, and we are working with the steering committee to complete it by the end of March 2020. The health authority will go through an expression of interest process to find an organization to deliver programming, and we are aiming to have this completed in early April so that we can start to begin the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 52-19(2):  
GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
COMMERCIAL FISHERS

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have to respect the work that the NWT fishers do and the product that they deliver to us. This is why we have contributions and grants to assist them with the associated high costs of doing business. Can the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment confirm the total grants and contribution and subsidies for the commercial fishing industry? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm for the Member that, in 2018-2019, a little over \$565,000 was provided to the Northwest Territories Fishermen's Federation in

varying supports. The Northwest Territories commercial fishing industry is eligible to receive funding and support from ITI in two different areas: the Great Slave Lake fishery support program, which is specifically for commercial fishers on Great Slave Lake and primarily to offset freight costs from Hay River to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation plant in Winnipeg, Manitoba; and the second one is the Northern Food Development Program. As entrepreneurs and small businesses, fishers are also eligible to apply for funding from the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Program, or the SEED Program, which many already do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** The NWT fishers depend on these grants and contributions to offset those high costs. Can the Minister of ITI confirm what percentage of these contributions go to the NWT fishers and, if any, to fishers outside the NWT who have not met the residency requirement?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I can tell you that all of the SEED and Northern Food Development Program funding went to resident and Northwest Territories fishers. For these two programs, you must be a resident of the Northwest Territories to be eligible for funding. Applicants are required to produce a valid driver's licence or healthcare card.

When it comes to the Great Slave Lake fishery support program, all fishers who hold a commercial fishing licence on Great Slave Lake, a current boat certificate, and sell fish to the Northwest Territories Fishermen's Federation fish plant are eligible to receive support under the freight support stream. This program pays out based on the poundage of fish delivered to the plant. Under this program, there was one non-resident fisher who received contributions last year, totalling about 2.5 percent of the total payout to fishers.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** With respect to the residency requirement, there seems to be a difference between what is in the SEED Program and what is in the commercial renewable resource use policy. The SEED Program requires six months, and the other one is three years. I am just wondering if the Minister has looked at that and if the Minister is willing to reconcile that difference, because I would rather see the money stay in the North. I would rather see it be three years than the six-month requirement due to the fact that it is pretty easy to get a driver's licence here and it is pretty easy to get healthcare here. Anybody could do it and take our money and leave.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I appreciate the Member raising this concern to me. It is not an area that I would express to be very familiar with. When I did hear of the discrepancies in the residency requirements, it does make me ask the same

question as the Member. I have not had a chance to follow up with ITI on the reasoning behind why a six-month residency versus three years for the fishers. I do commit to getting back to the Member with that answer, as well as committing to a general overall review of most of the programs or all the programs that I have in my departments, which I am getting started on.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the high costs associated with the fishing industry, can the Minister of ITI confirm that these grants, contributions, and subsidies will be revisited at some point to determine if they accurately reflect the high cost associated with that industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Yes to the Member's question. The department has and will continue to review all of its funding programs to determine if they are meeting their objectives. Members may or may not be aware that, during the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the support for NWT fishers under the Great Slave Lake Fishery Program was revisited and, in fact, it doubled from \$225,000 to \$450,000. Right now, we are of the opinion that the programs and services offered to Northwest Territories fishers are adequate. In fact, our jurisdiction is among the best in Canada when it comes to supporting individual fishers.

More importantly, though, Mr. Speaker, we are working with the Tu Cho Cooperative to realize a vision that we share for the revitalization of the Great Slave Lake fishing industry. It will position the Tu Cho Cooperative to ensure that the Northwest Territories' producers see the benefit of having a direct say and even ownership in their industry. With increased demand, access to higher markets and pricing, and new products, we want to realize greater returns for new and lifelong fishers working on the lake. Rather than subsidies and grants, we see this as a way to increase opportunities and returns in the fishing sector.

I would also like to acknowledge that I understand there are concerns within the fishing industry in Hay River, and I do commit to the Member to further discussions with him going forward to ensure we work on those together. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 53-19(2):

APPLICATION OF MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, nowhere in the Medical Travel Policy does it mention whether the

Minister or any government worker has the ability to overturn a doctor's recommendation for a non-medical escort, so my question is: under what authority does medical travel personnel have the ability to deny a non-medical escort despite a doctor telling a patient otherwise?

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

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. This is often a misunderstood issue, and it provides me with an opportunity to clarify the role of the clinicians in the administration of medical travel benefits. While our clinicians have an integral role with respect to medical travel, such as making a valid medical referral for the patient and making a recommendation for the escorts, medical travel assistance is a benefit program offered by our government and administered by our medical travel staff. The Medical Travel Policy does not give our clinicians full authority over escort decisions. The criteria for non-medical escorts are stated in the policy, and recommendations for an escort must be aligned with the criteria of the policy.

In June 2019, the Minister of Health and Social Services issued a directive formalizing the delegation of the implementation and administration of medical travel policies, excluding the appeals policy, to the NTSSA by the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services. The directive states that the NTSSA, through the medical travel office, coordinates the medical travel program for all of the Northwest Territories, including Hay River and the Tlicho. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** The person who denied the two cases that I mentioned in my Member's statement was done from a desk by departmental staff here in Yellowknife, a staff member who probably has no medical background, who dictates to our communities at large. Is this a professional medical practice that the Minister approves of?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The role of the medical travel office is to ensure that the Medical Travel Policy is being administered consistently and as intended by the policy. When a clinician makes a recommendation for a non-medical escort, the reason for the escort is written on the form and often accompanied by a letter providing further explanation. I have full confidence in the medical travel office's ability to determine if the reason aligns with the criteria that is listed in the policy. When medical travel staff deny coverage for non-medical escort benefits, there is often a follow-up communication between the clinician and the medical travel staff to confirm the escort decision. There are also an exceptions policy and appeals

policy to consider unique circumstances and to ensure the policy is being applied as intended.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Supporting our doctors in their decisions has always been my priority on behalf of the members of Thebacha and the NWT. Does the Minister feel doctors' decisions for a medical escort are vital and valid?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Yes. I have mentioned that the doctor's role is essential to the implementation of the Medical Travel Policy. However, doctors have a role as advocates for their patients, and sometimes make recommendations for non-medical escorts that do not align with the criteria in the policy and would lead to significant inconsistencies in the benefits provided to one patient over another.

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

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, a complete evaluation of this department's Medical Travel Policy should be done in favour of a doctor's professional opinion and the patient's well-being. When will this be done?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** We revised some of the medical travel policies in 2019, and we will continue to work with this over the next year. I will keep the Member and the Standing Committee on Social Development updated on this work and provide a briefing at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 54-19(2):  
COMMUNITY HOUSING PLANS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Long-range energy plans, community land use, and community wellness plans are completed independently, as are economic development and resource management strategies. Will the Minister commit to working with her colleagues to bring these planning exercises together and complete all communities within the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can work with my Cabinet colleagues to have the discussion, but I cannot commit that all 33 community plans will be completed within the four years. Also, I will continue the conversation with Cabinet going forward, because, looking at those

community plans, Indigenous partnership is my priority going forward, to offer adequate housing throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I appreciate the Minister's commitment to have the discussion. My next question is: do the long-range housing plans currently done by the Housing Corporation account for the changing demographics of an aging population in each community in the NWT, especially as it relates to women, women with children, people with disabilities, and elders?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Can the Member please repeat her question?

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I'm wondering if the current housing plans for the NWT Housing Corporation include the changing demographics of our population, particularly age, and also as it relates to women, women with children, people with disabilities, and elders?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The Northwest Territories does recognize there is an increase of population throughout the territory. We have identified programs to deal with the increase of population and the unique scenarios that we acquire throughout the Northwest Territories, and wanting to look at seniors aging in place and a safe program that provides renovations to clients who are homeowners, private homeowners, and looking at replacement of fuel tanks. I would also like to include that we do have a rent subsidy program that is used throughout Yellowknife, throughout this area, because of the lack of public housing units that we do have currently.

Going forward, I would like to work with the Member to look at initiatives for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. We can elaborate on program improvement.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I am always ready to have a conversation about housing, so I appreciate that. Is the Minister prepared to work with communities and Indigenous governments to re-examine the definition of core housing and develop metrics of success appropriate to the challenges that we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Housing throughout the Northwest Territories is something that I am very passionate about, and throughout the term and the time being within the portfolio, I was really excited to hear that one of my communities in the Sahtu, Fort Good Hope, has entered into an agreement, and they were able to establish housing programs independently accessing federal dollars.

Going forward, I will be looking at the housing initiative programs that are currently offered, and

one of the things that I would like to do is elaborate on them. Advertisement is a key for me and for the Housing Corporation, so that we are able to meet the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Also, reflecting and looking at the housing plans, I am quite excited for those to be completed. We do have 33 communities, but those community plans, housing strategic plans, will be able to identify the housing needs throughout the Northwest Territories. It is community-based information where the community is telling us what it is that they need. We, as a government, can provide the assistance and work in partnership with the Indigenous groups and with the communities.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yellowknife housing is becoming ever less affordable. How will the Minister improve the affordability of housing in Yellowknife over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly? Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I would like to elaborate on the housing programs that are offered currently. For the Yellowknife area, I would look at the rent subsidy program that is offered. There is a name change to that. We will continue to be offering it after April 1<sup>st</sup>. I would like to work with a colleague and just elaborate a little bit more on the programs that are offered for Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 55-19(2):  
COLVILLE LAKE SELF-GOVERNMENT  
NEGOTIATIONS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previously in this Assembly, I tabled a letter from the chief of Colville Lake, once again asking the GNWT to leave the negotiating table so that Canada and that nation can reach a bilateral self-government agreement. My question is to the honourable Premier. Have our negotiators been provided updated mandates at the negotiating table?

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mandate direction on negotiating tables change quite often. They are based on what we think will happen. Anything that has a change, if it is going to impact finances or land or anything, it has

to come through Cabinet. It's not a decision that negotiators can make at the table. I know that a lot of people think that it should be, but the reality is that, if it costs money, it has to come through Cabinet table. They are constantly being updated on a regular basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** We have consistently heard from a number of Indigenous governments that the unilateral imposition of our government's core principles and objectives in regard to self-government negotiations has become a barrier. My question is for the honourable Premier. Have we updated our core principles and objectives in regard to self-government?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** No, it has been quite a while, actually, since we updated our core principles and objectives. They actually arose from an obligation from the Tlicho agreement, is where they came from. They are actually very simple. They are very simple principles, and our issue is that there has to be some kind of standard of care or principles that go across. It's not as easy as just changing them to meet the whim. We also have to take Canada's legislation, as well. For example, the Canada Health Act has principles that need to be taken into account. The new Canada legislation that is coming out with Child and Family Services has principles and standards that have to be taken into consideration. Although we want to work closely with our Indigenous governments, and we are looking at a new way of doing business, we can't forget that there are three parties at this table, often, with the negotiations: the Northwest Territories, the Indigenous government, and Canada.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I am well-aware that there are three parties at the table, and to not update our core principles and objectives because there are federal government issues seems to miss the point, and that is the federal government's whole purpose being at the table. My question is for the honourable Premier. Are we willing to reopen our core principles and objectives and negotiate them with Indigenous governments, considering our commitment to implement UNDRIP?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** During the Member's opening speech, I heard him say -- and I might misquote him, so correct me if I do -- that there are two kinds of workers; one that works for the government, government workers who get a lot of CCs. Now that I'm Premier, I get a lot of CCs, in all honesty. I wish I didn't get as many. Then there's ones who work for the goals of the government.

I came in here four years ago to actually make change, and it shows that I make changes. These wrinkles that I have on my face did not come honestly; they came from hard work at this table. I

have already met with Indigenous governments. I am changing the way that I do practice. I called them all when I first started. I am meeting with them. We are switching up even the way we seat. It used to be them against us, and now we're sitting as a group. I have changed up our bilaterals. I have scared them all. I've said, "After our bilaterals are done, let's, the chief and I, sit together and talk about the negotiations, what's going on, what's happening." It's scary for them as well. They don't know where this Premier is coming from.

The point is, is that this Premier is looking for change. We have been going on some of these negotiations 30-some years, and government-to-government does not mean, to me, federal government, territorial government, and, at the bottom, Indigenous government. Government-to-government, to me, means, federal government, NWT, and Indigenous government all working together at the same level.

Yes, I am totally open to changing whatever we need to do to work better with Indigenous governments and to work towards self-government and land claims agreements. That is my ultimate goal, and I will forgive the House for any extra wrinkles that I get because of trying to achieve my goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 56-19(2):  
CANTUNG MINE SURFACE LEASE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, monsieur le President. Forgive me if I look like a prune today, but I want to go back to the issue of the Cantung Mine and Mactung that I raised yesterday. My questions are for the Minister of Lands today, though. GNWT had a surface lease covering the Cantung Mine as a result of devolution. I would like to know whether we have turned that back to the federal government now. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada is fully responsible for the administration of all surface leases and reserves that exist on the Cantung site, including inspections. Administrative arrangements at Cantung are now consistent with other federally managed waste sites under the devolution agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I would like to thank the Minister for that, because I asked many times in the last Assembly about whether that surface lease had been turned back. It sounds like it has; that's good

news. I want to know if there are any residual liabilities that accrue to this government as a result of the Cantung Mine, and that includes environmental liabilities.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The Government of Canada is responsible for the management of the Cantung Mine, including care and maintenance and remediation. The Cantung Mine is a federal area under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. This means that the GNWT does not have designated authority or hold security for licences and permits.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I think that the shorter version of that is that we have no liability for the Cantung site, but I will deal with that offline. I would like to know from the Minister, if I can, why this government, GNWT, accepted the Mactung property as part of the financial security for the Cantung mine when it was in operation.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The business assets for Mactung tungsten deposits were purchased by the Government of the Northwest Territories in order to recover debts owed to the GNWT under the Cantung reclamation security agreement. The Government of the Northwest Territories took this approach to preserve the security originally accepted by Canada and to maximize its value.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that response. I don't think he really answered my question, though. I want to know why we accepted Mactung as part of the security arrangement for the Cantung Mine. The previous Minister had full discretion to accept any form of financial security. Why did this government accept the Mactung Mine as part of this financial security? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** It is my understanding that the two properties were there to make sure that the federal government fulfilled their commitment. Part of the devolution agreement that we purchase these two properties to do that. I will make a commitment to the Member to go out and get further information on this because that is my understanding presently. If there is further information, I will get that to him. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Item 10, written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 16-19(2):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,  
2019-2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 17-19(2):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 4, 2019-2020

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents, "Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020," and "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 18-19(2):  
NWT CUMULATIVE IMPACT MONITORING  
PROGRAM 2018/19 PROJECT RESULTS

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program 2018-2019 Project Results." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 19-19(2):  
EMAIL FROM SHERI BEAMISH VOGT  
REGARDING MEDICAL TRAVEL DENIAL DATED  
FEBRUARY 10, 2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 20-19(2):  
EMAIL FROM MINISTER OF HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES REGARDING MEDICAL  
TRAVEL DENIAL AND ESCORT POLICY DATED  
FEBRUARY 10, 2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 21-19(2):  
MINISTERIAL POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES: MEDICAL  
TRAVEL - ESCORT CRITERIA

TABLED DOCUMENT 22-19(2):  
MINISTERIAL POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES: MEDICAL  
TRAVEL - EXCEPTIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 23-19(2):  
MINISTERIAL POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES: MEDICAL  
TRAVEL - APPEAL PROCESS

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table three documents: an email from the Thebacha constituency regarding medical travel escort denial; two, reply for the EA on behalf of the Minister Thom regarding the above constituent; and three, the Ministerial policy on medical travel escort criteria, exceptions, and the appeal process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 2-19(2):  
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 12-19(2):  
2019-2023 MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TO  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that, on Thursday, February 13, 2020, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. And, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Norn. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MOTION 3-19(2):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO  
FEBRUARY 25, 2020

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the change to our House sitting where we will have next week for Members to return to their constituencies, I give notice that on Thursday, February 13, 2020, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 13, 2020, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, February 25, 2020; and further, that any time prior to February 25, 2020, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and

shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

### Motions

MOTION 2-19(2):  
REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 12-19(2):  
2019-2023 MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TO  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,  
CARRIED

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories requires detailed consideration;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Hay River North, that Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 16-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019 - 2020, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Norn.

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 16-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 16-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present the Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020.

The Supplementary Estimates document proposes an increase of \$1.3 million comprised of the following items:

- \$418,000 for an enclosed cab snow blower for the Fort Smith airport that is fully funded by the Government of Canada's Airports Capital Assistance Program;
- \$400,000 to initiate work under the Surface Structures Adaptation for Climate Resilience project agreement at the Mike Zubko airport in Inuvik. This project is 75 percent funded by the Government of Canada's Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund;
- \$280,000 for one vehicle and three patrol boats for the establishment of three protected areas under the Nature Fund agreement, the costs of which are offset by Environment and Climate Change Canada; and
- \$200,000 to commence initial environmental assessment and planning work to inform the construction of an all-

weather road from Highway No. 4 to Lockhart Lake within the Slave Geological Province Corridor under the National Trade Corridors Fund.

Those are my opening remarks, Madam Chair. I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee might have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. We have agreed to begin with general comments. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House? Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber.

Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With me this afternoon, I have Jamie Koe, deputy secretary to the Financial Management Board, and Terence Courtoreille, the director of the Management Board Secretariat.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I will now open the floor for general comments, and the Members have ten minutes each. Seeing no general comments, we will proceed to a review of the supplementary estimates by department. We will begin with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell us what these three patrol boats are for?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are three jet boats and one truck that are being purchased for the operations and management of three Indigenous and territorial protected areas, the Thaidene Nene, the Ts'ude niline Tu'eyeta -- I am looking over this way for some help -- and Dinaga Wek'ehodi. I will practice over the course of Indigenous Languages Month, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that information from the Minister. I understand that this is federal money. What's the term of the agreement, and when is it going to end? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a four-year, four-fiscal-term agreement, so it will be running until 2023. I'm

sorry; I'm having trouble hearing the Member, so I think I may have missed some of his question. I will put my earpiece on. I apologize if I didn't hear all of it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister. What happens after 2023, if there are capital needs for these three protected areas? As I understand it, there is going to be a master plan or a plan developed for each of these; presumably, there are going to be some efforts to encourage local business development and tourism with these new protected areas. What happens after four years, if there are capital needs for these areas? Are we going to have to go to the federal government cap in hand, or is this something that we would start to fund ourselves? Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a little more faith in the system, perhaps, insofar as the nature of the three protected areas is such that they are investments by the Government of the Northwest Territories as well as the federal government, and in partnership with the Indigenous communities and Indigenous governments of those areas; so I am perhaps a little bit more optimistic as to their future and the future partnerships between the governments.

I can note for the Member that Environment and Natural Resources is continuing ongoing research into the long-term planning in order to make sure that there is a bridge over any funding gaps that might arise after the 2023 point in time, so, while that's not a complete answer, I can assure the Member that the department is alive to his concerns.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Thanks to the Minister for those. I have lots of confidence in our Indigenous governments and their ability to protect these areas, plan for them, and so on. I am not as confident, though, when it comes to our government. When I continued to ask questions in the last Assembly about where the money was going to come from and how much our government was prepared to dedicate to Thaidene Nene, for example, I was told that our total commitment was \$190,000 a year. That's what I'm concerned about, is our commitment as a government to these areas, not everybody else's. Just to clarify that for the Minister, and I don't expect a response, but I will certainly be watching this very carefully moving forward to make sure that our government



continues to invest in these areas as part of our economic diversification. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, I don't have any particular specific reply, other than to reassure that, certainly over the next four years, this is a joint contribution and that the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to contribute and support these protected areas.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any more questions? Mr. Bonnetrouge.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Thank you. Yes, I note in here that Fort Smith airport is getting an enclosed-cab snow blower, and it's listed at \$418,000. In the other, climate change ones, you've got three patrol boats and a vehicle for \$280,000. I'm not sure what kind of a snow blower this is. Can you provide some details as to why this is \$418,000? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We're on the \$280,000 commitment. Are there questions for the Minister, Member Bonnetrouge, on the Environment and Natural Resources stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$280,000 commitment? Okay. Committee will begin at page 6 of the details. Environment and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$280,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. Environment and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$280,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We will now go to page 7. Information asset management, not previously authorized, \$200,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me what this \$200,000 for initial work on an environmental assessment, what that is actually going to be spent on and what is it going to accomplish? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the contribution of the GNWT towards the project. A larger proportion of the amount is being funded by the federal government under the National Trade Corridors Fund. This was a successful application by the Government of the Northwest Territories for this partnership with the federal government and, as a totality, this part of the Slave Geologic Province will fund quite a number of things. There will be the initial environmental assessment, which will include studies of everything ranging potentially from water, water use, water quality, wildlife, permafrost, fish studies, air quality, as well as business opportunities using both scientific method as well as traditional knowledge. There is some pre-planning work that is to be done in terms of engineering, although the root analysis has been determined under prior funding. The next stage is actually to bring the matter to being shovel-ready.

As well, of course, and perhaps most importantly, is consultation with Indigenous governments, and to ensure that there is a thorough consultation plan in place, and that that work gets under way so that all Indigenous governments and Indigenous communities are a part of this process from the earliest possible stages. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that. What is the total cost of this project? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The total cost, year over year, I can give the cost. In terms of 2019-2020, the total cost is \$200,000; then, going forward, it reaches \$40 million over the course of the four-year plan. I assume that that was the timeline that the Member is asking. I'm prepared to go into other detail if he's looking for other numbers.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I would like the total amount to construct this project. I understand that the planning phase, so to speak, phase 1, is \$40 million. What is the cost for the rest of it? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am aware that there have been studies compiled and work has been done. I would

just like to confirm what stage those numbers are at in terms of their publication. As I said, I can confirm that this is a \$40-million estimate for phase 1 of the project. There are other phases to the project, and I'll just confirm the status of those numbers and, if I can release them, I certainly will. I apologize. I'm not familiar enough with where those studies are at.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm trying to understand what the Minister said. Is she going to be able to provide to the House information on the total cost of this project, and that that will come shortly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, as I've just said and I'll say it again, as soon as I can confirm whether or not the cost estimates are confidential, then, if they're not, I will be more than happy to bring them to the House.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell us whether there is actually a full project description or a business case for this project? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, there was. In order to partake in the Trade Corridors Fund, there was a complete business case assessment done. It was my understanding that quite a bit of that information was shared during the last Assembly, but I'm sure that what was sent to prior committees can be resent to the current committees as they are constituted, so that the information about the business case can be provided.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I was a Member of the last Assembly and we received a lot of information, some of which was about this particular project, but I don't actually ever recall seeing a business case for it. If the Minister can commit to share that, that would be great. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, as I've said, I am confident there has been a cost

benefit analysis and a business case provided. What I will do first is to identify what was shared with the last committee, ensure that the current composition of the committees have that information available to them, and certainly, if what was shared before was unsatisfactory, then we'll have to go back and confirm so that the committee can be assured of the analysis of the cost benefits, of the very positive cost benefits, of the Slave Geologic Province to the Northwest Territories.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Just a couple, or one last question, perhaps. Can the Minister tell me whether any of this \$200,000, or indeed any of the \$40 million, is actually going to be used to protect caribou and their habitat? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, as I mentioned, in order to have this project being shovel-ready, it will require baseline studies to understand the current situation facing the wildlife in the area and in the region, as well as conducting whatever studies will be no doubt required for the environmental assessment process that I expect would be required for this kind of level of project. That part of the money will be going precisely to do that, to engage in that process, to engage in that study, to ensure that we have the baseline data, and to ensure that we are prepared, going forward, with an environmental assessment so that this project can move forward in a way that is respectful of all of the needs of all the people in the territory. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, I need to be clear, here. In the last Assembly, I said that I don't support this particular project when we don't have a comprehensive plan in place and funded to protect the Bathurst caribou herd, which is down to 8,200 animals. Until our government gets serious about habitat protection and has that plan fully implemented, in place, funded, and so on, I will not be supporting this expenditure of funds. We can't have an all-weather road through critical habitat, including the Nunavut portion, which is a slightly different project, go through the calving grounds of this herd, when they are at such a low level, so I won't be supporting this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the Member's candid remarks. I can only assure the House, broadly speaking, that this is a project that is of tremendous significance to the Northwest Territories. It is, as I understand it, supported over in the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut. It is being done under a business case and with a cost benefit analysis. It is multi-departmental. It will involve ENR, and it will involve Lands, so I am sure that there will be plenty of opportunity, whether through this project or through the other work of the other departments, to review the impacts on the caribou as it goes forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is that the business plan and the feasibility of this project is largely contingent on the Grays Bay Port project in Nunavut going ahead. I see here that the environmental assessment is only to take the road to the Nunavut border. Is that correct, that we are conducting environmental assessment as if the Nunavut half is not going ahead?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Our environmental assessment takes us to the Nunavut border. As I said earlier, there is going to be, most likely, some partnership ongoing with Nunavut on the Kitikmeot side, but that that portion of it would be, I presume, under their jurisdiction to manage.

The viability of this project and the importance of this project to the Northwest Territories relates entirely to the possibility and the potential within the Northwest Territories. There are believed to be tremendous mineral resources within the Slave Geologic area. This is an opportunity to, in fact, study this area from that perspective, as well as to study this area far more effectively in terms of the wildlife and the environment, and the fish and the waters, so being able to access this entire massive geological region and geographic region more effectively will be of tremendous benefit to the Northwest Territories.

In short, it is not only dependent on what's happening in Grays Bay, but it is also beneficial to the Northwest Territories notwithstanding that it only goes to the Nunavut border. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My concern is that we're seeing here a scoping of the

environmental assessment that does not factor in the potential of the Grays Bay half. We know that the Bathurst caribou calving ground is in Nunavut, and caribou do not respect borders, so my concern here is that we are not setting ourselves up for, essentially, the resource boards to say that we have scoped the project wrong. Also, those mineral deposits, and there is no doubt there are minerals there, are largely dependent on the port access, so I question the scoping of this project to not include the entirety of the project. Can the Minister provide us with an update of the status of the Nunavut half of this project?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a lot to unpack in the Member's comment. I am not in a position, in the context of a supplementary appropriation that is involving the scoping of the Northwest Territories project, to commit to what may or may not be happening on the Nunavut side, other than to assure, again, that this is envisioned as being a partnership with Nunavut. It is indeed something that is of an Arctic nature and putting Canada as a country into being more of an actual Arctic country in terms of actually exploring and connecting all of our Arctic regions. I am confident that there will be ongoing partnership and dialogue with Nunavut and with the Government of Canada.

With respect to transportation of minerals, again, it is not entirely contingent or dependent on Grays Bay. The ability to transport over land would certainly make viable the potential for resource development in the Slave Geologic area. You know, I can't speak to what different mine sites might look like and whether or not a Grays Bay site or whether a transportation corridor over land is going to be more viable for the individual operation. That is theoretical at this point. This is, frankly, exactly why we want, in part, to be doing a proper technical study of the area, to understand exactly what is there and how it can best be accessed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any other questions? Mr. Bonnetrouge.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Yes, getting back to your snow blower.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Next activity. You have to wait. We're only on the asset management. No other questions on this, so I will reread it. Infrastructure, asset management, not previously authorized, \$200,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will move onto Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$818,000. Does the committee agree? Mr. Bonnetrouge has questions. Snow blower.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Third try. The price of this snow blower there. I am just wondering because you are saying there's a medium, so I imagine there's a small one, and then, there also is a large one. I don't know if there's any prices for any of those sizes. At the same time, too, why would you need a snow blower? You are going to be dealing with a lot of snow. You would pretty much be using a snowplow or a grader. Can you provide some details on this item? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Bonnetrouge. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Interestingly, as I understand it, right now at the airport in Fort Smith, they are, in fact, using the grader and snow blower and other machinery, and that by investing with funds that are fully offset by Transport Canada, they will actually be freeing up the machinery to do other work in the community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Bonnetrouge.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Maybe just to follow up. Because it's a snow blower, it is blowing snow. You've got maybe 100 feet across there. Where are you blowing the snow as you're moving around? Why wouldn't you use the plow and the grader type of thing? I'm not sure about the snow blower myself. If you could just clarify that? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Bonnetrouge. Minister of Finance. Do you want to answer that?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously, the important questions to understand, and I guess the one thing I would point to is that this did go to tender. As far as being the appropriate machinery for purpose, and as being a competitive price for purpose, I would simply point to the tendering process and place faith in that for the purposes of this current appropriation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Bonnetrouge, did you have any other questions? No other questions. I will go back. Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$818,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. Infrastructure, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,018,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister, and our thanks to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? Sorry, I'm ahead of the game. Mr. Norn.

COMMITTEE MOTION 1-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 16-19(2):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,  
2019-2020  
CARRIED

**MR. NORN:** I move that consideration of Tabled Document 16-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 3, 2019-2020 be now concluded and that Tabled Document 16-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Tabled Document 16-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. What is the will the committee, Mr. Norn?

**MR. NORN:** Madam Chair, I request that the chair rise and report progress.

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

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Report on Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 16-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2019-2020. I would like to report that consideration of Tabled Document 16-19(2) is concluded, and that the House concur in those estimates, and that appropriation bill to be based thereon and be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do I have a seconder? Member for Monfwi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

15. Notices of Motion

16. Motions

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories

- Tabled Document 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

