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Pages 229 – 294

**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*

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(Range Lake)  
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*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*

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(Yellowknife Centre)

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

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

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**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****Wednesday, February 26, 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, 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 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Thank you, colleagues. I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my condolences to the family of the late Chief Johnny Kaye of Fort McPherson. Johnny served his people well during his tenure; his leadership skills were noticed throughout the Mackenzie Delta and into the Yukon, where his family originated.

Aside from his serious side of being chief and other management roles, Johnny also had a way of making you feel comfortable, and there was never a conversation without laughter involved. Johnny led many hunting trips; he taught many young boys the traditional way of living. His culture was important to him, and he held on to his language and spoke it as much as he could. The Gwich'in Nation has lost yet another powerful leader. May we all take what he has taught us and continue to support one another. Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Lands.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 15-19(2):  
STRATEGIC OIL AND GAS RECEIVERSHIP  
PROCESS**

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Strategic Oil and Gas Limited, or "Strategic," filed for creditor protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act in April 2019. Strategic operates the Cameron Hills, Northwest Territories project, which includes winter access roads; well sites; oil and gas gathering systems; a small pipeline; an oil and gas battery; a permanent camp; and various incidental activities such as borrow pits, permanent bridges, and sump sites.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has been monitoring and intervening in the ongoing court process to help ensure Northwest Territories interests are represented. A receiver has been

appointed by the court to oversee the Northwest Territories' assets of Strategic. The receiver, Alvarez and Marsal, is to take temporary custody of Strategic's assets in the Northwest Territories, address regulatory obligations, and attempt to sell the Northwest Territories assets, if possible. The proceeds of any sales will be used to cover regulatory obligations and pay company creditors.

In the Northwest Territories, the immediate regulatory obligations are to repair and suspend a leaking well and suspend two other wells by April 1, 2020. There is currently enough money through existing securities to do this work and bring the site into compliance. Until the receivership process has been completed, it is impossible to say what the final costs to remediate the site might be or who would be responsible for covering them.

Strategic's project was approved in 2010, before devolution. At the time it was transferred to the GNWT, Strategic's site was in operation and its permits were in order. The Government of the Northwest Territories had a reasonable expectation that it would continue its operations until it was wound down according to regulatory requirements.

While it is too early to predict the outcome of the ongoing receivership process, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to protecting the Northwest Territories' land and environment and ensuring appropriate remediation is carried out on Strategic's sites in the Northwest Territories.

Our government's work to strengthen and improve the Northwest Territories regulatory framework continues, including ongoing work on how we calculate the amount of security we recommend to regulatory boards. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to managing development responsibly and protecting the Northwest Territories' land and environment through careful regulation of future projects and taking appropriate responsibility for the consequences of past projects when necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 16-19(2):  
PINK SHIRT DAY

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, no one in the Northwest Territories, especially our children and youth, should ever have to endure bullying. Our schools and communities must be safe spaces for all students, and the responsibility to ensure this happens is one we all share. I am pleased to announce today, on Pink Shirt Day, the formal release of the Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Equity, Safety and Inclusion in Northwest Territories Schools.

In 2007, Nova Scotia teenagers David Shepherd and Travis Price organized a protest after a male grade 9 student in their school was harassed for wearing a pink shirt. The next morning, these two youth brought pink shirts to hand out to all of the male students. Their school was full of kids in pink that day. Thirteen years later, Pink Shirt Day has become a global call to action as schools and workplaces around the world are flooded with pink in solidarity against bullying. The national theme for 2020 is Lift Each Other Up, and I am happy to see so much pink around the House today, as we stand together on Pink Shirt Day.

Across the Northwest Territories, we have worked with our education and community partners to combat bullying. As I am sure all Members of this House are aware, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, and Two-Spirit youth experience greater discrimination compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers. They have higher instances of mental health issues, substance abuse, lack of school attendance, violence, and suicide.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is aware of the unique challenges that LGBTQ2S+ students face in school, at home, and in their community. Research shows that having strong anti-bullying policies and guidelines results in lower levels of bullying victimization, greater school safety, and less social aggression. As well, students in schools that run Genders and Sexualities Alliances, or GSAs, are at a lower threat for risky behaviours, like alcohol and substance use. They also report increased psychological well-being and function.

Mr. Speaker, the department is committed to supporting diversity among school staff, students, and families. As a part of Education Renewal and Innovation, the Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Equity, Safety and Inclusion align with the Safe Schools Regulations, the Territorial Schools Code of Conduct, the Northwest Territories Human Rights Act, and the Government of the Northwest Territories Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy.

There are 13 promising practices that can be integrated into any school. These practices are evidence-based, tangible calls to action, through collaboration with the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife, FOXY, and SMASH, and with feedback from our education partners.

Some of the most valuable insight in the guidelines came from youth who attended the first Rainbow Youth Conference in 2017. LGBTQ2S+ and ally students across the North developed music, visual art, spoken word poetry, and videos featuring messages of inclusion and support. The students shared their ideas on what needs to happen to ensure their schools are respectful, caring, and safe for everyone.

We will be hosting the second Rainbow Youth Conference this spring, and sharing the new guidelines with the students. Community and territorial leaders will also have the opportunity to hear their stories at the Lunch with Leaders; I hope you all attend. I truly hope the students see themselves in the work and know that their input has helped break down barriers to understanding.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Territories schools should be safe and caring environments for the entire school community. With the release of the guidelines, the continued education and wellness partnerships, and most of all, the individuals and groups paving the way for inclusion and equity, I believe our schools can be the places of change where we respect each other's differences and recognize our similarities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 17-19(2):  
PREMIER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the Members that I will be absent from the House for a portion of today's proceedings to attend a Council of the Federation teleconference call. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 18-19(2):  
TLICHO ALL-SEASON ROAD

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Making strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy, and reduce the cost of living is a priority of this government. Infrastructure projects bring skills, training, and economic opportunities to our communities and their residents. Infrastructure

plays a very important role in the longevity and health of the people of the Northwest Territories.

During the last Assembly, the government completed work on the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, with the grand opening occurring just two years ago. This award-winning project has had a huge impact on the region, helping to connect communities and increase the tourism potential of the Beaufort-Delta. This past September, construction began on another new highway project, the Tlicho All-Season Road, and today I am happy to provide Members with an update.

I am pleased to report that work on the Tlicho All-Season Road is both ahead of schedule and on budget. As of December, embankment construction had been completed for the first 36 kilometres, along with a number of culverts and drainage ditches. The project is scheduled for substantial completion by November 2021 and final completion in the fall of 2022.

When the Tlicho All-Season Road opens, this two-lane gravel highway will cover a distance of 97 kilometres and provide year-round access from Highway No. 3 to Whati. This project will help to connect communities, support employment and training opportunities, increase our territory's resiliency to climate change, and create new social and economic opportunities.

Already, we are seeing the benefits this project is having for our residents and communities. By December of 2019, close to 6,000 hours of cumulative training had already taken place through the Tlicho resident training program. This includes training in job readiness, heavy equipment operation, camp cooking, and first aid. As well, as of December 2019, 137 workers were working on site. Nearly half of these workers are Northwest Territories residents, including 35 percent who are Tlicho citizens. Approximately 40 percent of business contracts for this project have also gone to northern businesses.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is working closely with the Tlicho Government on this project. The Tlicho Government is an equity partner in North Star Infrastructure, with whom the GNWT has a public/private partnership, or P3, project agreement to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the road. As demonstrated through projects such as the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link, P3s can be a successful way to advance major projects while achieving the best value for money for the government and taxpayers.

I am pleased to report that, in November, the Tlicho All-Season Road was one of five projects to be recognized by the prestigious Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships. As one of the first P3s

in North America with an Indigenous government holding a cash-funded equity stake, the project won gold in the National Awards for Innovation and Excellence in Public-Private Partnerships. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our P3 partners, both the Tlicho Government and Kiewit Canada Development Company, on this significant achievement.

Investing in public infrastructure is a core responsibility of government that benefits our residents and supports economic development across the territory. In the long term, the Tlicho All-Season Road is expected to reduce the cost of living for the region and support new social opportunities, while helping to attract additional interest from industry in the exploration and development of natural resources.

This highway continues to be a priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tlicho. I will continue to provide updates as we progress through the project timelines, and I look forward to the day when our residents can drive to and from Whati all year round, not just during the winter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 19-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ASSOCIATION OF  
COMMUNITIES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Mr. Speaker, today I'm pleased to share information on the NWT Association of Communities' upcoming annual general meeting and the specific training and networking opportunity for chiefs and mayors.

The NWT Association of Communities represents all 33 of the NWT's incorporated communities. Together, they are an effective voice for community governments. The NWTAC promotes the exchange of information among community governments, working together to reach collective goals. The NWT Association of Communities will host their 2020 annual general meeting in Inuvik from February 27<sup>th</sup> until the 29<sup>th</sup>.

This is a time of complex changes in the world, especially with the effects of climate change that we are experiencing in the North. Apparently, a theme for the AGM this year is managing change. Mr. Doug Griffiths has been invited as a keynote speaker and will share his knowledge and experience in helping communities identify challenges and develop solutions to become successful during this time of change. This year, there will be an interactive session focused on healthy communities and the social development of

health, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Services. This collaborative opportunity will be followed by a healthy living fair. I am excited to note that the formal AGM will wrap up with discussions with the Cabinet. This session has historically been very popular with community representatives, and I am pleased to share that Cabinet will be in attendance.

In addition, leading up to the AGM, MACA and the NWTAC are collaborating to offer mayors and chiefs the opportunity to attend the second annual Mayors and Chiefs Bootcamp on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February, and training for elected officials on the 27<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of the AGM later in the afternoon.

This year's bootcamp is about building relationships to help navigate the everyday challenges of governance. The focus of the elected officials training is in the process of being finalized, but topics being considered include addressing the media, fraud prevention, and forensic audits, and the importance of these actions.

On behalf of the GNWT, I wish the NWT Association of Communities well with their upcoming AGM and training opportunities. I look forward to being a part of the discussions and hearing from the communities to better understand their priorities and concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING IN INUVIK

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to discuss the housing and homelessness in my community. Since elected, I have many discussions with residents in regard to the Inuvik Housing Authority wait lists and policies, concerns of lack of beds at the homeless shelter, people who are having to stay in the wet shelter who don't have any addiction issues because of nowhere else to go, and people who are just going from couch to couch. I have been asked why there are vacant units not being filled. I have seen these units in my community. The most recent update I received is that we are currently sitting with 97 people, families, on this wait list. Some of my constituents have been waiting for years.

I would like to highlight one of our priorities for this 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, which talks about increasing the number of affordable homes and reduce core housing needs. Then, I'd like to highlight some of

our 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly priorities in the area of increased student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada, improve early childhood development indicators for all children initiatives, and create a polytechnic university.

Housing is just one basic need to survive, next to food and clothing. If we look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, housing is at the bottom, and we need to meet those needs at the bottom to move up. At the top of the pyramid, it is self-actualization, which is a desire to become the most that one can be. It is no wonder that we have the issues we have with our education graduation rates, child and family services, addictions, mental health, and crisis in youth and adults. If a person cannot even access a basic need to survive, how do we expect them to succeed in any of these priorities?

Anything we as a government can do to get people into homes, we need to do. We need to take risks, as our Finance Minister stated yesterday. We need to take risks on adding homes to our public housing allotment. With this thinking, we will begin to meet their basic needs so they will be successful and transition out of public housing before the date that our Premier continuously reminds us of 2038, when we will no longer have CMHC funding for operation cost funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2016, Northern Transportation Company Limited filed for bankruptcy. Subsequently, this government purchased the assets of NTCL for \$7.5 million. The justification for the purchase was the need for reliable and dependable barging services for our remote NWT communities and to address the high cost of living, which we know is a significant problem for residents of small communities.

Mr. Speaker, at the time, the GNWT stated it would be reaching out to private sector partners to come up with a made-in-the-North marine transportation service solution for our residents. To this end, the government retained the services of Offshore Recruiting Services, also referred to as ORSI, a recruiting firm from the east coast of Canada. Their company website states that it specializes in the provision of skilled and certified marine, drill, subsea construction, and catering personnel. My understanding is that MTS, subsequent to NTCL's bankruptcy, identified and recruited former NTCL managers to oversee its operations. In addition to these managers, the GNWT has provided various supports to the Department of Infrastructure.



Mr. Speaker, ORSI is currently supplying MTS with not only marine personnel, but also terminal crews that include management, supervisors, general labour, lead hands, mechanics, welders, machinists, electricians, office administration staff, maintenance, and others. My concern is whether or not the current structure is working in the best interest of this government. Some of the management is directly employed by ORSI, and it is this management that dictates hours of work, purchase of services, and purchases of material. ORSI, I am assuming, is compensated based on a cost-plus basis, which raises red flags.

I am looking to the Department of Infrastructure to ensure that the cost of work being undertaken by MTS is monitored for fiscal responsibility and fairness; that costing of MTS work versus work for third parties is being allocated appropriately; that we are doing everything we can to employ and train Northerners; and that we are treating our Northern contractors and businesses fairly.

Mr. Speaker, for what was to be a made-in-the-North solution, we appear to have failed once again. I'm not sure why we enjoy sending our limited financial resources to southern companies, but we do, and I'm looking to this government to put a stop to it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL STRATEGY

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I was delighted to learn this month that the Department of Health and Social Services has started work on an alcohol strategy. Alcohol abuse is a problem that touches all our lives, often with tragic consequences.

I'm going to summarize Harold Johnson's story of tackling the harm alcohol is doing to his First Nation. Mr. Johnson is Cree from Montreal Lake in Saskatchewan. He is a Harvard-educated lawyer who still works on his family's trap line. He has seen firsthand that alcohol is responsible for the vast majority of injuries and deaths in his community. In his book titled "Firewater, How Alcohol is Killing My People and Yours," he asks: "Given all we know about alcohol, its harm to the health of our bodies, our families, our communities, why aren't we doing more, something, about it?"

Mr. Johnson reviews a variety of models for dealing with alcohol abuse before coming to some important conclusions. First, he calls the courts "alcohol aftermath administrators." They can't solve alcohol abuse because it's not a legal problem. Second, he notes that outside treatment centres

have roughly a 6 percent success rate. He says: "Somehow, we have to turn our communities into treatment centres so that the whole community becomes involved in finding healthy alternatives." Third, he says, banning alcohol doesn't work because bootleggers control the supply, and police efforts to curb them are largely unsuccessful.

Mr. Speaker, his final point is his most important. He believes that we make change by setting an example as sober leaders. He says: "If leadership behaves responsibly, is not involved in scandal, works diligently for the betterment of the people, and creates a story of dignity and morals, then people will see that and participate in the story."

Mr. Johnson and others have started work, or did start work four years ago, on a community alcohol management plan. Local leadership decided on actions, including enhanced support for treatment and hosting more alcohol-free events. Early indicators are that emergency room visits and impaired driving rates have both dropped. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An alcohol strategy is not a magic bullet. Sober leaders working with community agencies have made a positive start on alcohol harm reduction in northern Saskatchewan, and we can, too. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CAMERON HILLS GAS FIELD ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. It was great to get the Minister of Lands' Minister's statement earlier today. Today, I am issuing a real red alert as our government is poised to assume tens of millions of dollars in environmental liabilities associated with the Cameron Hills sour gas field. I made a number of very critical statements in this House and asked a lot of tough questions on just how our government allowed this series of unfortunate events to unfold. How did our GNWT assume responsibility for the Cameron Hills gas field under devolution without an approved closure plan and without adequate financial security and yet never formally requested a revision in financial security or used other tools at its disposal to prevent this disaster?

Here are the latest developments, Mr. Speaker. The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board gave conditional approval to the fourth version of a closure and reclamation plan for Cameron Hills on January 16, 2020. Further changes are to be submitted by March 19, 2020. Strategic Oil and Gas had committed to provide an updated financial security estimate by June 30, 2020. The changes and updated financial security estimate will likely never happen, as an Alberta court granted an order on January 28, 2020, to appoint Alvarez and Marsal Canada Inc. as the receiver of all Strategic Oil and Gas so-called assets in the NWT. Basically, this means all efforts to sell or restructure the company have failed and what is left is to be sold in an attempt to settle some of the debts incurred.

On the same date, the executive director of the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations filed an affidavit with the Alberta court stating that at least three wells owned by Strategic in the Cameron Hills field are currently in an unsafe state, with one of these wells leaking sour gas, which is toxic to humans and poses a risk to flora and fauna in the area. I will again have questions for the Minister of Lands on how we got ourselves in this mess of red ink whereby taxpayers of the Northwest Territories are on the hook for tens of millions of dollars of environmental liabilities, and what is being done about it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT PROVIDENCE MINOR HOCKEY PROGRAM

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the current minor hockey program in Fort Providence, after being inactive for quite a number of years. It had its humble beginnings back in 2012, when a local hockey coach, Edward Landry, and the manager of the Northern Store, Tim Cragg, decided to start up the minor hockey program. They began with three to four players. Eventually, more kids wanted to join, but there was a lack of hockey equipment to outfit them. With the assistance of the Canadian Tire program Jumpstart, the minor hockey program received 20 bags of hockey equipment. This led to more kids wanting to play hockey.

They attended their first hockey tournament in 2017 at Fort Smith. This was in the initiation division. After more fundraising and finding sponsors, they were able to purchase their first set of hockey jerseys with the team name and logo, Fort Providence Ice Ducks. The jerseys are a nice colour of orange. The team eventually attended tournaments in Hay River, Fort Smith, and Yellowknife. The kids attended hockey camps and

other development camps such as the Reggie Leach Shoot to Score hockey camps held in Fort Smith and Hay River.

Just as recently as this past weekend, the team entered the Atom Tournament in Hay River. I was there to watch the tournament, and you could see the huge smiles on the faces of the kids. They belong to a sports team, and the camaraderie with kids their own age is an experience they will have for quite some time. Team coach Edward Landry, along with his wife, Bertha, and the kids' parents are making this a worthwhile experience for the kids in Fort Providence and deserve the recognition and praise from the community. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to begin my Member's statement by quoting from our consensus guiding principles: "Consensus government is a unique combination of the British traditions of ministerial responsibility, Cabinet solidarity, and legislative accountability and the Aboriginal traditions of open dialogue, inclusive decision-making, accommodation, respect, and trust." Mr. Speaker, I love consensus government. I would never wish to be a politician in a partisan system, but the system we operate in only works when we all play our roles and we make sure these conventions are followed.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the principle of ministerial responsibility. That is the principle which is a Westminster's system of government where a Cabinet Minister bears the ultimate responsibility for all actions of their department. The accountable Minister must take the blame for the faults of their department. "This means that, if waste, corruption, or any misbehaviour is found to have occurred within a ministry, the Minister is responsible even if the Minister had no knowledge of the actions." Mr. Speaker, that quote there is from Wikipedia, a source just as infallible as our own guiding principles.

This principle is essential to consensus government, Mr. Speaker, as it guarantees that elected officials are answerable for every single government decision. It is key to motivate Ministers to closely scrutinize the activities within their department. One rule coming from this principle is that each Cabinet Member answers for their own ministry in question period.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation started talking about their election campaign as an excuse for not knowing what is happening in their department, that is not acceptable. This is not how our system of government works. When a Minister starts talking about decisions of previous Ministers, that is not how this system works. Today, I heard the Minister talk about and take credit for an award on the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway. They get to take credit for that because they are responsible for all past decisions of their ministry. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation on how the Arnica Inn project got denied due to her department not providing support and how she is going to take responsibility to correct this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NAKA FESTIVAL INDIGENOUS CULTURAL GALA

**MR. NORN:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak about an event that will be taking place very soon within my riding in the community of Detah. This event is part of a week-long list of festivities taking place in the Yellowknife area titled "Naka Festival," which is an aurora-themed event that celebrates the northern lights and highlights the Dene culture for the region. For clarity, Naka means "northern lights" in the Willideh dialect.

The concluding event of this week-long festival will be the Indigenous Cultural Gala taking place in Detah on Saturday, March 7, 2020, in the evening at the Chief Drygeese Hall of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. This festival, Mr. Speaker, is a collaborative effort with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, GNWT, and NWT Tourism.

This will be the second consecutive cultural gala taking place in Detah, and I must say I am very excited to be attending this event once again. Last year's inaugural gala was a wonderful event that showcased northern art and creativity at its finest. For me, the highlight of that event last year was seeing the fiddler Wesley Hardisty and William Greenland on flute. It was an electric atmosphere. My daughters took part in modelling down the runway. I was so proud, and it was such a wonderful atmosphere to be in. I encourage any Members and any member of the public to go see this event, because it is a wonderful event.

Again, going back to what I was saying, Mr. Speaker, if this year's event will be anything like last

year's, people can expect to see creations of all sorts being modelled on a runway, very much akin to a fashion show. Last year's event featured dozens of items on display, from handmade earrings, necklaces, traditional vests, to dresses, hats, mitts, gloves, and other attire.

Mr. Speaker, this cultural gala will feature a whole host of Indigenous clothing designers, makeup artists, hair stylists, musicians, and others, all under one roof. It is events like these, Mr. Speaker, which demonstrate the great importance of the arts and of one's culture and identity. I would argue that, among the many hallmark features of identity, chiefly among them is the value of art, music, clothing, furs, and fashion ingenuity.

I could go on and on about the positive effects that events like these bring into our smaller communities. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. NORN:** In conclusion, I can see that it brings the best out of us in a truly collaborative fashion, no pun intended. I hope to see that this event continues to achieve great access into the future and continues seeing partnerships being built and collaboration being achieved among the Yellowknives Dene and the City of Yellowknife. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER  
CORPORATION CUSTOMER SERVICE

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, I raised my concerns on the GNWT managing the board of the Power Corporation. Today, I am raising concerns on the NTPC and how it treats its customers in the communities.

The Power Corporation has a 60-page document available on the website on terms and conditions of service to customers. The policy of the document gives NTPC the authority to disconnect service to the customer who does not pay their power bill within 28 days after the billing date. It also says NTPC can refuse to reconnect a customer until arrears are paid in full, late payment charges are paid up, and a security deposit is provided for a reconnection fee. The NTPC policy provides the corporation with its sole discretion to limit the electricity to customers as an alternative to disconnection.

Mr. Speaker, in the winter months, this is unacceptable. This is done with a technology called a current-limiting device. I heard this from constituents as a subject that, with this technology, someone in Hay River could just flip the switch and your power is cut off or you are given 10 minutes at a time. At 50 below, Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. The customer in Ulukhaktok and Tuktoyaktuk and Sachs Harbour, then without power, is flicked back on for 10 minutes. You could imagine that, when you are trying to run a household and you have little children occupied by the TV or trying to make dinner, flick goes off the power, no warning. Then it comes back on 10 minutes later, when the "Wizard of Oz" in Hay River grants the 10-minute window of power to finish cooking your meal or flick the TV back on and get to feed the family in the dark, probably. Now, 50 below outside, blizzard going on, no worries about that because every pipe is freezing up in your house, unacceptable.

The use of technology given by the mighty wizard may feel benevolent, but nothing kind in it. I have said I am hopeful that the government will know more and show more compassion to the people that it serves. It should absolutely be prohibited in terminating or interrupting power during the winter months. Life is hard enough in our small communities. Lack of heat, it's life threatening, especially in our smaller communities.

Since NTPC is run by a bunch of deputy ministers, it seems to me the Minister has the power, no pun intended, to direct them to change the policies, bring back the end of the use of the current-limiting device, and allow people to pay their bills in full, but they are stuck with expensive bills, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. JACOBSON:** Mr. Speaker, this is so important for our small communities. Legislation should change, that they are unable to cut power off like this until, say, August or November till April. Because small communities' housing houses don't have wood stoves, it goes on and on, has a rippling effect to the people who we represent. Thank you. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last August, CBC North and True North Rotary partnered to host Yellowknife's Friendship

Breakfast to break down barriers and misunderstandings for homeless people in our city; people who largely feel invisible.

My children and I ate breakfast with a man from Fort Resolution who told us about bush adventures, moving to Hay River, and about his first and only trip out of the Northwest Territories. He spoke wide-eyed and excited as he recounted his trip to Calgary, where he stood at the top of the Calgary Tower. His eyes grew weary as he explained to my children just how high the tower was and how he and his friends took a taxi for 45 minutes to get there. He then told my children about how addiction took control of his days and of his eventual move to the streets of Yellowknife. This concept was lost on my younger children, but my oldest son's eyes told me he felt the weight of the importance of where this conversation was going.

As a child growing up in Yellowknife, we did have a handful of people who lived on our streets. We knew them all by name, and the most infamous were "Charlie" and "Archie." By a 2018 count, roughly 338 people are now experiencing homelessness on Yellowknife streets. Ninety percent of these people are Indigenous, and only 16 percent come from Yellowknife.

Discussions found the top three NWT communities people migrate to Yellowknife from are Behchoko, Hay River, and Fort Smith. The most common reasons reported for becoming homeless were inability to pay rent, addiction and substance use, partner conflict, and job loss.

For months following the friendship breakfast, change from couch cushions and piggy banks instantly became a coffee or a soup for their friend and weekend drives were largely spent driving until we delivered it. In December, our luck ran out and we no longer spotted our friend on drives around town. Eventually, the kids stopped asking, but, this past weekend, we walked into a coffee shop and immediately I heard, "Well, there's my friend with the little, blue eyes." I turned to see a familiar face, and my boy's eyes lit up as he found his friend once again.

I am thankful to the efforts of CBC North and True North Rotary to break down barriers and forge relationships within our community. People need to feel love. People need to be seen. People need to be remembered. I am thankful we live in a community that gave my children the opportunity to learn that, along with a friend whose name they will never forget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
AURORA COLLEGE

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I would like to make a statement regarding Aurora College. We do not really know exactly the reason why this person was let go. We are saying this because we have questions and concerns from the community that are coming in, and that is our statement. [Translation ends].

I asked the Premier to tell us where the power to fire the president of Aurora College came from. I quote her response from unedited Hansard. The Premier said: "Hiring and firing the employment contracts is separate than appointments," and, further, she said, "Just because a statutory appointment might be part of a person's job, it does not mean that the applicable Minister who made the appointment is responsible for governing the employment relationship."

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has confused her powers under the Public Service Act with the Minister of Education's powers under the Aurora College Act. In her confusion, I believe she has misled this House and overstepped her authority, in fact breaking the law.

The Public Service Act permitted the Premier to fire Dr. Weegar in his role as associate deputy minister of postsecondary education renewal, but her powers under that act did not apply to Dr. Weegar in his dual capacity as president of Aurora College. Under the Aurora College Act, that power rests plainly with the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education's power to hire and fire are one and the same by virtue of section 18 of the Interpretation Act, which states explicitly that the power to appoint a public officer also includes the power to terminate the appointment and remove the public officer from employment in the territorial government. Read together with the Interpretation Act, the Aurora College Act makes it clear, Mr. Speaker, that the only person with the authority to remove someone's appointment as college president is the Minister of Education, and this termination would bring to an end the president's employment.

If these statutory realities aren't enough to convince the Premier of the errors of her ways, the Aurora College Act offers one other bit of guidance that should have told her she was exceeding her powers. For added clarity, section 19(3) of the Aurora College Act states that, for greater certainty, the Minister's authority to appoint the president "operates notwithstanding the Public Service Act."

Put simply, section 19(3) of the Aurora College Act provides that the Public Service Act, and the

various processes it sets out for making appointments, has no role in the appointment and termination of the college's president.

It should be troubling to this House that the Premier would play so free and easy with something as sanctified as the duly enacted statutes of this House. It makes one wonder where else she might choose to exceed her authority as a Premier. I believe her misconduct warrants an apology to this House and a pledge to us that this will never happen again. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I am pleased to recognize two groups of Legislature interns visiting us from Ontario and Manitoba. They are here this week to learn more about our consensus form of government. With us today from Ontario are Misha Powell, Eric Osbourne, Marian Bayseez, Vanessa Groobs, Jennifer Hann, Jeremy Istead, Meagan Irons, Kira Lawler, Claire McDonald, and program manager, Alyssa McAtterely. Also joining us from Manitoba are Mariah George, Chelsea Rapstead, Sinoman Ray, sorry if I got that wrong, Franklin Moldin, Shishiba McGroobay, hope I got that right, Bailey Palekir. Please join me in welcoming them to our proceedings. Also with us today is probably the longest-serving constituency assistant in this house, Elizabeth Wright. Also with us from Tsiigehtchic are Britney Kendo and Dale Cole. They are Pages with us. Mahsi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I would like to thank Mary Rose for coming back. She has been interpreting for many, many years, and she is interpreting all of our words. I'd like just to thank her. Masi.[Translation ends.]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, replies to the budget address. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 88-19(2):  
ALCOHOL STRATEGY

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken several times in this House about the harm that alcohol does to the people of the Northwest Territories. We spend a fortune on the effects of

alcohol abuse without ever addressing the elephant in the room, which is alcohol itself. Alcohol touches every part of our lives, whether we drink or not. With this in mind, I was delighted to discover that the Department of Health and Social Services has started preliminary work on an alcohol strategy. My question for the Minister is: what does she want an alcohol strategy to accomplish? Thank you.

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

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, things are dropping all around here. The Member has asked about the alcohol strategy, and our department has put a tender out for the development of a territorial alcohol strategy. This is basically preliminary research on a procurement of shared services to develop a territorial alcohol strategy, and presumably it would fit within it. We're trying to get a background on information that would help us develop a strategy. We are right now in the process doing the tender process.

**MS. GREEN:** I recognize that the Minister had a flurry of action around her when I asked my question, and I don't think she heard what I said. I am asking a much more general question, which is: what does she want an alcohol strategy to accomplish?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The overall approach from the department is to be able to have a scan of what are some of the alcohol, you know, the department realizes that we need to reduce the prevalence and impacts of addiction in the Northwest Territories. That is one of the things we would like to have a look at. Also, the territorial government had a territorial committee on problematic substance abuse, and this was just established in January. The mandate is to develop a comprehensive response to the ongoing issues related to substance in the Northwest Territories. That's why the department is looking at an alcohol strategy.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. My next question is about how the strategy is going to be created, and who will be involved in the work to create this. Is this a multi-party drafting proposition, or is the department going to draft the whole thing itself?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** The territorial committee on problematic substance abuse allows the GNWT to address harms of alcohol abuse, as well as other substances. The territorial committee on problematic substance abuse will report to the deputy ministers, given the interdepartmental structure. The membership of the territorial committee will consist of representatives from the Department of Health and Social Services; the

Department of Justice; the Department of Education, Culture and Employment; the Department of Finance; the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority; the Tlicho Service Agency; the Office of the Chief Coroner; the RCMP; the Workers Safety Compensation Commission; and the NWT Association of Communities.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not having much luck today, but I'm going to press on. The preliminary work on the alcohol strategy is going to be finished, and I'm not totally sure who is going to create the alcohol strategy proper. My last question is really about timing. When does the Minister expect to have the alcohol strategy completed?

**HON. DIANE THOM:** I can get back to the Member with the timelines. We have a tender currently out in RFP, so I can get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 89-19(2):  
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN INUVIK

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of housing. My first question to the Minister is: will the Minister of housing take a risk at increasing the housing stock so Inuvik's wait list may decrease?

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have in our mandate that we are to be increasing the housing stock throughout the Northwest Territories by 25 houses annually. We are working toward homeownership so they can free up the houses and we're able to work with Indigenous groups to offset our old stock. So, going forward, we are working toward a plan to improve housing in the Northwest Territories and increase our public housing number of units in our smaller communities, and throughout the territories, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** That didn't really answer my question, but that's a bigger-picture plan. What is the plan to house these families? As I mentioned, there are 97 on the wait list. The majority of these are single and they've been waiting six, seven years on this wait list, living with other families, couch surfing. I have one member who just told me

she lives in a three-bedroom house with eight people, and she has health issues. So what is the plan for the housing Minister to deal with the authorities to get these people housed?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Going forward, I do realize we do have a shortage of units in the territory, and I want to let the Member know that we do have houses that are being constructed this year, but I'm just not sure which communities will be receiving them. I will give a list over to the Member to let her know if there are units scheduled to be built in her region.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Will the Minister commit to working with the Minister of ECE to look at their housing lists, especially in my community, to see if there are people who are single on income support? Because what I'm hearing is that they are not given enough funding to be on their own, and there is only a limited amount, so they can only rent a room. So can they work together in my community to look at what it costs to have an apartment and get them housed?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I will be working with my colleague and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. As this is a new concern to me, I am really interested in following up with my colleague and I will be following up with the Member, as well.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one last question: does the Minister agree that not providing adequate housing in Inuvik and all communities outside the capital causes them to migrate to Yellowknife, which increases the homeless in the city and the need for NGOs to look for solutions like the Arnica Inn?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Homelessness is a huge problem in our Northwest Territories, and looking at solutions going forward and how are we going to be working as a territory and addressing this issue, I would like to meet with the Member and discuss the issues in her region. We do have a pending strategy right now happening in Yellowknife, and the Member is aware of that, but I would like to follow up with her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 90-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER  
CORPORATION USE OF LIMITERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to have questions for the Minister

responsible for the NWT Power Corporation. Does the NTPC have the policy set on how the current device for the current limiting system? Does it have that set in policy, and when do they use it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the Member bringing this concern to me I think about three weeks ago, when we started looking into this. To answer his first question, yes, it's in our policy. It's about how we use it. The second thing, it's only used during the wintertime. It's making sure that the facility, the house or the building, is not frozen up, and so it doesn't cause the pipes to freeze. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** So it's only used in the wintertime, not in the summertime? So we're okay in the summer, but that's the wrong time of the year. It's minus 50 at home; 56 in the coastal communities. The wind is blowing. Families are having to go in 10 minutes of power; 10 minutes on, 10 minutes off. I'm asking: would the Minister direct his deputy ministers or the board to cut off or to stop using the limiters from October to April?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Why we don't do it in the summertime is because we disconnect. We have 2,999 delinquent accounts, \$2.2 million in arrears that the government has to cover, which means our other clients have to deal with it. In regard to the situation from October to April I believe the Member has asked for, I'm willing to look into this to see if it's something feasible, but right now, people have to understand, when the limiters are used, it's a last resort. We try every possible way to make sure we don't get to that stage.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Has the Minister ever spoken to any of his elders in his community, or anybody across the territory, who have actually been limited with the device?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I do have a number of people in my riding who have had this experience. We've talked about it. The biggest thing, when I'm talking to my elders and the constituents, is about payment plans working out there. If there are other options available, then they can reach out to that. The Power Corporation does provide that information to people on the notices, that they are able to do that.

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

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, in the Delta, like I always said like a broken record these last few months about people not having jobs and not being able to pay things in full because they're having to choose either pay your rent, pay your power, buy food or clothing for your children, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking this Minister to direct his board to stop using these limiters from October to April and to get repayment plans during the summer when people are actually working. Is that possible? Thank you.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Like I said the first time, or in the second question, I'll look into it and I'll get back to this House. Right now, what we're trying to do is make sure that limiters are a last resort. I want to repeat that: it's our last resort. What we want to do is work with them on payment plans, work with them to see what other options are available through the government, through various programs, and so we try to get that information to them. So, again, it's our last resort, but I will check and have a conversation with the board and the president and, as we move forward, we'll get back to you. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 91-19(2):

CAMERON HILLS GAS FIELD ENVIRONMENTAL  
LIABILITIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. In my statement earlier today I noted that the so-called assets of Strategic Oil and Gas in the NWT, namely the Cameron Hills sour gas field that is now in receivership. Can the Minister of Lands explain how and why our government took Cameron Hills under the devolution agreement and whether there is an opportunity to give it back to the federal government? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During devolution negotiations, the GNWT and Canada developed criteria to determine which sites would be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories. The Cameron Hills site held by Strategic Oil and Gas was one of the sites that we agreed to take over because it was still operational at that time. Right now, though, currently, the receiver is responsible for managing the site, and not the GNWT.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. Clearly, those criteria have not worked in our favour. We're just going to assume millions of dollars of environmental liabilities. It sounds like it was a bad deal. I want to thank the Minister for that

explanation. Can the Minister explain whether our government ever asked for a ruling by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board or requested an increase to financial security under any permit or licence for the Cameron Hills sour gas field and, if not, why?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The GNWT requested updates to Strategic Oil and Gas closure plans through the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Closure plans provided necessary information upon which reassessment of accumulated securities could be calculated. The process to date to update the plan was not completed when it went into receivership.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. This went under on our watch, and we really didn't do enough to stop it, so the Cameron Hills sour gas field is now in receivership. Does GNWT or the regulator of oil and gas still have unfettered access to any financial security for this operation, and, if so, what are the values of such security?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The GNWT was successful to catch a security of \$2.9 million. These funds represent the security held under the water licence and land use permit. Unfortunately, the funds held by the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations are confidential.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Great to hear that the amount held by OROGO is confidential. So much for open and transparent government. I know we fixed that in the legislation. We still have to do regulations, but this is not a good way to manage our resources.

Can the Minister explain whether our government or the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas has calculated or estimated what the environmental liabilities are likely to be for Cameron Hills, and what portion we are now likely to assume now that the property's in receivership? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Strategic Oil and Gas was not able to complete their closure plan before it went into receivership. The goal of the receivership process is to sell off the assets, and the procedure of any sales can be used for the clean-up costs. Now that the receiver has been in place or appointed to address the NWT assets, the process will become clearer in the weeks and months to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



QUESTION 92-19(2):  
FORT PROVIDENCE DENTAL CARE SERVICES

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. That minor hockey team that I was speaking about earlier, apparently, must have had a lot of sweets and lots of candy on the road there, which leads me into dental care now. The residents of Fort Providence are concerned with the lack of frequent dental visits to the community. It was pointed out to me that there was an instance where it was a whole year before they even saw a dentist in the community. Apparently, there is space for the dental team in the new health centre, and I am not certain it is being used at all. Can the Health Minister confirm that the department has a contract with a dental service provider for Fort Providence? Mahsi.

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

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can find that information out for the Member. At this time, I'm not aware of the details specifically for Fort Providence and the space that is in the health centre there. Thank you.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. I'm not going to get too many answers, it seems like, for the dental team as the Minister doesn't know all the information there. I would like to have more information, if she's going to dig out information, about this list of known dental team visits to the community for the year 2019, and also if she can provide the number of days in a given week that the dental team is in the community? I would appreciate that information, also, with that.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Yes, absolutely. If the Member wants to provide me with his list of questions, then, I can definitely get back to him.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 93-19(2):  
ARNICA INN

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, during question period, the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation repeatedly said that the Women's Society should reach out to her regarding the Arnica project. I can confirm that they've been in contact with the department throughout this process. Mr. Speaker, there's a \$60-million co-investment fund for housing allocated to the Northwest Territories. My concern is: I am sick of being reactive. We need to be a proactive government that goes out and gets that money. Will the Minister commit to setting up a meeting with all the relevant parties to the Arnica

project and get to the bottom of what the issue is, and see whether we can save this project?

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A contact was set out early this afternoon, after my meeting with the Member. Hopefully, we are able to get in contact with the parties for the Arnica Inn. A meeting will go forward. Hopefully, that will happen by the end of the week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** That may be my first "yes" in this Legislative Assembly. Yesterday, there was concern about whether we had actually supported this project. Will the Minister commit that, if CMHC comes up with this three quarters of this funding, we are able to find the \$660,000 and we will follow suit and provide our funding to this project?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The application for the Arnica Inn has to be resubmitted. I have instructed my staff to reach out to the Yellowknife Women's Society to start our communication process going forward. Looking at the project, we are looking for money internally to support the project, and going forward, I will keep the Members informed.

**MR. JOHNSON:** There is almost a "yes" there. I do believe there are some parliamentary issues about a Minister committing money on the floor, but I'll look forward to the updates. My next question regarding the co-investment fund: I understand there's a number in the works. The problem here is that this is the first one that seemed to fail, and I don't want to be standing up in the House every single time we hear that our Housing Corporation did not support a project. My question is: will the Minister assign someone in the Housing Corporation to coordinate applications and work with proponents so that we can access this federal money?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The co-investment fund that is accessible through the federal money that is accessible to the Northwest Territories is a new initiative, and a new funding pot that we do have access to. The Arnica application was the first; not the Arnica, the application from the Yellowknife Women's Society was one of the first applications that made it to the second stage. Actually, it is the first. Going forward, we will be looking at a position that will fill the responsibility to make sure that there is straight communication for the application process from the Housing Corporation.

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

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that, and I appreciate the Minister

keeping us updated. My next question is: as we are providing this funding, I believe the Housing Corporation has repeatedly stated that our goal is partnerships, the future is partnerships. Throughout this process, it is clear there has been a breakdown in communication in exactly what the Housing Corporation's role is and whether they are providing technical advice, whether they want partnerships with Indigenous governments for all projects, whether they are going to fund the 25 percent. Will the Minister commit to setting out clear guidelines for the application process and what the Housing Corporation's role is in accessing this federal co-investment fund?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** I did speak to my department, and I have instructed them to complete a criteria. In regard to the 75/25, it would be with the application and what the responsibility we are going to carry out as a Housing Corporation, yes, we will go forward and be more clear on our process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 94-19(2):  
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to give credit to the last Assembly when they purchased the assets of NTCL. It was a good move on their part. However, when it comes to the operation, we have a problem. We were to have a made-in-the-North solution. Instead, we have had a southern company running the operation for the last three years. First of all, I would like to ask the Minister of Infrastructure: what process did this government use for retaining the services of ORSI? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current contract was awarded through the public procurement process. My understanding is the request for proposal was released on October 10, 2017 and it closed on December 5<sup>th</sup> of the same year. We received four proposals for the work, and the contract was awarded to the highest responsible proponent, which was the Offshore Recruiting Services Inc., or ORSI as you called them. The term of the contract was for one season plus an option to extend for three additional years. The current contract will expire on December 31, 2020.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I will ask the Minister: will MTS be evaluating and looking at developing in-house capabilities for recruiting terminal staff?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** MTS has contracted ORSI due to their unique expertise in the recruitment and day-to-day management of offshore labour, so we do not have a current plan for the government to assume this function. We do have the marine training centre in Hay River, which is funded by Transport Canada, and that was providing marine-related industry training to Northwest Territories residents. We wanted to introduce them to the marine industry in hopes that they will pursue careers in the field and we can increase our numbers there. We did employ a number of the students last year from that institute, as did the Canadian Coast Guard. Where we can, MTS will continue to commit to employing those students in the future. We employed a total of 194 employees in 2019 to support the operations in the peak season, 92 of whom were Northwest Territories residents and 39 were local-hire Indigenous residents. Thank you.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** It's interesting that the Minister says that ORSI has unique expertise. I guess I have lived in Hay River for close to a hundred years, and I have worked for NTCL before, and, when I was a kid, I used to hang around there. It always seemed at that point that there was pretty well all, even riverboat captains and that, it was Northerners who worked there. There were very few Southerners. All of a sudden, as time goes on, we shift. We make that shift, and we always think everything is better in the South. I guess I am just making a point there. The question is: what oversight is in place to ensure this government is receiving cost-effective service from ORSI?

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I do acknowledge the Member's frustration with this process, so I commit to continuing to work with him to move forward. The contract for the services includes terms and conditions which the contractor must abide by. GNWT MTS management staff are responsible for ensuring the contractor performs, and they are in regular, frequent contact with the contractor management. Costs are managed on a biweekly basis by the MTS finance staff, and they are ensuring the invoice costs are in line with those terms and conditions of the contract. Like I said, the current contract does expire in 2020, at the end of this year, so we will be reviewing the performance of the contractor prior to extending for the last option that we have, so I commit to working with the Member going forward to hear his concerns about that and addressing them.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The past government had indicated that a long-term business model for MTS was to be developed, and I am just wondering if this government or your

department has looked at that, or if there is anything in place and when we can expect something.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** My understanding for the business model plans, that was in 2017. Infrastructure produced a comprehensive, multi-year business plan for MTS, and then they produced an update of that plan last year. They are presently working on the long-term business model that will support the business plan, and exploring different types of governance models. The business model study is expected to be completed by this summer, and then we would be presenting it to committee with the hopes of finalizing it in the fall of 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 95-19(2):  
HOMELESSNESS

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, to start us off today, I just want to clarify one of the questions from my colleague, the Member from Yellowknife North. He requested that the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation would commit to inviting the relevant partners to the meeting with the Yellowknife Women's Society, and I just want to clarify that that will include both public servants from housing and education, as well as the mayor of Yellowknife and also potentially the federal MP, Michael McLeod. 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. Right now, I have the request going out to the executive director for the Yellowknife Women's Society, and we will together collaborate and create an invite list as to who she would like to attend the meeting. For myself, there would be myself and two of my staff.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I definitely appreciate that. Given the timeline on this project, I hope that we can get everybody in the room in a timely fashion. My second question is: in the 2018 National Housing Strategy, CMHC committed to a 50-percent reduction in chronic homelessness by 2028. In 2015, Winnipeg became the first Canadian city to eliminate homelessness. I am wondering if this government is actually committed to ending homelessness in the Northwest Territories.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Working with homelessness throughout the Northwest Territories, it becomes such a huge issue that we are dealing

with a population throughout the territory. Eliminating the homelessness, it's a strategy going forward. I would like to just be mindful to the Member that we do with isolated communities, as well, in the northern part of the region and looking at climate change and just making those points that for us to get material and to build and construct in the northern part of the region can be quite challenging. However, going forward, we are working with a strategy to work with the homelessness issue in the Northwest Territories.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** In September 2018, I noticed an ad that was a call-out for proposals to create a homelessness strategy. We are now 18 months down the road, and the strategy is not complete. I am wondering what timeline the Housing Corporation is working towards completing this strategy and also when we can expect the action plan.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Right now, the Housing Corporation is in a working relationship with the 33 communities in wanting to complete housing plans that are developed at the community level. These are going to be requests that are made from the people. Going forward, I directed my staff that I would like these housing plans to be complete and submitted by August. I know we are not going to be able to get every single community, but then, with that information, I would like to start working towards the strategic plan on how we are going to go forward for the next three years.

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

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of our priorities is related to affordable housing, and one of our other priorities is the ability for people to age in place. A few of us discussed earlier today how people who are homeless in Yellowknife are often moving here from their home communities for a variety of reasons. Definitely, these are people who want to be able to age in their own communities and be with their family. Will the homelessness strategy include the communities as far as an action plan? Will there be a strategy involved to give people the opportunity to stay in their own home community, to age in their home community, and to be housed in their home community? Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** The purpose of the project is exactly what the Member has expressed. We need to have those numbers from the community so we know what we are working with and directing the communication between the communities and the Housing Corporation. We have created programs to deliver within the smaller communities and also throughout the territory that would meet the needs of the senior population. Going forward, I

will keep the Member informed of the next steps that the Housing Corporation will be taking in regard to our community plans and our strategies and working towards our housing issue in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 96-19(2):  
CAMERON HILLS GAS FIELD ENVIRONMENTAL  
LIABILITIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I have some further questions for the Minister of Lands on the Cameron Hills environmental liabilities, how we got there. It is my understanding that we have something called "reclaim." It is a model for calculating liabilities. It is based on per-unit experience of remediating, reclaiming sites. Could that model actually be applied right now to the Cameron Hills site to give us even an initial estimate of what the liabilities are? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, right now, it is in receivership. The receiver is actually doing this work. We have made a commitment. Once that is done, Lands and ENR inspectors are going to go in, and we may be looking at this. Right now, no. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. Clearly, though, we need to start to do our homework about what this contingent liability is going to look like. I am just wondering if the Minister can tell me how this liability is going to be entered into the public accounts?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** I don't have the answer. I will get back to the Member. I have no clue how it is going to be done. It is the first time I thought about it or heard about it. I will take ownership of that, and we will get back to the Member with that answer.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank you the Minister for that. I didn't give him a heads-up about these because, obviously, I am kind of excited about this issue, to say the least, and the liabilities that are heading towards us, hurtling towards us. I want to ask the Minister, though: what are we going to do to prevent this from happening again? We have seen this happen again and again and again in the North, whether it is Giant Mine, Colomac, you name it. Name me one site that has actually been properly reclaimed, here. What is this government going to do to prevent this from happening again?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** This one I can answer. I appreciate the Member's commitment and willingness to bring this forward. Presently, the departments of ENR, Lands, OROGO, and ITI or Industry, Tourism and Investment, we are meeting. We are working on this. We are trying to make sure that we have the opportunity to learn from it so we can make sure this doesn't happen in the future. We are also working with the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Resource Board in regard to that regulation, as well. We are trying to work with all the parties right now. Unfortunately, with this Cameron Hills situation, it happened, and we were working on trying to get the reclamation plan in place. Unfortunately, they went into receivership before we could do it. We are working on it.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I just want to remind him we were both Members of the last Assembly. This was a commitment made in the last mandate, to have in place a proper system to prevent this from happening. It didn't happen in the last Assembly. In the very first round of legislation post-devolution in the last Assembly, what we did was we passed a Public Land Act that removed mandatory financial security. How could that happen? First time we get a chance to try to deal with something like this and we remove the mandatory financial security. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. That act is not in force yet, thank goodness, but I want to see if the Minister is willing to re-evaluate what happened with the Public Land Act and put in place mandatory financial security again. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** We are willing to always look at things to improve it. We will look at it. I am not going to make a commitment here in the House that we will add it, but we will look at it. We will get back to committee at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 97-19(2):  
INCOME ASSISTANCE

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to know if clients have to be on the housing wait list to get support for rent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the question was about the housing wait list and income assistance and whether, to be eligible for income assistance, the clients have to be on the housing wait list. Okay. I see heads nodding. Yes, that is technically how the system works. However, there are always exceptions and exceptional cases. Sometimes, people are not allowed in housing for a number of reasons. In those cases, we would work with the clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Can the Minister tell me, I know it is a quite detailed question; if not, he can get back to me: how much does income support provide to an individual for rent in Inuvik if they are on the wait list? Because I know by looking at the market to find a unit, the cheapest one is \$900 is month.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I don't have that detailed information. It is more than \$900. I know this just from being an MLA and then seeing an increase in the previous Assembly. I can get that detailed information for the Member.

**MS. SEMMLER:** The reason I am asking is, if you are a student and you are getting funding, so you get some income, which, if you are a single student, you get \$850, and they have been on the wait list for five-plus years. This is a scenario. Would they qualify for income support to offset if they were to find private accommodations to have a home on their own?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I've been dealing with Income Assistance quite a bit lately. We're looking at some interesting initiatives and ways to really make the program work better for the people of the territory. While I have been spending lots of time on this file, I don't have the skill set that perhaps our client service officers in the regions have, and so I can't answer that very detailed question right now. I am happy to get back to the Member and I can sit down with the Member, with some staff, as well, and we can have a little briefing if she would like to get down to the nitty-gritty of this.

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

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just the last one: I want to see if the Minister would commit as well to working with the Minister of housing and looking at some of those housing lists to see if there is a way that we can get some of these people by income support and housing list to work together, and get them into homes as they wait for a unit to come available.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** I've been talking about how we have two housing systems, basically, in the territory. We have the social housing system through the Housing Corporation and we have

ECE, which provides housing for a number of residents. I want to do that kind of work. I want to have those discussions with the housing Minister and figure out how we can make those two systems work better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 98-19(2):  
HAY RIVER FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I have is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. It has to do with the Co-Investment Fund. I guess we have heard about the Co-Investment Fund for the last couple of days and I have a feeling that it might be that elusive Loch Ness monster, or something like that, that we'll never find. In saying that, the Family Resource Centre in Hay River is also looking to access that program. I suspect that they are looking for investment from the NWT Housing Corporation as well. I had asked the Minister if she will provide the Family Resource Centre with access to her staff as she is doing for the people in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Co-Investment Fund that is available for the Northwest Territories by the federal government is such a new program, going forward, I instructed my staff to structure a process that the public can access this funding. I will commit to the Member that my staff and the Family Resource Centre of Hay River will work together so they can get an idea and communicate what this funding is about, how they access it, and the application process, and the financial resources that are available, as well.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** It is just important to note that the Hay River Family Resource Centre, as with other non-profits, has limited resources, they have limited staff, and they probably have limited expertise when it comes to filling out some of these government forms. I appreciate the fact that the Minister will work with me on that, and the Family Resource Centre. I guess just kind of a note that I'm hoping that they look beyond just going there and saying, "Here is how you fill it out," but to actually assist. I'm asking for a little more commitment than just showing up to the door and saying, "Here are the forms, here is what you need."

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** As I go forward with this new initiative that is offered by the federal government, I am becoming more familiar with the

process. There is funding that is available for the clients, should they need a consultant to help them with the application process. During that process, the Housing Corporation will be available. It won't be an approach of knock on your door, "here are your papers", and run. Nothing like that. It's going to be thorough, and, as we go forward, I need to have my staff work closely with our clients so that we are very clear, so we don't end up with misinterpretation, so it doesn't delay applications coming forward.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I'm pleased to hear that. We have to be more collaborative and we have to be more proactive in the approach that we take. We've got to learn to say yes, as the Minister of Health has learned how to do.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Yes, my staff will be available going forward. We will be looking at these applications more thoroughly. There will be more support as we have individuals coming forward wanting to access this money. The program will significantly change; there will be more communication.

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

QUESTION 99-19(2)  
INCOME ASSISTANCE

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment questions regarding Income Assistance. I'd like to continue that line of questions. He informed me that we spend approximately \$6.5 million a year simply administering income security. I believe much of this time is chasing people and making sure those on Income Assistance meet their monthly reporting requirements. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to asking his department to review the monthly reporting requirements and, where it makes sense, to extend those to longer time periods so people are not living 30 days at a time?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I am not going to ask my department to do something they are already doing. As the Member knows, I've had conversations with him, this is something we are looking into. We are trying to figure out ways to make this program serve the population that it serves better, essentially.

As the Member pointed out, there are people whose incomes don't vary. They are steady. They don't go up or down, and if they do, it might be by

just a few dollars every month, and they might stay that way for years. The Member is correct; there is no reason to have those people reporting on a monthly basis. While there is an opportunity right now for some of those clients to be what is called "payrolled," meaning that they only need to report maybe every three or six or 12 months, that is something we are looking to develop into an actual program. We have perhaps a separate program for persons with disabilities and people who have aged out of the workforce, whose incomes won't be going up and going down. That would make the lives of those people easier, and it would also free up our client services officers to help other clients who they are dealing with.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I am very glad to hear that answer and I look forward to the Minister reporting back whether we actually increase the number of people who are payrolled. My second concern here is that I have spoken to a number of private landlords and they have informed me that, if people are payrolled, and if they can guarantee rent for more than 30 days, they would buy a building and fill it with Income Assistance clients. Presently, the way it goes is, if a person misses their reporting appointment and doesn't get the money for the next month, then they can't pay their rent, and then that landlord runs into the Residential Tenancies Act and has to go through a lengthy process to evict the person who can't pay their rent. My question is: will the Minister, during this review which he's asked his department to conduct of putting more people on payroll, look into the issue of working with private landlords to guarantee them rent from tenants?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** What the department is working on isn't just payrolling more people, it's how we can better deliver the service, so it's a very holistic approach. I had questions earlier about Income Assistance and housing, and so that's something that I want to look at, as well. I understand what the Member is saying; I've had a number of constituents over the past four years who have run into these types of issues, so it's something I'm alive to. I look forward to having conversations with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, as well as the Minister of housing, so we can create a system that works for everybody.

**MR. JOHNSON:** I appreciate that this work is being done, but I think the ultimate goal here should be not just payrolling people but providing a guaranteed liveable income. That is an amount that no person can fall below so that no one in the Northwest Territories is living in poverty. While the Minister is asking his department to conduct this review, can we look at the benefits that a guaranteed liveable income would provide the North?

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** You know, successive governments over the past number of Assemblies have gone through multiple budgets cuts, and it's not the front-line person who we cut. They need to be delivering services. It's the policy people. It's the people who would put their minds to these kinds of things. I can only do so much. Right now, the mandate has tasked ECE with some big jobs, the biggest reform to education that we have seen in a generation. There is quite a bit going on, so I cannot commit the staff to doing that at this point because there are other things that need to get done.

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

QUESTION 100-19(2):  
AURORA COLLEGE

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I made a statement regarding the college, but the decision that was made is not quite clear, so there are a lot of constituents who are asking these questions. I want to ask the Premier a question. [Translation ends].

Can the Premier please explain to this House and the public how section 19(3) of the Aurora College Act supports her assertion that, as Premier, she is the person with the authority to terminate the employment of the Aurora College president? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start out by saying that I am actually really excited that the constituents from Monfwi, actually, their biggest concern is about this hiring because, man, I have been hearing all about housing, education, all kinds of things. It does show that one of the regions is actually doing really well in the Northwest Territories, and I am happy to hear that. I have offered many times and I will offer again. I am very sorry, Mr. Speaker, that the Member is still confused. I will offer again that the staff from the Department of Justice are willing to sit down with the Member and explain how this works.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, it's not just about me. It's about the public. The Premier needs to explain to this House: what kind of authority does she have to deal with that matter? I will just move on to the next question, since I am not getting any answers here.

Perhaps I need to be more specific. Section 19(3) of the Aurora College Act, which is a law that we follow, "for greater certainty," the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment's authority to

appoint and hence terminate the president of Aurora College "operates notwithstanding the Public Service Act." What is the Premier's understanding of the meaning of this clause in the legislation?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I thought I was pretty clear in explaining the difference between hiring and appointing, but I am understanding from the Member that I was not clear enough, and I am understanding from the Member that other Members are not clear on it, either. Any Member, Mr. Speaker, who needs more clarification, I am willing to offer that the staff of the Department of Justice are willing to sit down with any Member in this House to explain the difference.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** I am trying to gather all of the information so we are being transparent, we are being accountable here in this House, so the public is aware of it, not behind closed doors, having a meeting. We are here, being accountable to the public. Will Premier Cochrane apologize to this House for overstepping her authority in terminating the Aurora College president?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** There was a personal statement made by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment that explained the situation that this was not a decision made on my own, that this was a decision that was made in consultation. No, Mr. Speaker, I will not apologize.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Since I am not getting the answer the public is expecting, at a later time, I am be tabling a document that is legal advice that I received and let the public decide on this. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No question, but I will give the Premier a chance to comment if she would like.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am more than willing to hear any sides. Again, I stand by my side. I will offer the Member the whole staff of the Department of Justice to give him a briefing, if he would like that for clarification. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to the Commissioner's address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, reports of standing and special committees. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 39-19(2):  
LETTER TO MAYOR, CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE  
FROM MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING  
CORPORATION REGARDING FUNDING FOR  
THE PURCHASE OF A MULTI-USE BUILDING TO  
HOUSE 42 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS, DATED  
FEBRUARY 25, 2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 40-19(2):  
LETTER TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
YELLOWKNIFE WOMEN'S SOCIETY FROM  
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING  
CORPORATION REGARDING FUNDING FOR  
THE PURCHASE OF A MULTI-USE BUILDING TO  
HOUSE 42 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS, DATED  
FEBRUARY 25, 2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 41-19(2):  
LETTER TO CONCERNED CITIZEN'S GROUP  
FROM MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING  
CORPORATION REGARDING FUNDING FOR  
THE PURCHASE OF A MULTI-USE BUILDING TO  
HOUSE 42 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS, DATED  
FEBRUARY 25, 2020

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents, "Letter to Mayor, City of Yellowknife," from myself as Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, regarding funding for the purchase of a multi-use building to house 42 homeless individuals, dated February 25, 2020; "Letter to Executive Director, Yellowknife Women's Society" from myself as Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, regarding funding for the purchase of a multi-use building to house 42 homeless individuals, dated February 25, 2020; and a letter to a concerned citizen from myself as Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, regarding funding to purchase a multi-use building to house 42 homeless individuals, dated February 25, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 42-19(2):  
LAWSON LUNDELL MEMORANDUM FROM  
DEPUTY LAW CLERK TO MEMBER FOR  
MONFWI REGARDING LEGAL AUTHORITY TO  
TERMINATE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE  
AURORA COLLEGE PRESIDENT

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. As indicated earlier, I would like to table a document that is a

legal authority to terminate the appointment of the Aurora College president, via Lawson Lundell. There is more detailed information in here. Masi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, motions. Item 18, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020; also Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before this House, with the 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 committee, Mr. Norn?

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that committee consider the following two tabled documents: Tabled Document 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020, and Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and that they be addressed. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with Tabled Document 17-19(2). Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here to present the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020. The supplementary estimates proposes a total increase of \$49.1 million. Of this amount, \$33.8 million is being requested for increased expenditures for the



Department of Health and Social Services, or about 70 percent of the total request.

Some of the more significant items in the supplementary estimates include:

- \$14.5 million to offset costs related to Northwest Territories residents receiving medical services outside the Northwest Territories;
- \$10 million to administer activities under the Northern Wellness Agreement that are fully offset by revenues from the Government of Canada;
- \$4.7 million in increases to the Income Assistance program for costs associated with increased client uptake and inflation;
- \$4 million for costs associated with insured hospital services provided to individuals who are non-residents of the Northwest Territories. These costs are fully offset by recoveries from other jurisdictions; and
- \$2.5 million to administer activities under the Nature Fund Agreements and the establishment of three protected areas. These costs are fully offset by revenue from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This afternoon, on my left, I have Terence Courtoreille, the director of the Management Board Secretariat, and on my right, I have Glen Burns, the manager of budget development.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will review the supplementary estimates by department. The committee has agreed to begin the review with the Legislative Assembly. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Legislative Assembly. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question has to do with the additional costs for the

territorial election. Could the Minister please elaborate on what the additional costs are in this circumstance? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Any year when there's an election is an exceptional year. In this case, some of the workload was as a result of the fact that there was - sorry, Madam Chair. I just want to make sure that I'm referencing the right explanation.

Madam Chair, in an election year, some assumptions are being made and budget estimates are based on the number of days that the House will sit, given that it is an election year. In this case, there were much heavier expenditures as a result of there being more sitting days, more sitting hours, and overtimes resulting. As a result of that, there certainly were some increased expenditures as a result of those increased hours towards the end in the last sitting days of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. There was also some need, in terms of the staffing within the Legislative Assembly, leading up to the territorial election that had to be increased to support committees to complete their work prior to the election. There were other expenditures related to the operation of Legislative Assembly, Madam Chair, not specifically with respect to the election.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Finance Minister tell us whether these are one-off costs or whether, in fact, this amount of money will in part or in full be required going forward? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In a non-election year, the expenses are lower, and so there will not be the same level of funding required for the Office of the Clerk in this coming year or in the next three years.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am wondering if the Minister of Finance can confirm the total cost to the GNWT of the supplementary estimate once the offsets are received from our funding partners. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes. Sorry, Madam Chair. The net impact will be \$30,783,000. I'm not saying that number right at all. I am getting a nod. I think that the Member has understood my attempt at saying that number correctly, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** I'm good. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister or staff tell us what the impact of this supplementary appropriation is on the reserve and whether there is going to be any increase in debt and debt payments as a result of this supplementary appropriation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The supplementary reserve at this point is in a net overall deficit position. My apologies, Madam Chair. I just wanted to confirm. The \$70 million deficit projected that was already mentioned yesterday, this is included in that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the response. The supplementary reserve, then, is going to be in a \$70 million deficit? Is this correct? I think that's what the Minister said yesterday in her budget address. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$70 million deficit is to the entire operating budget of the GNWT from 2019-2020, so it includes the impact of the deficit in the supplementary reserve. The \$70 million isn't exclusively from or entirely from the supplementary reserve. The supplementary reserve is impacting on the total deficit. The total deficit is \$70 million, and that includes \$41 million from the supplementals.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me if this is going to result in an

increase in our short-term borrowing and what the cost of that is going to be? Short- and long-term debt, I guess. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There would have been an impact in the short-term borrowing in order to cover the expenses as they were incurred in different departments. That has already been factored in to the total \$70 million.

The Member asked in terms of long-term debt. I don't have the numbers in front of me as to whether that has any impact in terms of long-term debt. I mean, obviously, if there's an impact on our overall debt, if there's something further that I need to double-check on, I will provide that to the Member, but at this point, it would have been an increase in the short-term debt, if I'm not mistaken.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I would like that information, and I would like it to be made public. If the Minister provides it to me and she doesn't want to bring it to the House, I will table it, but I want to know whether there's an increase in our debt payments as a result of the supplementary appropriation, as well. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, there's not an increase in debt payments. It's short-term debt, and there is a servicing charge on that, and that comes out of the Department of Finance's budgets.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks. Can the Minister tell us what that increase in the servicing cost is going to be within the Department of Finance for this? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As with any debt, Madam Chair, it would increase the total interest payment because the principal is bigger, but there won't be any other increase or change in terms of the overall projections for 2019 and 2020. The total deficit we are projecting for the GNWT for 2019-2020 is \$70 million, including these amounts and including the payments on those amounts for this last fiscal year.

That doesn't alter that total number that was provided. As far as going forward, again, the amount that is being requested in the mains for the Department of Finance considers the amount of interest we are projecting to be required in light of the total debt that we are looking at now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we will begin on page 4, 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$704,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I did have one question. It is about the Office of the Clerk. My colleague from Yellowknife Centre asked about starting to break down that figure, \$704,000. Can the Minister tell us how much of that can be attributed to the legislative logjam at the end of the last Assembly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, \$155,000 is the amount that is resulting from expenditures that were on compensation and benefits as a result of some additional work, as well as, I believe, \$270,000, which was similarly related to that. Although, that number actually includes a couple of different values, Madam Chair. I will have to break out that number and make sure that it reflects only what the Member is asking me, not further requirements. We are just doing some quick math, Madam Chair. Maybe the math might be even done. Yes, \$270,000, Madam Chair, for the election and \$279,000 also for the sitting days. Then there was some succession planning that is also included. One hundred and fifty-five thousand is included for succession planning. That should make up the total of \$704,000.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Thanks for that information. I just want to get that on the record. That is the best rationale I have heard about not jamming up the legislative agenda at the end of

an Assembly. It just about killed our staff and MLAs. We don't want to go there again. You have to incur these kind of costs. Let's try to work together to make sure that that doesn't happen. That is more of a comment. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. No further comments. I will go back to 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$704,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Legislative Assembly, statutory offices, not previously authorized, \$440,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Legislative Assembly, total department, not previously authorized, \$1,144,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will now go to general comments on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is it possible to gain an understanding of how many more Income Assistance program clients this amount serves? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have a total number of clients that are served. If the request is more for the difference between the two, sorry, Madam Chair, I don't, unfortunately, have the number of actual increase in individuals receiving Income Assistance at this time. I have a number of approved applications here, which is sometimes not exactly the same. I certainly would commit to provide that to the Member and can provide a detailed breakdown of the increase year over year in terms of actual individuals who are receiving Income Assistance.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Sorry, Madam Chair. I missed if there was a commitment at the end of that sentence, as your head went down. Sorry. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Madam Chair. I can commit to getting those, to the numbers of actual individuals receiving Income Assistance. We can break that down.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further comments on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at page 40 of the main estimates and the income security total amount is \$54 million. Then now, I am looking here at the 2019-2020 total appropriation is \$56 million. Sorry, 2021, going forward, we have ascribed \$54 million. Yet, it appears the total appropriation for last year, this current fiscal we are in is \$56 million. Considering we budgeted less than we actually spent, do we expect to see another supplemental appropriation for income security in the next fiscal?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have the 2021 Main Estimates in front of me. What I can say is that the Income Assistance numbers do vary quite a bit from year to year. I do have five-year averages in front of me, and there is quite a bit of difference in variance year over year. There is an effort obviously made to review that and to make projections based on the best guess possible, but there is quite a bit of variance. As gas prices utilities go up, so do costs. As the economy changes, so do demands. I certainly cannot sit here and promise there won't be another supplementary appropriation sought for Income Assistance only, but if the Member wants to see the variance year over year, I certainly can provide that. That might be in terms of just demonstrating the wide variety that happens year over year and why we do wind up coming back on a supplementary appropriation specific to Income Assistance.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we will begin on page 5. 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, Education, Culture and Employment, income security, not previously authorized, \$4,740,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Education, Culture and Employment, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,740,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Now for general comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister explain what this funding is for? It is rather vague, the description that is here for the environmental stewardship and climate change item, \$2.5 million. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This funding is to support the Department of ENR in terms of the establishment and operation of territorial protected areas, including Thaidene Nene, Ts'ude Niline Tuyeta, Dinaga Wek'ehodi. That is the purpose of the application.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. It's great that we're having the federal government fund these protected areas that are established through our legislation, but what's the term of this agreement, and what happens when that money runs out? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding does expire in 2023 under the current agreement. I have confirmed prior to today with the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources that his department is actively working to ensure that there is stable funding beyond 2023. I can at least provide that assurance that that work is actively under way.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, that's great. At some point, though, this government has to start to make an investment in the conservation economy, just as it supports mining and other areas of our economy. This is something we're going to have to take on and not just rely on the feds to continue to fund. Is that something this government is prepared to do? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, given that approximately 81 percent of our total budget comes from the feds, it's a question of how we go about asking and seeking the money that we are receiving to provide the services that we are to the people of the Northwest Territories, and I am confident that we will continue to engage in some active and creative partnerships with all partners so that we can continue to provide those kinds of services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to -- Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at the \$1,670,000 for increased costs associated with fire suppression, can the Minister explain what that is in regard to?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There was an overage in terms of the costs of fighting fires in the last fiscal year. In particular, this arose toward the end of the fire season, and in particular in the North Slave region with fires that were started late, and all started roughly within the same period of time, which demanded a significant amount of resources that had to be marshalled in order to fight those fires. The supplementary appropriation is in response to that effort.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking at the revised main estimates, and it appears we've budgeted a slight increase for forest management for fighting fires, but my understanding was that it was a largely a wet fire season, and \$1 million total supplementary appropriation for fighting fires is a low amount. Can the Minister just give a bit of a better idea of what we can expect going forward in seeing supplemental appropriations for fires? Are we currently budgeting enough to fight fires on average, year after year?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Two questions there. With respect to the first, I'm fairly confident that the need to do fire suppression is exactly the example of why we have supplementary appropriations. I am not going to be

in a position to necessarily predict that; however, what I can say is that, with respect to the forest growth submission, or the submissions as part of the mains, rather, is meant to address the fact that we were providing for our air tanker fleet out of that fire suppression fund, and now we are going to be directing funds to air tankers in part of the main estimates, so that the fund that is directed to actually fighting the fires will go to fighting the fires. That is hoped to be a better way of utilizing those dollars, so that they can be used in response to fires and not in response to tanker maintenance.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed through the detail contained in the tabled documents?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** In your tabled document, page 6, 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Environment and Natural Resources, environmental stewardship and climate change, not previously authorized, \$2,508,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,670,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Environment and Natural Resources, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,178,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Now, for some general comments of the Department of Finance. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Page 7, 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Finance, Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$248,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. What resources are actually being transferred from the authority to the Department of Finance? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a transfer of staffing positions. There has been no loss of positions, and there has been no movement from any of the communities. It is simply transferring staff who were otherwise or previously under different departments over to Finance.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I understand that each of the Health and Social Services Authorities have their own finance people. They are all being moved into the Department of Finance. How is that going to make them any more responsive to the needs of the NWT HSSA, when they're going to be part of Department of Finance? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** The benefit of having these positions moved over to the Department of Finance is that now, rather than having six different financial systems all operating purportedly for the benefit of the NWT HSSA, now all of those individuals who are specialized in finance can actually report under one structure so that all the numbers can be coming in onto the one system, and better reporting and better data gathering can be had, which ultimately is hopeful to assist in terms of getting the NTHSSA's budgetary demands better under control, because we'll actually have a better sense of what, in fact, is happening in all the different regions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I'm all for a coordinated, consistent financial tracking system where we might even be able to get at things like waiting times and so on, but why does it have to be under Department of Finance? Why can't it be under the NWT HSSA directly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. These staff roles are performing a financial reporting function and, from that perspective, it would make sense to have them in the same department as their other financial colleagues. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Maybe I just don't understand this. Are they using the same kind of financial reporting tracking system as the rest of GNWT, and that's why they all have to be in the Department of Finance? I guess what's underlying this is that, in the last Assembly, we saw a troubling trend of centralizing a lot more power and authority in the Department of Finance. We used to have a separate Department of Human Resources. Now, it's in Finance. We have this shared corporate services stuff happening out of Finance. I haven't seen any evaluation, any sort of statistics on how that is increasing efficiency effectiveness. Taking these people away from jobs, not taking away their jobs but transferring them into Department of Finance, how is this going to increase their efficiency and effectiveness? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some of the transfers are obviously quite new. Certainly the fact that this is in the supplementary appropriation for the last fiscal, this particular transfer is fairly new. I cannot say to the Member that at this point the impact on the NTHSSA, at least preliminarily, is positive, and so, with respect to the some of the bigger issues being raised, those may well be the subject of questions, more detailed questions, and we can address them on a case-by-case basis since there are a number of items within finance that are being. I can say that the ISSS service, which was also one of the more recently collected services, there are evaluations ongoing and, as those processes go forward, I will report back to the House and hopefully to confirm that the intended benefits to the GNWT have been realized. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I guess I am a little bit skeptical of the benefits here, and I am not going to get the answers I am looking for here, so that is a heads-up to the Minister that I intend to pursue this as it rolls through. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I thank the Member for the heads-up. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. All right, so 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimate No. 4, operations expenditures, Finance,

Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$248,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Finance, total department, not previously authorized, \$248,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Now for general comments on the Department of Health and Social Services. I open the floor to general comments. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document, starting on page 8?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Okay. 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$2,713,000. Does committee agree? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at the first line, "To provide funding for costs associated with the new pharmacy information system at Stanton Territorial Hospital." I am wondering if this system speaks to other Northwest Territories hospitals' systems and works in conjunction with them or those found at community health centres? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, this is specific to Stanton Territorial Hospital, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So my understanding would be the pharmacy information system is a computer system that allows us to do, and, forgive me, I would probably need to ask you about this, not myself, but allows us to do prescriptions for patients and whatnot. So, if a hospital in Inuvik prescribed something to a patient, does this system in Stanton allow us to see what information or what medications a resident from Inuvik who has been medevac'd down is on or is taking? I am just wondering if those systems speak to one another, or is this something that is going to have to be upgraded in our other hospitals down the road. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, I think perhaps I am going to attempt to answer the question. If not, I will turn it over to my colleague. There is an outdated system currently in Hay River and in Inuvik. The system that is being upgraded in Stanton does not speak to the systems in Hay River and in Inuvik. There is ongoing work to upgrade the other two systems, as well, but that is not part of the current supplementary appropriation that is before the House.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. My question to the Minister is on the same item. I am wondering why this item is in the supplementary estimates and it wasn't in the main budget? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. When the Stanton Territorial Hospital was originally being budgeted, this was considered O and M funding, and it was therefore not part of that capital funding. Since then, I believe the contract for this was signed, if I am not mistaken, in June of 2019, and therefore it was a bit late in the process to be anywhere other than in a supplementary appropriation. There were no supplementary appropriations brought in the fall, as a result of the election, and so we find ourselves here, at this stage, in order to fund the switch-over in the pharmacy systems. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I heard the Minister's explanation, but I still do not understand why it would not have been included in the budget for last year if they were just a couple of months away from signing a contract for this software. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It really was within a fairly close period. If I am not mistaken, May of 2018 would have been the cut-off for including in the previous fiscal year's business planning process, and the contract here was signed not until quite some time later, in June of this year, so it did not make the cut-off in terms of being included. It has been included going forward, so it is part of the main estimates that are now before the House for 2021, and there will not be another supplementary appropriation,

obviously, for the pharmacy systems going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So, if I understand correctly, the cut-off for items for the main estimates is in May for the following March. Is that correct? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Part of the challenge here was the fact that there was the fall election, and that did disrupt the business cycle somewhat. It would otherwise have been able to find its way in later in the summer, but, in this particular year, the business planning process was interrupted, and that impacted some of the items and some of the timing of the items.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, each time, I get a little more confused. You said the cut-off was May of 2018 for the 2019 budget, so I don't understand how the election has anything to do with that. Could you clarify that, please?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, I realize I am not being clear. The O and M costs that were for 2019-2020 would have had to be included in May of 2018 for the 2019-2020 business planning, and, in this case, the contract was not until June of 2019, so it would not have made its way into the 2019 business planning. I think the point with the election is that any flexibility that there might have been in terms of a supplementary would have interrupted. It would not have made its way into the business planning process, as far as I can understand, under how that system would have been working at the time or given the timing that it was under at the time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Yes. I will just make a comment based on what I understand here, and that is that we need to have almost a year's lead time to get something into the budgets. My comment is that I realize the government works slowly. I have been here long enough now to understand that, but I

would really encourage the Finance Minister to look for ways to make budgeting more responsive to events as they unfold. I mean, okay, so this could not have reasonably been foreseen, but then later on we are going to talk about all of the utilities for the hospital. There seems to be a different threshold between what is urgent and what is not, and there seems to be a lot of leeway in what has to come through the regular business cycle and what just gets put in at the last minute because it's considered urgent. If she can rationalize this system so that we can better understand it, I think that would be very helpful. That is everything. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I am sorry. I was getting the dates wrong in my head initially. I appreciate that the Member had me clarify that. I am sympathetic to the challenges in terms of the length that it takes to prepare the full year's estimates. It is a full-year process, and I certainly have been making an effort in just the last couple of months to explain that full-year process as much as possible to the House and in the public. I'll continue to make that effort because, to a certain degree, in order to go through a business planning process, it is going to be starting this spring for the 2021-2022 year. It does happen several months in advance, six or more months in advance. It doesn't make it necessarily very responsive, but there are ways throughout that process, before they're finalized, to impact on what is actually in the business plans and impact what is ultimately in the main estimates, certainly, at least until the end of the calendar year. A better understanding of that by the public, and better understanding of it by all of the Members, will hopefully be helpful, and as far as making it more expensive more generally, the ability to see the business planning over four years should also, hopefully, make it more responsive to things that are on the horizon in the near future, even if not necessarily in the few months. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I didn't know I had my hand up, but I'm happy to get in the queue. A couple of questions, if I can. I want to go back to the pharmacy information system at Stanton. If Stanton goes ahead and the changes are not made in Hay River and Inuvik, how compatible are all those systems going to be, and will patients still be able to get properly prescribed medications, if they are moving back and forth



between these different hospitals? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are still the online record-keeping systems within Health, so I would suggest that there is no doubt that patient care will still be maintained overall. Patient care is going to be a priority. Again, records of the patients are still kept electronically. The ability of the pharmacy systems to speak to one another, I'm not sure that that is necessarily the intent of the changeover in the system, the technical system. It's really a matter of managing it at least within those various entities. The Department of Health is actively working to develop a proposal, I believe, within the next fiscal year. I may be incorrect, but I think that it's within the next fiscal year that there is a proposal coming forward to the business planning process to see that the other two hospitals are also on the same system.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Okay, I can accept most of what the Minister has said. I am still worried, if you have two different or three different pharmacy systems at three different hospitals, that's probably going to lead to some problems at one point.

I want to go down the page, though, to the \$350,000 to provide funding for costs associated with maintaining temporary operations at the old hospital in Hay River. Can somebody explain what that's all about? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, Madam Chair, the Member indicated \$350,000. Is it \$338,000? Is this the item, Madam Chair? My apologies. I had my binder covering the line item, but I see it now at \$350,000. Yes, so Madam Chair, this is to support the fact that there needs to be work done to house the non-health services; social services, public health, environmental health, community counselling, those services are not within the new health centre. They were in the old facility, and there is some work that needs to be done in terms of maintaining that facility. There is currently the \$350,000 there to support some positions for housekeeping, ongoing engineering, and work to be done in terms of roof leaks at that old facility where those particular services are being housed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me when the old hospital is scheduled for demolition? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, I'm not sure about a demolition date. I can say that construction of a new facility is scheduled for this spring with completion within the next 12 months thereafter anticipated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just kind of concerned about spending money on an old facility that is going to go out of service. Look, I don't live in Hay River; I'm just wondering if there is any other space. Did they test the market to see if there is any other space where these services could be provided out of, rather than fixing up an old building? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some program analysis was done in an attempt to try to locate alternative spaces in Hay River in the belief that this would help provide some more diversity in terms of the infrastructure investment that was being made in the community, and that was the initial intent. Ultimately, it was decided that the lease space that was anticipated ultimately wasn't proving to be appropriate or fit to the purposes for which it was intended. As a result, an RFP was issued in order to provide for a new facility for these other health services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to go up to another item here about the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. I believe this is a top-up of the pension fund for employees there. It's \$1.2 million. Is that what this is all about? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, the \$1.2 million is for the collective agreement that was signed between Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and public service increased costs as a result of that. The pension-related

matters are \$338,000 in order to provide the incremental costs associated with the pension for those employees, since they are not part of the benefit plan for other GNWT employees. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Sorry, I had the wrong line item here myself. Do we have a plan to actually bring these people into the public service, the GNWT public service? Like, I have been here now, this is my fifth year. This is going to continue to grow. Have the employees ever been approached or asked to increase their payments? How are we going to deal with this over the longer term? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Since 2007, there have consistently been some amounts paid out to support the employees in the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. However, even in that now well-over-10-year period, the total amount paid out is only just over \$5 million, whereas the current amount estimated to pay out entirely would be \$17 million. That doesn't answer the second part about whether we have gone out to those individuals, but as far as dollar for dollar, there is not an impetus from the Department of Finance to buy them out and bring them on in that regard. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just continuing on that line of questioning, it appears that the pension fund isn't funding itself. I understand that, if they were going to join our public service, we would essentially have to buy out a number of pensions to that \$17 million figure you just quoted. Is there any intention in the next round of collective bargaining with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to bring some members in? Is there a way of essentially keeping the old ones and grandfathering those pensions and bringing new ones in? Is that impossible? I'm trying to understand the problem of the cost of bringing them in.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Because the employees of the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority are not employees of the GNWT as a collective, they're not eligible for inclusion in the GNWT's pension plan. At

the same time, the health and social services authority obviously is related, and we do support. The GNWT ultimately is the source of the funding, and so we're paying in to support their pension. I am not sure that that's a matter that I can speak to in terms of collective bargaining and what may or may not come forward from those employees. I can certainly explain to the Member why we are having to pay that out, and that is indeed to ensure that they have their pension supported. He is quite correct. It is otherwise not funding itself sufficiently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you. Can I just get an explanation of, if we were going to bring them into the GNWT, it would cost us \$17 million? What is the reason for that? Is it that they are making less, or is it that we would have to give them a better pension? What makes up that \$17-million figure?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is simply that the pension fund for those employees is not making enough money, and so it has to get topped up. That is due in part to federal regulations that monitor what the comfort level is on our pension, and so we have to continue to pay in to bring it up to a certain level to ensure that it is stable and reliably available for the employees who may be drawing from it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to go back to the temporary operations there in the \$350,000. I think that was maybe for the roof repairs. I'm wondering: has the department looked to see if there were additional costs that would be incurred in maintaining that building? Any major costs over the next year or two years until the new one is built? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have any information as to whether any other costs for specific issues are being anticipated at this point. I can say again that there is an RFP that was issued, and that ultimately it was determined that that would be the better cost-value. The better approach longer-term would, in fact, be to build a new building. I anticipate or expect that that decision does take into consideration the impacts of the old building and whether or not the old building could be renovated.

If the Member would like more information about what efforts remain for the old building, I'm fairly confident that we can provide that to him. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Office space in Hay River is limited and probably the cost of temporary office space moving would exceed that \$350,000 by quite a bit. That's probably the right choice to make. I just want to go back to the health authority and bring them in with the GNWT. There has been talk about that, I guess, and the cost associated with it. I'm expecting that there have to be discussions to make sure that they actually want to come in with the GNWT. I guess more of a comment than anything. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. I'll take it as a comment. All right, do we have any other comments? So, 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, (Operation Expenditures), Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$2,713,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Health and Social Services, ambulatory care services, not previously authorized, \$18,485,000. Does committee agree? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am happy to see a lot of these line items don't have a net effect on government operations because they are fully offset. I'm wondering about the last line, "to provide funding for costs associated with expenditures for services received by NWT residents from physicians outside the Northwest Territories." Does that include people with disabilities residing in permanent care outside the NWT? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, I am not certain. I believe that it does. I'm not sure if the Minister of Health has that information at her fingertips, as to whether or not funding for out-of-territory individuals under this supplementary appropriate includes individuals with disabilities who may be residing permanently outside the territory. Yes, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, thank you. Yes, and I'm sorry for the awkward back and forth there, but yes, this does include individuals with disabilities from the Northwest Territories but having to reside elsewhere in order to receive their treatments for services.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Does this number also include residents who travel for medical travel down to, say, Edmonton, for appointments with physicians down in Alberta, who aren't necessary permanently residing outside of the territory? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is the Minister of Finance currently in conversation with Minister of Health and Social Services to find out how they can reduce the number of potentially unnecessary medical travel costs to see southern physicians so that we can make sure that we don't continue to have really high supplementals for physician appointments outside the territory? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, the Management Board Secretariat is actually currently working with the Department of Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Health Authority in order to assess the factors and the impact on the costs that are leading to overages. This is right now an internal review, it's an internal effort, but the intention is, in fact, to do exactly as the Member is requesting, which is to determine whether or not there is a more efficient way to deliver the services, to identify which areas might be ones that could be managed more effectively. Thank you, Madam, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Would the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Health and Social Services be prepared to provide a breakdown of this \$2.4-million figure to show what quantity of that is going to people with disabilities

residing in permanent care outside the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Madam Chair, we can provide that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at the line item here that's just north of that \$12 million, I'm curious to know if these monies will be allocated for costs associated with expenditures for services received by Metis residents in hospitals outside of territory. Does that mean it's the US and abroad, as well? Do we pay to jurisdictions outside the country?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is for Canada only, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Is there any sort of travel cost in this number, as well?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, no. This is exclusively for the hospital fees and physician fees. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Okay, thank you, that will be all.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. So, Health and Social Services, ambulatory care services, not previously authorized, \$18,485,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Health and Social Services, community health programs, not previously authorized, \$10,176,000. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at the last line, "to provide funding for incremental costs associated with long-term care services provided by Avens," and I'm wondering if this number of \$344,000 is something that we are going to see now in the main estimates, given that

we have an aging population, so that we will provide continued care to Avens seniors home. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is as a result of the collective agreement increases that were concluded in the 2019-2020 year, and it has since been built into 2020-2021. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Any other comments on that? Health and Social Services, community health programs, not previously authorized, \$10,176,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Health and Social Services, community social programs, not previously authorized, \$341,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister of Finance confirm how much the total legal costs in Child and Family Services are?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Just one moment, Madam Chair. The expenditures for Child and Family Services legal services right now for 2019 are projected at \$711,000.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. They're projected at \$711,000. We have \$340,000 here. We seem to have doubled what we're spending on legal costs in Child and Family Services. Can the Minister provide some explanation of why that occurred?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The department's explanations for this were largely related to the fact that there have been changes to the Child and Family Services Act in 2016, and there has been some slow growth in the area in terms of its impact on the legal services required. The department is of the view that there have been increases in permanent custody hearings, increases in the number of youth eligible as a result of changes in the act, and an increase in the number of custom adoption services, and it's the department's belief that this may be what's

driving some of the increase in those costs, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister of Finance confirm whether the department feels they are adequately funded going forward, considering that there has been an increase of legal costs, it appears, since 2016, according to them? Is that budgeted in our main estimates?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is not reflected right now in the 2020-2021 mains. As to whether or not they think they're adequately funded, there was not an application made for growth in this particular item in the budget for the Child and Family Services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. If there are no further comments, I'm going to go back. Health and Social Services, community social programs, not previously authorized, \$341,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Health and Social Services, supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, \$2,067,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Health and Social Services, total department, not previously authorized, \$33,782,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to go back to supplementary health programs. The briefing material indicates that the budget for 2019-2020 is more than it is for the year. Can the Minister talk about what the total amount of the budget is for Extended Health Benefits in Health and Social Services? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For 2019-2020, the Extended Health Benefits program has a total of \$13.85 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The total shortfall for the year is \$374,000; is that correct? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The total shortfall is \$772,000. There has been some ability to reallocate internally, and that is what has brought the supplementary appropriation number down to being \$374,000, but the actual total shortfall is \$772,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** That's everything. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Health and Social Services, total department, not previously authorized, \$33,782,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Now for general comments on the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Page 11, 2019-2020, Supplementary Estimates, No. 4, Operations Expenditures, Industry, Tourism and Investment, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$200,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department, not previously authorized, \$200,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Now for general comments on the Department of Infrastructure. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** 2019-2020, Supplementary Estimates, No. 4, Operations Expenditures, Infrastructure, asset management, not previously authorized, \$374,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Does committee agree? Yes, okay. Infrastructure, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$36,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Infrastructure, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$392,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Where am I, here? Sorry. Infrastructure, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$2,705,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Infrastructure, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,507,000. Does committee agree? Oh, sorry. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to go to the section that says that part of this supp is \$2.7 million for utility costs at Stanton hospital. Could the Minister give us some detail on which utilities, and what period of time, and so on? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are electricity costs, propane costs, biomass, fuel oil, and also water, garbage fees, and city services. The total cost for electricity is \$1.833 million; the cost of propane is \$333,000; biomass, \$366,000; fuel oil, just shy of \$17,000; water, \$123,000; and Madam Chair, I am happy to provide this to the Member so that she can have the exact numbers. I'm sorry; to committee, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you for that detail, to the Minister. What period of time do these costs cover? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. These are actual costs from April 2019 through to December of 2019, as well as

estimates for January through until the end of March.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. It will certainly be interesting to see what it is on an annual basis. Can the Minister of Finance shed any light on why the cost of utilities was not up to the landlord, rather than up to the tenant? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Stanton territorial P3 agreement determined the responsibility for payment of utilities, and by doing it in the current way and having the GNWT pay the utility costs directly, it eliminates the need for any administration fees being paid to the P3 partner. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Nothing further. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I'll go back to Infrastructure, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$2,705,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Infrastructure, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,507,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Now for general comments on the Department of Justice. Any comments? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am happy to see there is \$100,000 for our training for restorative justice, and I am even happier to see that it is completely offset by Justice Canada. However, this is one-time funding. Restorative justice, I believe, is very underfunded in our territory. Are there any current applications in to this same pool of funding to get more money?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have to get back to the House, to the committee, on this. I don't know, although I am confident that the Department of Justice will be continuing to seek out funding for restorative

justice. It remains a priority for the Department of Justice, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you. In addition to when the Minister gets back to committee, if it could also be included, any further efforts to access money from Canada's Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund. I am happy to see this money, but I would like to see more. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The gun and gang strategy is a longer-term commitment from the federal government, but I will confirm for the committee whether or not there are any additional applications that are in the pipelines coming down. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document? Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Page 14, 2019-2020, Supplementary Estimates, No. 4, Operations Expenditures, Justice, community justice and policing, not previously authorized, \$337,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Justice, legal aid services, not previously authorized, \$136,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Justice, total department, not previously authorized, \$500,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. General comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Any comments? If there are no further comments, does committee agree to proceed to detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Page 15, 2019-2020, Supplementary Estimates, No. 4, Operations Expenditures, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$199,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just always slightly confused when we see implementation funding appear in all sorts of different departments. Can I just clarify if somewhere else in our budget the financing agreement with Deline for their self-government agreement -- is this \$199,000 coming from the federal government, or is this our money?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the GNWT's portion required to contribute under the self-government agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is this the total of what we provide under the Deline self-government agreement? Does it all flow through MACA?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. All the funding under the agreement does flow through MACA, and I believe that this is the total amount, Madam Chair. I'm sorry. Oh, no. Madam Chair, I apologize. I need to turn the page in my own documents. The 2019-2020 grant in total, Madam Chair, is \$3,520,815.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you. Then, what is this \$199,000 for? Final question, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a supplementary appropriation, obviously. It is due to increased costs that were determined later in the course of the year, flowing from operations and maintenance increases. There were figures that are provided by Statistics Canada that were received only late in the calendar, and as a result of which, it is only upon receiving those figures that the final determinations, the final calculations, are able to be made. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Any other comments? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was my understanding that the NWT and Nunavut lottery corporation paid for the cost of multisport games. I

am not sure why we're making a supplementary appropriation for them, but no doubt the Finance Minister knows. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The lottery funding was now brought under the GNWT in order to support compliance with Canada Revenue Agency's requirements. This is a fund that is funded largely by lottery revenues, but it is administered under the GNWT through the Department of MACA now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that answer. Are revenues as robust now that they are in-house as they were before? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, thank you. The revenues for 2019-2020 are lower than what they were being forecasted to be. That was a function, however, outside of the GNWT's control, and it was a function largely of technical issues experienced at some of the remote retailers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the answer from the Minister of Finance. What kind of technical issues, and how have they been addressed? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I can advise that the technical issues were at the remote retailers, so the selling point of various lottery products. There was a period in the spring and summer when four high-grossing retailers were all offline, and that impacted sales. I can also note that there has been some indication that overall lottery sales are also down. As far as whether or not the technical issues are rectified, Madam Chair, I don't have that information. That may be specific to the individual retailers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that answer. Can the Minister just remind us how much revenue we get from lottery ticket sales? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Chair, my best estimate at this point is between \$8 and \$8.5 million. I will confirm to the committee the exact number year over year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to the Minister of Finance for that answer. Given the size of revenue that comes in from this, it seems pretty significant when the operation is offline and the revenue is not coming in. Who is tasked with the oversight of this, and the troubleshooting when there is trouble? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This fund is administered through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, and there is work under way as I understand at the moment within that department in order to ensure that the funds available to it for this purpose are adequate. I guess that is the answer. Sorry, Madam Chair. The work is being done right now through MACA to ensure that the funding is adequate in order to support all of the sports programs that are funded under this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to the Minister for that answer. The Minister wasn't definitive about whether the problems that caused the four highest-grossing retailers to go offline were fixed. Could she commit to discovering that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Madam Chair. We will look into that and provide a response to the committee. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.



**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Nothing further.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I'm just going to go back to 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$199,000. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I want to go back to the multi-sport games. In the last Assembly, this money was cut out of the budget for MACA due to the fiscal strategy that the last Cabinet adopted of cutting programs and services. Now, it's popping up in the supplementary appropriation, and my good friend from Nahendeh was one of the biggest advocates for this, sitting next to me in the House in the last Assembly. I am trying to understand why it's cropping here in a supplementary now. I think we do want to support our youth in becoming more active and participating in multi-sport games. Is this going to be an ongoing appropriation in the Main Estimates for the next year? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, at this time, MACA is anticipating that the trend will even itself out, and that this fund will ultimately balance out, and that there will not be a continuous need for supplementary appropriations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I sincerely hope that's the case, as well. We heard from MACA last time in the last Assembly that they would sort of try to scrape together bits of money by the end of the fiscal year, unspent money here and there, and try to make this up. Yes, I'm hoping that there's a little bit more robust plan to ensure that we can continue to support youth and sport, if we've got terminals offline. The whole idea of bringing this in-house was to make it more effective, more efficient, and it doesn't sound like that's happening. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am conscious of the concerns being raised by the Member, and in line and in keeping with the theme of the fiscal planning going forward, I would suggest that there will be a more robust plan to support sports and to identify how sporting will be contributed to and funded going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Can we get a commitment out of the Minister to share that more robust plan with I guess it would be the Standing Committee on Government Operations? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Madam Chair. At this point again, this supplementary appropriation, it's only before the House now, so the need for this additional funding is only just going to be identified. It's going to take some time, but when there is something on paper, I will commit to bringing it back to the relevant committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. No further comments. I'm going to go back to 2019-2020 Supplementary Estimates No. 4, operations expenditures, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$199,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Municipal and Community Affairs, sport, recreation and youth, not previously authorized, \$650,00. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Municipal and Community Affairs, total department, \$849,000, not previously authorized. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. Do you agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document No. 17-19 (2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. This concludes consideration of Tabled Document 17-19(2). Mr. Norn.

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

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 17-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

--Carried

Tabled Document 17-19(2) will be reported as ready for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and we will return to page 21. Does the Premier have any comments?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** [Microphone turned off]...witness.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort the witness in? All right. Okay, so we are on, "Reduce the cost of power and increase the use of alternative and renewable energy." Are there any further questions? No. So, if there are no further questions, I am just going to remind the Members that we are going to do one round per priority, so you have 10 minutes. Use them wisely. All right, so the next is, "Ensure government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and businesses." Questions? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at the "What We Will Do." It says here, "Strengthen GNWT procurement policy and practices," and it mentions our BIP policy, P3, and NMPP. I am just wondering what our government is going to do or what the Premier is going to do for small businesses in consultation to move this forward. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Within this action item, what we will do is, again, I have given notice for all of the

Ministers to engage all stakeholders. In this case, because it's a business that we are looking for because it's the Business Incentive Policy and northern manufacturers, we will be engaging with the Chamber of Commerce, both Chambers of Commerce, on this item. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Yes, I was not too sure, but I caught that last little bit, and that's good. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Yes, thank you. I wonder if this wouldn't be an area where a business panel is created to identify best practices rather than having government do the engagement with business to come up with the best practices. It seems like a more efficient and robust way of getting the information. Is the Premier open to doing it that way? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we are open to the Member's suggestion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. I appreciate the openness to that. I think that businesses working together, without government to facilitate and potentially slow them down, would produce some really good results. I appreciate the work that the prior Standing Committee on Economic Development and the Environment did, but I think this is an area where turning it over to business to sort out and come back with recommendations would be very useful. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister of Infrastructure, ITI, I am not which one on this one, will answer the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you. Yes, the plan was always to engage and have that feedback from businesses. As I have been meeting with industry, I have been asking them to clearly reach out and provide the feedback. Perhaps it hasn't been written out and sort of formalized, "We are going to create this panel," but one hundred percent

the intent is to have business input on all of the review of the procurement policy and procedures. They are more than willing to give me that input. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Madam Premier, did you have anything else? Okay. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Yes, thank you. I am actually looking for something a little different. What I am looking for is a panel of people who do business, who will hold the pen and come up with the best practices recommendation, so I am wondering if the Premier or the Minister can commit to that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We welcome all of the input from businesses. We are more than open to actually having businesses sit together and look at it, but we need to work in partnership on this. This is a GNWT policy, so we would like to actually be part of the table instead of just letting it go freehand, so be open, but we want to be part of the discussion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I can appreciate that letting go can be very scary, but I really feel that, if there was a panel that was tasked with coming up with best practices, that that would in fact produce very good results. I find that having the GNWT at the table, and I am reflecting on my own experience of co-drafting-type situations, is that they tend to be a boat anchor of barriers, slowdowns, and different kinds of opposition to what is going on, where there might be more free thinking if the businesses were able to work on this on their own. All they could do is come up with recommendations. It would be up to the government to decide whether those recommendations fitted their procurement policy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** I completely agree with the Member. Perhaps, I was misunderstanding what you were saying before. Yes, I would a hundred percent commit to having the business community develop their own comments and thoughts outside the GNWT influence. I think that is where you are trying to get at. The only caution I have if we establish a panel is the business community is going to want to get paid and they are going to want to do this as a consulting thing, so I

completely appreciate and will take that into consideration. I also just want to point out that I come from the business community. I know I won't be sitting in the details of everything, but I will be providing an oversight and not allowing that sort of, how do I diplomatically say this, not allowing the idea of not being able to change. I am pushing a change mandate on my department. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair, and I want to thank my colleague from Yellowknife Centre for raising the recommendation from the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment that I sat on in the last Assembly. The idea was to have an ongoing advisory committee, panel, whatever you want to call it, so it's not just a one-time deal. That's not exactly engagement; it's an ongoing function. We had a Minister in the last Assembly who wasn't even prepared to admit that there was a problem. Despite numerous emails to individual MLAs and raising it in the House, he wouldn't even admit that there was a problem. I hope that you are going to adopt an ongoing approach to continual improvement that involves small business. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You have a commitment from the Minister and myself that we will engage with small businesses. We are open to having a panel where they can write whatever they want. However, we are not committing if there is a cost to it. Ongoing feedback from the business community, ongoing feedback from all stakeholders is what we are asking for this government to do. That is something that is an easy yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I think we are starting to get somewhere. I just want the Minister and the Premier then to look at that report from the standing committee in the last Assembly. I want to move on to one other area, though. Earlier today, the Minister for Infrastructure made this statement about the Tlicho All-Season Road. There was, quite frankly, some shocking statistics in here about northern employment, that less than half the workers on the Tlicho All-Season Road are Northwest Territories residents, and there are only 40 percent of the business contracts going to northern businesses. That is quite shocking. This is a project that we are managing, we are paying for. That is the best we can do?

I had understood last Assembly that the Minister had said there were going to be northern employment requirements in contracting requirements built into the P3, and this is the best we can do? I am shocked, quite frankly. The Member for Monfwi has raised this, as well. That is not even listed in here anywhere on this page that, when we are spending money on big projects, we have to build in northern requirements with penalties into the contracts or the P3 arrangements. That is a way of securing northern benefits. It is not even mentioned in here. I guess I am seeking a commitment from the Premier that that is something we are going to pursue. It is our money. We should be making sure that Northerners benefit from these big projects. Is that something that is going to be worked on in this Assembly? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. This government is not the last government. I won't stand here and say what the previous Minister of Infrastructure made commitments to. However, I will state that this government is committed to reviewing the procurement processes, all of our BIP processes, all of the policies around it. We also have, as I stated before, the Cabinet value that says northern jobs, northern contractors. We will stand behind that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. We have to make sure that this is going to include training and apprenticeships, as well. This was something that the Federation of Labour, in the last Assembly, past president raised with the Regular MLAs. I think she even approached some Members of Cabinet about this. These big projects are opportunities for us to build in training and apprenticeship requirements, as well. I don't know if that was done on the Tlicho All-Season Road. It certainly didn't happen with Stanton, because I am playing hockey with guys who are being flown up from Ontario to work at that project. That was ridiculous, without any northern requirements for training and apprenticeships. How are we going to change that on the big projects moving forward? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is the Tlicho Government actually were part of the negotiations on this P3 contract, so they were involved in it. I do want to make a clarification that our commitment is

to trying to get jobs for northern residents, contracts for northern businesses. However, there are certain things, there is a specialization, perhaps, in the Stanton hospital that could have been argued. That is what I heard on the floor in the last Assembly. There would be areas of specialization. If we can't get it, we would have to go south, but that is not what we are trying to do. We are trying to keep the money in the North. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. This is something I am going to be looking for in our spending moving forward, the contracting that we do, procurement policy. It kind of comes back to some of the performance measurements or indicators that the Minister of Finance has talked about, as well. If we are going to be spending money, we have to make sure that Northerners are going to benefit from it. I am going to be watching for this. The results from the Tlicho All-Season Road, those are shocking, and that is not what we should be here trying to do. I will just leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The other thing is: I know the Member brought up about training and apprenticeship. It is something that has been on my mind, as well, and I am sure other Cabinet Members. When those policies are reviewed, we will be looking at it. I will make a commitment though, on behalf of my Minister that before we complete this work she will share it with standing committee for feedback from Regular Members, because we also made a commitment to work better with Regular Members. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just not sure where to start here. I guess I have seen the ups and I have seen the downs, being in business most of my life. A panel is fine, I guess. I have never really had much to do with panels. They might work. What I would suggest and what I want to start off with the Minister of ITI is to have her come to Hay River, which she agreed to, and actually meet face-to-face with people because that is what it is about. You have to actually hear it from the businesspersons and the workers and things like that. When it is second-, third-hand, it just doesn't work. I would encourage, if we are going to spend money, I would rather see this government do that. Go out and talk to people. I think that I

already got that commitment that the Department of ITI will be doing that and the Department of Infrastructure because it really impacts the communities. As long as she agrees to that, I am happy on that one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do believe that was put out there yesterday or the other day when we were looking at the mandate. I do believe that the Member already got a commitment from the Minister that she was going to go to Hay River. I will say it again: yes, she will go. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Over the years, we see southern contractors come in here, and we always think they are going to hire local people. There are promises that they are going to use local businesses. Then, year after year, we wonder why that hasn't happened. We still haven't learned yet. So, I think it is important that we really look at making sure that our contractors are working first and our people are working first. If our contractors need help, then they can slowly bring in the people they need if we don't have them here. If we have to do that, like I said yesterday, through negotiated contracts or whatever we have to use, we have the tools here. We have everything we need. We just have to start using them and not fight about it. I would ask the Premier to make a commitment that we will look at those tools that we have and see the benefit that they will bring in this economy because, right now, the economy is in the dump. The only way that we are going to make sure that our people are working is that we do it ourselves. We can't count on southern contractors to do it for us. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make the commitment, yes, that we will look at the tools that we currently have to ensure that northern contracts go to northern businesses as a priority. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is getting to be too easy. The other area is the BIP. The BIP is good. It's a good program. It helps northern businesses. However, we have to make sure that the bureaucrats who look after it actually make sure that it is working properly, and we have to monitor it. We don't monitor it, and that's a big

problem. We don't have to change anything to do that. We don't have to go out there and talk to people. There are policies in place. All we have to do is do the work. Again, I would ask that the Premier or the Minister of ITI direct the department to come forward, and if there is a reason why they haven't been doing it and why they can't do it, if it's more people they need, then let's look at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have been hearing I'm too easy, so I would like the Minister of ITI to answer that reply. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of ITI.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I recognize that there is a need to overhaul a lot of the policies and the procurement processes that are being used currently. As I've stated before, I am in my, sort of, collection mode, and I think you can ask most of the business community that I am not turning down meetings with them. I'm meeting with them, and I'm meeting with industry, et cetera, to get that feedback, to ensure that, when I make the changes, I am making the right ones. We're quite busy right now with session, et cetera, so what we have going on is the BIP review. We have the other policy reviews. I'm going to look at the information that is provided by my department, and then I am going to put my private consultant hat on and look at it from a realistic standpoint of somebody trying to bid or get into these policies or use these programs.

While, potentially, it is going to be a little bit of a struggle to get these things moved along, and the procurement process cleaned up, and the checks and balances in place that need to be there, I just ask the Member's patience with me, that it's going to take a bit of time to do so. One of the reasons that I did run was my own frustrations with procurement and BIP and watching companies come in and buy projects, and nobody checked the change orders, which is also about education to project officers or project managers within the client departments as well. What they need to be looking for so that they are a little bit more savvy in recognizing that a contractor or such may be actually trying to buy the work. There's an educational piece within the department -- both departments, because they both have a piece here -- in educating the workers to understand and recognize when the situation is happening, but the checks and balances are missing. I agree. I saw it myself, and all I can say is that I am committed to making those changes, and I know that, if I don't,

you're going to be standing up for the next four years and asking me about it. That's my commitment. I commit to you to making those changes.

Also, I just wanted to point that maybe while not normally formalizing a big panel, which is always hard, and like you said, you're not a panel person, one of the things that I really want to do is engage groups who are already set up and running themselves, who have an interest in a certain area. That would be the chambers, like the Premier said, but there is also the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies. They were regularly meeting with procurement. I don't know if that's fallen off since I'm not their president anymore; however, that's one group that I would be engaging. I'd be engaging NAPEG, which is the professional association, the architects association, the construction association. To me, it seems to be a better way to go about it is to go to these groups that are already formed and set up and have a mandate for what they want to see happen and get unbiased feedback from them, without the department's influence. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With all due respect, I'm not about to wait. I need it done right away. Anyway, the other thing is with respect to small businesses. We tend to cater to the bigger businesses, and it's the smaller ones that need to bid on contracts. A lot of the contracts that come out are fairly large, and because of personalities, sometimes, or whatever, some smaller contractors might not get the work. What I'd like to see, and I think that we used to do that, is to break some of the contracts up a bit so that the smaller portions, some of the small contractors can bid on themselves, as well. I would like the Department of Infrastructure to look at that, as well, and make a commitment that, over the next year, we will have something in place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We discussed this when we were talking in Cabinet about the Cabinet principle contracts for businesses in the North, jobs for people in the North. It was already discussed at the Cabinet table. We are committed to looking at it. There are ways that we can actually break up contracts so that more northern businesses can take advantage. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will move on to Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I sometimes think that Rocky and I live in the same place, because we have a lot of similarities between the people who we serve and the concerns that come up in our ridings. I'm going to try not to repeat what he has just said, but I think that these next two pages are some of the most important pages in our mandate document, simply because we heard yesterday from the finance Minister that a lot of our revenue, a lot of our prime drivers of our economy, are money that the government is putting into the economy. If we are reliant on ourselves to fuel the Northwest Territories, then we need to make sure that the money from the Northwest Territories is going to northern businesses. When we're looking at benefit retention, and we're looking at procurement and contracting, this is where we keep the money in the Northwest Territories. This is really important to sit down and talk about.

I was really happy to hear the Member from Yellowknife Centre talk about making sure that the best practices are put together by actual business owners, because with the best intentions, unless you're the ones using the policy, you really need people who, on the day-to-day, are out there competing for contracts to be able to let you know what works and what doesn't work. If we can really empower business owners, and actually listen to them, and make sure that we are 100 percent not wasting their time, because time is quite literally money in that sense, then I think it is a great idea. I would just urge the department to make sure that they're using business time wisely.

The other thing is I'd like to mention that I would like it not just to be associations that we're approaching, because of the fact that we have small and medium businesses that operate without any type of affiliation with associations, especially out in Kam Lake, and I'm assuming Hay River as well, and a lot of our small communities.

The other thing that I would like to mention is in regard to P3s. A lot of people who I have spoken to in my own riding in regard to our most recent P3s have really lost out. Where we have gone to businesses and we have said, "This project is too big of a scale for your operation." Well, lo and behold, we hired a southern company to do the work, then that southern company turned around and hired our local company to do the work, and then our local company had to go and fight the southern companies to actually get paid, some of which have not been paid, and this is years down the road. We're not only hurting Northerners through our P3s; we're devastating Northerners

through our P3s, and that's not fair. We really need to make sure that we are protecting Northerners through our P3 projects, and that does not seem to be happening.

As far as the one-stop shop for vendors online, the more time that people can spend in their businesses, the less time they can spend bidding on contracts, the better, because that opens them up to be able to do stuff like mentorships, to be able to further develop their projects, to be able to take people under their wings. The more we can do to make the administrative burden of getting government contracts, the better.

The last thing that I'd like to just ask, I guess, as a question instead of a whole series of comments is: are we willing to review all elements of the Business Incentive Policy? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, when the Member was talking, I was checking with the Minister. We will be looking to get feedback from all businesses, all people interested in providing feedback on this BIP process, the review. Thank you for the comment on the one-stop shopping. Anything we can do to make things easier. I do recognize businesses are hurting. Not only are they busy, but everybody's feeling the pinch at this time, so we need to make things as easy as possible.

What was her actual question now? Oh, yes. Sorry, it was the one I didn't write down, the question. We are committed to reviewing the whole Business Incentive Policy, not just a piece; the whole thing will be looked at in this term of the government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That makes me really happy, that we are willing to review all elements of the Business Incentive Policy. I'm just going to say it: are we willing to talk about the grandfather clause? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will let the Minister of ITI speak to that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister for ITI.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** Without knowing the legal ramifications of the grandfather clause, I

worked for a company that was grandfathered in, and it was ridiculous to me that they were considered to be BIP when they were 60,000 employees around the world, more people than in the entire Northwest Territories, and they were considered to be a BIP company.

I don't know, legally, at this point, what can be done about that, because I am sure that there are a whack of legal issues around it. Maybe Member Johnson can fill me in later. However, I can say, once we start to open that door, these are large companies, so they are all going to say, "Wait a minute," and there are going to be legal challenges with that, I would assume. I commit to the Member that I will continue to have a discussion with you about this as I get more information on what that would mean, to open up that clause. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am happy to hear that we are willing to have the conversation, and I will happily sit down any time with the Minister to discuss it. I'm sure that Rocky will come with me, but yes, I won't let it go. Thank you. No further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. There was no question. Okay, we're going to take a short recess and resume with the tabled document after our recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will call committee back to order. We are on "Ensure government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and businesses." I have Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can we remove Walmart from the business incentive program list?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to let my Minister of ITI answer that one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of ITI.

**HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY:** As I previously said, I commit to looking at the BIP policy to ensure and see what I can do to fix the errors that have been pointed out by the Regular Members and others to me. I don't want to speak to a specific company at this time. However, I continue to commit to updating the Member as it progresses. If we start cutting

people, I promise the Member that Walmart will be one of the first. How's that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I guess this relates to the point of increasing the number of registered businesses by 20 percent. I have been looking through the registered BIP companies, and I can find companies that I know are southern companies and no longer have 51 percent northern ownership. I guess this is just a comment to the Minister of ITI. I don't want your department to go and increase this by 20 percent as the end game. We may, in fact, end up exactly where we are once we cut a lot of the grandfathered companies or conduct a review of companies that have since moved south. Just a comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. I'll take that as a comment. Are there any further questions on "Ensure government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and business?" Seeing none, we will move to page 23, "Adopt a benefit retention approach to economic development." Questions. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just looking at the very last in "What We Will Do," increase opportunities for equity participation, and looking at ways that we can also leverage, maybe, federal dollars in order to do some more economic development and infuse money into our local economy by creating more opportunities for local businesses. I was really excited when I heard the housing Minister today talk about actually putting someone within the Housing Corporation in charge of leveraging those federal dollars.

Is that something that other departments are going to be looking at as well, to make sure that, with all of the money that is coming out of the Liberal government, we are putting our best foot forward to make sure that we are getting some of those dollars, that we are accessing the guardianship program, that we are accessing money for Indigenous languages, that we are accessing all these different federal dollars that have the potential to come our way? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. Like I had said earlier before, we are developing a federal engagement strategy. When we are talking intergovernmental, it means the federal; it means Indigenous

governments; it means municipal governments; it means other jurisdictions. We need to put our best forward. We need to continue advocating for money for the Northwest Territories, and not only that, we are actually challenging and saying we'd like 100 percent dollars now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the second point here, it says "conduct an independent review." How independent will that review be? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my understanding and the Cabinet's understanding, at this point now, is that "independent" means outside of government. An independent review, a private contractor to do the reviews. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake. Are there any other questions? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I want to follow up on my colleague's questions about the independent review of competitiveness of the NWT mining regime. As far as I know, ITI has hired a contractor for \$300,000, and this was work that was started in the last Assembly, to do a report that basically repeats methodology from a previous report, and maybe adds a few bells and whistles. I think that was supposed to be done by March 31<sup>st</sup>, and that's great. That might provide some fodder for this independent review. What is the role of the public going to be in this review, or is this going to be a consultant doing a report giving advice to ITI?

Look, ITI has an inherent conflict of interest in doing this work. They are a department that is responsible for promoting mining, and I've always given them credit. They do a great job at that. You can't have that department in charge of regulating it and looking at benefits at the same time. It's just an inherent conflict of interest. They are advocating for industry, and that's part of their job. What is the role of the public going to be in this independent review? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd have to get back to the Member on what exactly is the public's role on this one; however, like I said earlier, we are committed to working better with all Members of the Legislative Assembly, and therefore, once we get the



independent review, we will let standing committee know, and we will discuss this with standing committee. That is my commitment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Madam Chair, I appreciate that commitment. This is not just coming from me. This was a recommendation from the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment in the last Assembly during the review of the Mineral Resources Act in that report, and also in the transition report that the standing committee brought forward. This needs to be an independent review. It cannot be left to the department alone and the consultant.

Look, when Alberta reviewed its royalty regime and a way of retaining benefits from oil and gas, what they did was they appointed a blue ribbon panel of experts. They went out, had public hearings. They commissioned some of their own work. That kind of independent review has never been done because the federal government wouldn't do it. We've taken this on since devolution and done nothing with it, and we owe it to our citizens to make sure that we are retaining the right amount of benefits from this.

I'm just going to give a couple of examples: \$30 billion worth of diamonds have left the Northwest Territories; \$30 billion worth. We have a heritage fund that's \$26 million. We started the heritage fund way too late, and I know there are other benefits that we have accrued from diamond mining. When we are actually raising more money from tobacco and alcohol sales than we are from resource revenues, that's a problem because there's a billion dollars' worth of diamonds leaving here every year, and all we're retaining in resource revenues is around \$30, \$40, \$50 million? That's not good. That's not what our citizens deserve. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will, like I said, I committed to sharing it with standing committee and getting feedback on this. The other thing that I should note is that, when the Member brought up the issue of the resource royalties, we share that with Indigenous governments, so Indigenous governments will be part of this review. We will make sure that they are all part of this as well. They are partners in this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm fine having this \$300,000 spent to redo the study, but there are lots of other international examples that we can and should be looking at in terms of benefit retention. Norway has a pension fund that is now over a trillion dollars because of the way they manage their North Sea oil and gas; North Sea oil, in particular. They also had state ownership of part of it through Statoil, so there are lots of examples that we can and should be learning from around the world, not just repeating some of the mistakes that have been made in Canada around resource development. It needs to be a well-rounded review that does engage and involve the public, and looking at international best practices, as well.

I want to go one other item if I can in here, Madam Chair, and it's the socio-economic forum that's mentioned in the middle item. I do think that that's a good idea, but I would hope that the participation be extended beyond just the mining industry and Indigenous governments and GNWT. I think there are others that have an interest and, perhaps, stake in this. There are people in academia who have looked at this before. Maybe some NGOs might have some thoughts or ideas. Are we going to try to find a way to make this a little more inclusive than the way it's portrayed here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. The Member is correct. This one overlaps not only the public, but also into many departments. This one will have an interest in all the departments, applicable departments, for this as well, and we will engage with all applicable stakeholders in this work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions to "Adopt benefit retention approach to economic development?" Seeing none, committee, we will move to page 24, "Improve early childhood indicators for all children." Questions? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. I'd like to ask about the third point, which talks about expanding community-based, family-friendly programming beginning this summer. I am unclear about whether this is a new program or whether this is an existing program that is being expanded? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some of this will be building on the Healthy Families Program. We know that needs to

be built on. Also, I'm a huge advocate, the Member knows that my degree is in social work, and I'm a huge advocate of early childhood development. It is part of the answer. Education is the next answer.

This one, for sure, we will be looking at. We're looking at items like community-led initiatives such as parent/teen cultural camps. I'm not going to put boxes around and say: this is what we're going to define it as. It's about community-led initiatives to support families and children.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you for that, Madam Premier. If you're going to design some kind of granting program like the anti-poverty fund to assist this, is it realistic to begin this in the summer of 2020? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** When we first did these things, I mean, the timelines were a little bit too conservative, and so we listened to the Regular Members and standing committee, and they said: be bold. This is a little bit bold. I don't think is actually something that we can't accomplish. I do know that we have a lot of programs within the Northwest Territories that are already offering services. I think that we can begin this work in 2020. I don't think this work will be finished in 2020 in the summer, but we can certainly start it. In fact, we should be looking at, internally, starting it now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have just one more question in this area, and that has to do with the point below of streamlining early childhood development funding. How do these two items relate to one another? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is where experience comes in handy. In my previous role, working in NGOs for over 20 years, working with low-income families, the annual funding that has been received has always been an issue, especially for NGOs that are small. Their sustainability is not secure, so we are looking at actually expanding the funding so that it would be multi-year funding to accommodate smaller societies, et cetera, that need the security of being able to retain their staff. They do not directly link. A lot of community-led initiatives will be in that situation, where they do not have the

sustainability, where they need that guarantee so that they can keep their employees and their programs going. However, they are not contingent on each other. We are looking at multi-year funding, but we are open to ideas at the same time, so it's not just people who are getting services now; we are also looking at expanding it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Oh, I thought you said "Frame Lake." Sorry.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's been a long day. So this page actually makes me very excited. I think there are some really great wins on this page that make me very, very happy to see. The multi-year funding is huge; the single-window funding for grants, huge; training provided for family support workers is also very exciting to me. I do have a couple of questions, though. Under the first line, "ensure better coordinated services for children and their families," I want to make sure that this includes the thousand children every year who are involved in Child and Family Services, who are generally in higher need of a lot of these services and that we are really focusing on making sure that those kids have access to the services and the programming that they need. So that would be my first question: does this include the children of Child and Family Services, with a great big exclamation mark? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. Those children are in the care of Government of the Northwest Territories. We have an obligation to take care of those children just as if they were our own children, so my commitment and the commitment of all of our Cabinet is to working interdepartmentally to make sure that we have the best services for all children, and it's not one or the other, but not forgetting the children who we are in charge of, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My second question is in regard to wait times for access to assessment and rehabilitation services for children being reduced. At what point does Cabinet intend to focus that on teams who travel the north, on specialists who come and live in communities versus when they decide they are going to send kids out in order to reduce those wait

times? I am just wondering kind of what our threshold of that measurement is going to be. Is this mandate item going to actually be something that just results in a huge increase in our medical travel costs and that will be our only way of looking at achieving that, or are we looking at other ways to make sure that we are providing those services to kids across the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have to get back to the Member on that answer. In all honesty, I do not have the answer at this time. The whole idea is that we are going to be working closer together within the departments. There is no guarantee that we will not still need to send children out for medical, so I am not going to guarantee that it would alleviate our medical travel needs. However, when we have more programs in the communities, there is less need. A lot of the NGOs actually will provide services to people who do not even come to the government. It's when we do not have any services that it impacts the GNWT more. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Yes, I guess just a comment. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would never expect a child to not get service because of wait times or to deny medical travel by any means. I just want to make sure that we are looking at ways that we can provide these services to kids in the way that best suits them. Sometimes travelling all the way to Edmonton if you are from Whati or if you are from even Yellowknife or you are from Ulukhaktok can be very intimidating and very scary, and so, depending on what it is you are receiving service for, it may actually add to the stress and the anxiety of the child who is receiving the service. So I am just looking to make sure that we are approaching this from all angles and looking at different options of how we can best serve kids. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So, yes, one of the examples of programming that we have that is working and we should look at moving it forward is the integrated service delivery program that is offered. That program is like a one-stop shop. You get one worker, and then they get taken to where they need to. They had done research within that program to validate the need of it, and they found that it was just unreasonable to expect that one family member would have to go to the number of government

appointments. This model, the integrated service delivery service model, is proven to work. It is a model; it's one model, but we have to work across all departments, and that is why this Cabinet is different. This Cabinet is doing a lot more consultation between each other. It's no longer every man and one woman for themselves. It's more of: let's be a team. So, that, we carry forward, so, yes, we will do our best to try to make sure that as many children as possible don't fall through the cracks, because that is the goal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further, Member for Kam Lake?

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the only thing I would add to that is a good-news story, and that would be ECE's travelling support team, as well, who goes into the schools. I really look forward to seeing where that team goes over the next three-and-a-half years. Thank you. No further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am really happy to see the way this is being done in collaboration with Indigenous governments. I do not want to see what happened with the implementation of junior kindergarten, where it almost felt like we were pegging Aboriginal Head Start against junior kindergarten. Also, within the Healthy Family Program, I am happy to see that there is going to be a made-in-the-North program. In my previous career as a nurse, this program, when I was working in Yellowknife, the families that I was working with, it was a good program, but I think as it started to leave Yellowknife and the capacity in to the communities, that it did not hold that same structure and maybe it was the way that it was being taught or not taught. So one of things that I know is the Hotii ts'eeda researched on that whole program, so I would like to know if that is the model going from the research that was done by Hotii ts'eeda, which is the SPOR unit for the NWT, scientific patient-oriented research. They funded that Healthy Family Program review. Do you know if that is coming from that?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So is the question: there was a review done, and is the Healthy Family Program operating on the recommendations of the review? Is that the question that I am hearing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Sorry I wasn't so clear. I do not think my time was reset because I do not think I talked for eight minutes on that, either. I am going to let you know. What I was saying was I think it was in the last year that the SPOR unit, Hotii ts'eeda, did review the Healthy Family Program, did some research in that, and so I am just wondering if this curriculum is based on that report or the outcome.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to address that question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is definitely something we look at. I mean, you look at the whole mandate itself, to "improve early childhood development indicators for all children," and if there is something out there. Our government keeps saying we need to look at strengthening partnerships and you look at the Child and Family Services, the new legislation that is coming out. Here is an opportunity for us to work with Indigenous groups, to be able to work together for the best interests of children, and if Hotii ts'eeda is doing a research project, something that we could build on, that's definitely something that we should have a look at. If it's working, then why not? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Further questions, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

**MS. SEMMLER:** I do know that the deputy minister does sit on that governing board. Deputy minister of Health and Social Services, the Department of Health and Social Services, sits on that governing board. They should be aware of that research project that was done. I just want to make sure, because they did meet in the community. Like, they went around to different communities, and I will use Inuvik, for example. They met with the Healthy Family Program. They met with the Indigenous governments. They met with the Ingamo Hall healthy babies program. They even reached out to the Muslims to make sure that the programs that are being provided are going to reach out to the Muslim families in Inuvik. That's something that I'd never seen in health before, that reached out to that group, and we do have a lot of them. I just want to

make sure that, within this and in creating this, we do look at that report. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You have a commitment by the Minister that she will review the report to make sure. The other thing I should mention is that, in this one, the early childhood development, it's critical that we work with our Indigenous governments, and thank you for bringing it to my attention. The federal government has made legislation that actually allows Indigenous governments to draw down the care of their own children. I happen to be an advocate for that. I hate to say it, but across Canada, jurisdictions, public governments, have not done a great job of it.

We have one Indigenous government already that is interested in drawing down the care of their children. I am a big, strong supporter. I am also a supporter of not setting people up to fail. I have told the Indigenous governments that, in anything they're asking to draw down, I will support them, but I will tell them the pros and cons of every issue so that they make informed decisions based on the best knowledge that they have at the time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further, Inuvik Twin Lakes?

**MS. SEMMLER:** Just one last comment. I know when we went with the daycare in Inuvik and just some of the programming for the early childhood, like Ingamo's healthy families, they really struggle to keep staff, and we hear that all the time in these NGOs. They struggle to keep staff because they can't get a commitment longer than March 31<sup>st</sup>, especially for funding when it comes to child programming. I really look forward to seeing how this is going to be multi-year funding so we can ensure that people get these jobs, and when we are training all these early childhood providers, they come back and take these jobs. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am glad that the Member agrees with me. Coming from the NGO world, I know that, at least for the last 25 years, NGOs have been asking for multi-year funding. I am glad that this will be a government to bring this forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Next on my list is the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. That last piece of news from the Premier was quite good. Just a couple of points, I guess, I would like to make on this section. This has been raised in the House before, by the Member for Yellowknife Centre and by myself. Is there a role in early childhood development and Child and Family Services for a child and youth advocate? We're the only jurisdiction in Canada that doesn't have one. Is that something that this government is going to look at? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My deputy minister is feeling like he wants to talk for a while, so I will let Martin Goldney have the chair for a minute.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am happy to advise that that's something that we are actively looking at right now, what are the options for the potential establishment of that role, but we are also mindful that we live in a unique jurisdiction as well. We don't want to just adopt the same practices that everybody else is doing. We are also aware that, as was mentioned previously, the landscape is changing as far as who might be delivering these programs and services, and maybe there's an opportunity to come up with a made-in-the-NWT approach to improving accountabilities for the delivery of programs and services related to children. Maybe that means something different in our context, something that would provide a different type of accountability directly to Indigenous governments, that might not be the same type of model that is used in other jurisdictions. It's very early days in that work now. We are just doing the jurisdictional scans and looking at the potential for other approaches. Some of it might be innovative solutions for our circumstances here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, let's keep the good news rolling here. No, I'm very happy to hear that, because it was something that was consistently raised in the last Assembly. If those options can be shared with standing committee, that would be great. I see some heads shaking, but I'll let them respond at the appropriate time.

We've just established the Office of the Ombud, and I think we have a child advocate in the legal system. I might not get the title right, but there are

some other similar or related functions. My objective here is to get the function covered somehow so that there is some oversight and someone independent who can look at the whole system and how it works and help keep us on track in terms of the Auditor General's report and the action plan that has been developed by Health and Social Services and so on. Can the models or approaches be shared can standing committee before they're finalized by Cabinet? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely, we'll share the models with standing committee. I do want to point out, though, within the last month, I believe it was -- it might be a little bit more -- I had a constituency meeting, and I believe that there were foster parents who were actually told to come to my constituency meeting. The foster parents came, and they shared a whole bunch of issues with me. The people who asked them to come to my constituency meeting didn't realize that I was a social worker, I'm thinking. I engaged with them, because these are the people I work with every day.

When they talked about a child advocate, because they were saying, "We need a youth advocate, we need a youth advocate," I asked them, "What is that? What do you need?" They were talking about all kinds of things, Madam Chair. They weren't talking about a youth advocate. They were looking at an appeal process, a grievance process, a process to help the foster parents, so I think that the first thing that we need to do when we look at this is actually ask the people, ask the stakeholders who are providing services, the people receiving services, what do they want to see? Not with the title. "What do you need to help you?" Then, from that, from the words of the people, then we should be defining what the role is. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, I would expect that our government would engage with foster parents in terms of what and how this office might be set up and so on, but I think it would be important to not start from ground zero, but to have the kind of jurisdictional scan and best practices piece of work, maybe as a discussion paper, just like what you guys did with the post-secondary education legislation. You went out and did a jurisdictional scan and some best practice stuff, and the Premier knows this because it's something that she did in her previous life in the

past Assembly. I think we're getting close to being on the same page here, so that's good.

The last item I want to mention is: I will confess I don't know a lot about the early childhood development indicator. I think it is on about a three- or four-year cycle in terms of when it is done in the schools. I think it is going to be hard for us to show progress even within the term of this Assembly. This is work that needs to be done over a long period of time to get us where we need to go. What I am looking for is some interim targets, measurables, in this section.

What I want to do is just get you to flip the page for a moment and look at universal childcare, where there are some clear targets here. I wish there were a few more: 25 new spaces; 20 licensed childcare spaces; an increase by 5 percent. What I want to encourage you folks to do is to think of what the measurables and targets are that are going to help us get to where we want to be at the end of four years and leading to the long-term progress we need to make, because that is not in here. It is going to be hard for us to keep you guys accountable and for you to report on progress, trying to work together. Just think about some clear measurables for this one in particular. That is all I have got. Thanks, Madam Chair. If the Premier wants to respond, I would be interested in hearing that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have some deliverables in here. A new curriculum will be evaluated. The reporting curriculum will be developed. Training will be provided for family support workers. There is some in here. I recognize that it would have been nice to have numbers, et cetera, like in some of our other ones. Early childhood development is a passion of mine. I know it is a passion of many of our Members and Cabinet Members sitting around the table here, as well. Education is a passion. We won't let this drop. However, I do appreciate the Member's note. If we provide services now, the outcomes for those children, if we provided the best service, won't show for years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Next on my list, I have the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just going to carry on from what the Member for Frame Lake just mentioned. A lot of the results for this item won't be seen for years. I will say this made me feel really good. Again, you look at some of the most developed countries on the planet, some of the G8

nations. Scandinavians are light years ahead of the rest of the world. What they do is they throw their resources behind their kids. You can see it now. They had done it a couple generations ago, and you can really see it now. They are way ahead of the rest of the world in terms of having their kids educated. It shows in their economy. This is it. This is one of the most proactive things we can do on our list.

What I did notice in here that caught my eye was there wasn't too much mention about small communities. You always have to remember, whenever we have set goals, to always remember that we have to think about our most vulnerable sectors, regions, to get some of these programs into the small communities. It is so important. I think I just want to see if I can get some sort of commitment from the Premier to get to have this as a KPI, key performance indicator, by region just to closely monitor this. Once we have this in place, we need to really closely monitor it over time so that we can closely track. If there is a region left behind, we can get behind it and make changes as they go along rather than finding out when it is too late, realizing there might be a region or small community left behind. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Now, I am going to make a commitment that the department had better take note of. I agree with you. We have to make sure that every region has these supports. This is key. Scandinavia is way ahead of us. I am thinking that a lot of politicians, wise politicians in the day in Scandinavia, made the choice of looking for the future versus "Look at me. I am glory. Look what I can do in my four-year term." I hope that all Members will actually think about that as we move forward, because that is the answer. We will start to track. I have a personal investment to make sure that all children have services as best as we can provide. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Any further points, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh? Are there any further comments on page 24, "Improve early childhood development indicators for all children?" Seeing none, we will move on to page 26, "Advance universal childcare by increasing availability and affordability." Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Madam Chair, one of the questions I know we talked about is in the way we do business. I think it was allowing for clients who live in low-cost housing, NWT Housing Corporation, to run businesses out of their homes. Because we want to increase the amount of licensed childcare

spaces, would this priority help to do that? We know there is a lot of aunties and grandmas and uncles who probably do this already. If we were able to do it and they were able to be licensed so that they could take in kids and make some money and provide an income, is this part of this priority? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Absolutely, Madam Chair. If you look at the third bullet, it is: amend our income assistance and housing programs to allow for delivery of licensed childcare programs. The reason I am insistent on licence within that is because there is money with having licensed childcare. There is quality control with having licensed childcare. People on income support and in housing programs too often are forced because of government red tape, government policies that aren't people-friendly, that say you have to hide if you want to have an extra income, if you want to support your grandchild, et cetera. This hopefully will open that up, allow small businesses to develop, allow caregivers in the homes to actually access funding to support children, and allow quality program that we can monitor. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That kind of leads into my next question: would there be support from the government, the departments, to help the clients who do choose to want to set up childcare in their home? Knowing the little bit that I do know, not that I ever ran a daycare out of my house, it feels like it sometimes, but I know that there is a lot of rules. Are our housing units going to meet some of those criteria to open up, to have it in their home? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we will be reviewing the policies I do know that, being the education Minister before and actually operating daycares before, is that the policies for a licensed daycare facility are a lot more stringent than for a licensed home provider. There are start-up fees within Education, Culture and Employment to assist daycare providers to not only have access to funding but also to support so that they can actually ensure that they are successful in becoming a licensed home daycare provider. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you Thank you, Madam Premier. Further questions, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Premier, for that. I know just in my region alone that there is one early childhood, I am not really sure of what their position was, and I know it just recently became vacant. My community could keep that person busy, does keep that person busy, and they do have to travel to the communities. I am just wondering: with that position, I don't know if it is in all regions, the early childhood, it is under ECE. It's in the department. If they could do more education as soon as this kind of goes live with housing and doing that partnership to say, you know, if you do this, there is money here, just that communication that we are really bad at, this government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will let the Education, Culture and Employment Minister answer that because he has taken over from my old position. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The position is early childhood consultant, and there is one in each region, and they do work very closely with any childcare providers or potential childcare providers. So, this information, I guarantee will make it to the people who it needs to make it to because that is what these people do, and they have very good relationships in every region with all of the providers, and they are mandated to develop those relationships if they just come into the position new. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Further questions? No further questions from Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple of questions, my first being in regard to after-school care. After-school care is a form of childcare, and, within the Northwest Territories, the ratio for adults to children for after-school care is different from the ratio for pupils to teachers, but a lot of times our after-school care takes place in our schools, and so a student could walk out to their locker, get a snack, their teacher leaves the classroom, a childcare provider enters the classroom, and all of a sudden you are only allowed to have half as many students in that room. So I am wondering if we are prepared to also make this part

of the conversation, the ratio for kids to childcare providers for after-school care within our school facilities in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I can assure the Member that this is part of the conversation. I have had those conversations, if we look at creating more, using perhaps some of the spaces available in some government infrastructure buildings, like schools. A lot of schools are under-capacity, and they have a lot of room. Perhaps some spaces like that could be repurposed for childcare. So, if there is a childcare centre in the school and there are adults in the school, perhaps that ratio is something that can be looked at. In terms of after-school care, if you have all of the adults who would be assisting a classroom, you know, the principal could come in, other teachers could come in, support assistants could come into a classroom. If they are all gone, then that ratio becomes more important because, if there are only the employees of the after-school program and no other adults in the vicinity who could come in to help out, that becomes a concern. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** All right, thank you, Madam Chair. I am definitely game to continue having more conversations about this with the Minister of Education. Another concern of mine has to do with the same type of thing, and that is after-school care again in schools, and that is around the rules. I get that it's a safety concern, but, if a child is sitting in a classroom playing with blocks and there is an outlet on the wall that is open, as soon as that becomes an after-school care facility, my understanding is the rules change and all of a sudden those outlets need to be covered, but the students did not touch the outlets during the day when they were with their teacher; the odds of them touching the outlet all of a sudden after 4:00 -- so I am wondering if the Minister is also willing to have discussion about those types of rules that would make sense in a daycare setting, but, when the students are in a school for after-school care purposes and the safety of the students is paramount during the day when the teacher is there and the standards are paramount when the teacher is there, why that changes after school, I'm unaware of, and so I am wondering if we can also add that to the discussion of things we could potentially change, as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**MR. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I am happy to look at all of those kind of things. Earlier in the mandate, it does not fall in my department, but we talked about reducing red tape, and sometimes there are regulations that need to be re-examined. Safety is always going to be paramount. There are no two ways about that, and I think everyone is going to agree, but, if a rule just exists to exist, it's something we need to reconsider, perhaps. I promise to look into all of those kinds of issues, and I am happy to sit with the Member and hear about any more of these types of issues she has because, clearly, she has put some thought into it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My last question: so our priority here is "advance universal childcare by increasing availability," so we have definitely discussed that. The last part of that sentence is "and affordability," so I am wondering if the Premier can speak a little bit to how my constituents are actually going to feel that childcare is more affordable with these types of changes. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The reality is that we have 22 priorities, and we have said that, when we made those 22 priorities, we did not have all of the information. We did not. We made the information on the information we had, but we did not have all of the information at the time. So, I have said it over and over: we are not going to have enough money to meet everything. We know that. However, for me, and I am making a judgment call here, the availability of childcare versus the affordability, and affordability needs to be taken into consideration, but universal childcare versus available childcare, my priority is having childcare in communities. When we talk about affordability, Madam Chair, higher-income families usually do not need to have subsidies. The lower-income families all qualify for childcare subsidies, so not only do we subsidize the daycare providers between I think it's \$15-something to \$45 a day, depending on the needs of the child, we also will provide subsidies to parents who are low income and need that extra support. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question for the Premier has to do with the



commitment to better utilize GNWT infrastructure for early childhood program space. Can the Premier tell us what she has in mind with this commitment? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some places in these mandates spill me all over the place. This is where we are looking at a hub model. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment had talked about using schools, new school builds. If we are going to be doing school builds or if there are schools that have rooms, why aren't we using them? This will not only deal with, in my opinion, the availability of childcare; it will also hopefully deal with the trauma that comes from people who experience residential school syndrome. We have a lot of children who aren't attending school because of fear from parents, fear of what the school system is, so, if we start early and we have their daycare programs, their parenting programs, maybe their immunization shots in the schools, we are hoping that will kind of socialize the families so that the schools aren't seen as a bad thing anymore, actually turns into a positive way of looking at it.

The other thing too is, looking at buildings that we have, there are a lot of buildings that we say we do not need anymore, as the government. Maybe we need to, instead of just saying we are going to put them out there or rip them down, start looking at it and saying: is there a way we can use this space; can we use that building and offer it to an NGO so that they can offer a childcare program or a parenting program or whatever it may be? So it goes right across from new builds with schools to current infrastructure that we currently have and how can we best use that space to meet the needs of children and families. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Premier, I think that having that kind of flexibility is a good idea. There is a new school build forthcoming in my riding, the new JH Sissons school. I have talked in the past about the possibility of having space there for childcare. The point there is to provide the space and then to advertise for a service provider. Is there any chance that there will be space in the new JH Sissons for childcare? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We would have to get back to you on that one. I do know that the planning during the last

Assembly, at the end of it, was starting to begin on that school, so I am not sure because I am now not the education Minister; I'm the Premier. I'm not sure where that stands at this point, so we'll have to get back to you on whether that's a possibility or not. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will take a commitment for you to return with that. My next question has to do with evaluating the early childhood scholarships and early childhood staff grants that were part of the bilateral that is expiring at the end of March. There is a point here to evaluate that program, but not until spring of 2023. I just can't make sense of the timing there. If the bilateral finishes in 2020, why would the evaluation then take an additional three years, or am I confusing two different programs? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The work is going to be completed by 2023. It's not starting there. We perhaps should have had a beginning for this one, but we already know, in all honesty. It's always good practice to do an evaluation. That's just good practice. Best practice says to do that, but we know that the early childhood scholarships are working already. We know that people are taking advantage of it. We know that there's a huge need for early childhood providers in the communities. This work is already beginning, will be completed then, but as long as I am the Premier, this is something that is shown to work. I believe it's coming up at the end of this year for the new agreement with the federal government, and so I am hopeful that the Minister will bring this forward to the federal government and show the applicable Minister that it is a program that we need to support. Right? Okay, thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What I would like to see is that the results of this bilateral that is about to expire inform the next bilateral that is going to be negotiated. If it turns out that the scholarships and grants are useful, then that's great. If it turns out that they're useful, but there are other possibilities that would also return good results, such as some kind of subsidy for the operator, for the parent, for construction, whatever, then I would like the Minister to be open to the bilateral covering not only what has already worked, but what might work in the future. That's a comment more than anything.

I think this is my last question, and it has to do with the number of licensed childcare spaces added each year. Can the Premier tell us now how many children are without childcare spaces who might use those spaces if the service was available? What's the gap between the number of spaces available now and the number that are needed, and how does money figure into that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my knowledge, we don't have that figure. In all honesty, Madam Chair, that would be a hard figure to actually get because of the underground childcare provisions that are being provided in communities. People often don't see, when they bring their children to their grandmother's, often they wouldn't count that as "I need childcare," because grandma's looking after the baby. It's kind of like counting the number of homeless people. It is difficult to assess that, so currently we don't have those figures, but we do know that, in Yellowknife alone, we have wait lists on daycares. We have those numbers that the NGOs or the applicable daycares are providing us, and I believe them that we have wait lists. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** The situation in Yellowknife is unique. I spoke with a woman yesterday who put herself on the wait list as soon as her pregnancy was confirmed so that there was some possibility of obtaining timely childcare by the time that she went back to work. The situation in Yellowknife is very bogged down, and space is a really key part of that question. That's a comment. Those are all of my questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take that as a comment. I know that the Member is a big advocate for this as well as I am. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there any further questions to "Advance universal childcare by increasing availability and affordability"? Seeing none, committee, we will move to page 27. Sorry. Where am I? Oh, I jumped ahead. Okay, sorry. We're moving on to "Increase student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada." Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have, I think, one quick question. Under the first

mandate item, under "How We Will Do It," it says, "ensure distance learning opportunities are available in all NWT communities." Does that include available to all NWT students? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Distance education learning is a unique program. It's not the traditional distance education learning that people from southern jurisdictions usually think about; you apply online, you get a package in the mail, you send them in, and you get graded, and the results are really poor, because a lot of people don't finish the courses, in honesty.

This is actually a different program. It's to make sure that the higher levels are available. Within small communities, they are only allowed, and I can't remember, because I'm 60 years old, what we called the different subjects were different; it was 10, 20, 30, but now they don't use those terms. Within the smaller communities, because of the capacity of teachers, they have only been allowed to take the lower grades of education. This distance learning allows children, students, to actually take the higher levels of studies. Is it available to every student? No, distance learning in this form is not. This distance learning form is specifically for the smaller communities, where they don't have teachers who can actually teach the higher levels of education. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Within the small communities, is every student within those small communities that the programming is targeted to able to take the distance learning? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This almost feels like a trick question or something. My understanding is that any student who is interested or has the capabilities to be able to take the higher subjects would be allowed those opportunities, just like any other student in any other school in the Northwest Territories, but not all students would be interested. They have the option, but not all students want to be a brain surgeon or go to university. Some students are more interested in trades, and that's why we also have the pathways program. It's about picking out where students want to go. Some students, like my one son, decide to take all the lower grades, and now he's paying the price. Hopefully, all students who

are interested, Madam Chair, all students who have the abilities would be promoted to take this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess my concern a little bit is, if I was doing right now what I thought I wanted to do in grade nine, I would not be sitting in this chair right now. If a student decides in, say, grade 11, that they want to take advantage of distance learning, but they had not identified that to their pathfinder in grade 9 or in grade 7, is that still an opportunity that they can take advantage of?

I just want to make sure that we're being realistic with the expectations of kids and that kids can decide that they would like to be on a different path, and we're not pigeonholing them into a box in grade 7 or grade 9, because they said in grade 7 or grade 9 that they wanted to be an astronaut, and then they come back and say, "I'd like to be a welder." Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Absolutely, Madam Chair. Thank you. We need to be flexible within this model. The Member is absolutely correct. How many children have said when they were 12, they wanted to be a fire truck driver, and how many fire truck drivers do they end up producing? The whole idea of pathways isn't it to just say, "This is where you're going to be, and you're stuck in that." We're not a communist society; we're a democratic society. It's about helping children where they are, giving them goals, showing them that education is key, especially in the smaller communities where they are struggling to see the future. Then, if they change their mind, then we need to be there to support them to do that, because the stats show that children nowadays will change their careers, I believe, between seven and nine times in their careers. It's not the luxury of when I was young, when you could get a job, and you could keep that job forever. Those days are gone. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Next on my list, I have the Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to addressing social passing that we have in our communities, that's a big concern for myself. I think that we should be doing more, assisting the local DEAs and helping them to implement. Getting kids to school is the big one. They're trying to find ways to motivate our youth to get to the school.

Speaking with the principal last week in Tuktoyaktuk, that's what he is working towards. I'm trying to give him a hand, but our local DEAs are really suffering and really need assistance. Is there any plan in regard to addressing the concerns under social passing to assist local DEAs? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. The last bullet on "How We Will Do It" says we're going to implement new programming to assist schools and parents when making decisions about student placement, promotion to the next grade, or retention. When we say assisting schools and parents, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment does not operate physically every single school. That's why we have DEAs. They are part of the picture. We see them as our partners. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. More questions, Member for Nunakput?

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to that, Madam Chair, it's saying 2021-2022 with that programming coming forward. Is there any way that we are going to be getting into the schools earlier or working with the local DEAs and the Minister's office to make something happen with regard to the social passing part and getting kids to school, maybe some extra money somewhere, if we could find it, just like anything else? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes. When it says the fall 2021-2022, the school year, it will take a little bit of time. We have to develop the program. There will be some feedback. They will be working with the education boards, districts, et cetera. It's not going to be that we're only going to start it either in 2021 or 2022; it'll be an ongoing process. By that time, what we're looking at is, by at least fall 2022, we will have the program up and running, and as it says in here, it will be monitored, and progress will be reported. The program under this timeline says it will be implemented by then. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Any further questions, Member for Nunakput?

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to the distance learning, in regard to making sure that we have access and Internet

service into each of the communities, in the smaller communities. There's a big asset making sure that kids are able to get online for the online courses, because not all of our schools have grades K to 12. Just making sure that kids who are getting an opportunity to try to do what they want, with the parents and education, that's so important. If you don't have your education, you don't have nothing. We always say the kids are our future, and we're making sure that we are able to help them to get success in school. That would be a real good thing, especially with distance learning, giving them opportunities. Thank you, Madam Chair. More of a comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has been working on implementing distance learning every single year to bring more and more schools. I believe there are five new schools on the plate coming up. There will be five more schools, five more communities, actually accessing distance learning, and the goal of the government is actually to make sure that every small community has this option if they don't have other options for schools. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Next on my list, I have the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the "Ensure distance learning opportunities are available," to have all the schools by 2022-2023 school year, how many schools do we have currently connected? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a number in my head, but I'm not 100 percent sure. I will ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. In the current school year, there are 15 schools or 15 communities, I guess, that are part of the Northern Distance Learning program, and five more will be added for the 2020-2021 school year. Exactly which schools is still being determined.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In this part here, I know, when the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation started this pilot, I mean it started from teleconferencing on a phone, moved into video conferencing, and it is now what it is today. When the government decided to fund this, I remember, as the chair of BDIC, I sat there, and I sat with a bunch of DMs who were in a room, and I specifically said, so I'm going to say it here: I do not want the teachers to be teaching these courses from Yellowknife, because my experience with this program is that a lot of the teachers in the Beaufort-Delta, or even if it was in the South Slave or Hay River, a lot of those teachers come from the small communities before they come to the regional, because it's always, like, we'll get to Aklavik, or we'll get to Tuktoyaktuk, and then, in a year or two, there will be movement or a mat leave, then we'll get into Inuvik. They spend a lot of time in the communities supporting a lot of these kids. They know a lot of these kids, and they understand what they have.

I know that was one of the selling things, when we sold it to the DMs, the need to continue to teach it out of Inuvik because they have the experience. I just want to make sure that, by expanding this, that we're making sure that the instructors -- because if we have instructors there, you just have to have the support in the communities for those students. I just want to make sure that I can get that commitment here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. They used to do it for free, and now we're paying for it? Is that what I heard? That was just a plug. The model, I believe, is working in Inuvik. It's very successful. I don't know why we would change it, but I will ask the Minister of Education to make the commitment that it would stay in a program that's working. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I was just up in Inuvik at East Three, and I visited one of the classes that this is offered from. The experience and the knowledge that that staff has now from running this program for a number of years is invaluable, and I just had that discussion with my department the other day.

The whole point of this is to offer courses that would maybe not otherwise be offered, where there might not be enough students to take a course. In Yellowknife, that's not really an issue. If you have a Chemistry 30-1 course, it's going to be full. The

economy of scale is there. I think that, when we expand, it would be taught out of places like Hay River. It would be taught out of Inuvik. It would be taught out of places like Hay River.

We have to remember we are limited by the staff, the teachers that they have in Inuvik. If there is not, say, an art teacher for a year, then we cannot offer that through northern distance learning. The more participants we have, I think, the better and then the wider our offerings can be and we can perhaps accommodate, too, different scheduling. Different regions have different schedules. I do not see foresee this being taught out of Yellowknife. That is not the market. It's not free to set this up, either. There are infrastructure costs in every community that offers northern distance learning, and there would be no point to set it up in a school in Yellowknife, where it wasn't even needed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe I was not as clear. I was not saying that they would have a class here. I think it was keeping the teachers and the infrastructure to teach the small communities in Inuvik, and so I am happy. It kind of goes to our other, though I do not know if we have gotten there, the regional, making sure that stuff stays in the region and is not in Yellowknife, so I am glad of that.

The other one is, the same with my colleague, again, as a past regional chair of the High Arctic, every single board meeting that I sat at, it came up, "social passing." The inclusive schooling specialist hated it, and she would try to tell us the definition and ensure that we call it "inclusive schooling," but everybody outside who is not in that profession, it's "social passing," and any of us who have grown up in the North know that it has not always been like that, and so we don't understand it. The smaller communities even have a harder time understanding it. So I think, as we move kids along, and this is where I found that in the communities that were smaller, like in my region, the Tsiigehtchic, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, the smaller communities, they could not understand why we could not put high school teachers teaching high school courses, but they did not realize that, their kids, they were 16, 17, but they were not working at that level.

So I think we have a lot of work to do, and we try to do it as DEAs, but even with the DEAs, sometimes they had a hard time understanding. It's more of a comment. Under this, as part of your moving forward, it's going to be really important with the small communities outside: how do we communicate this, and how do we have the

teachers understand that they don't understand it, so, when they are working and they are moving kids along, they really need to have that dialogue, that "passing" and "placing" doesn't make sense to them. It's almost like you need to say: they did not pass because they did not meet, they are not at this grade level, so it's up to you. We will have the discussion. We can move them with their peers, or they could stay a year in this grade. You know, it's almost that basic, that I think we have to make sure that they understand because we use all these terms. I know, as a health provider, I use all these acronyms all the time. Even my notes to my husband and my kids, they finally got used to shorthand because that is all I am used to, so I think that is what I think we have to make sure we do when we are teaching that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely, communication is something we need to work on with this, and we need to work with our partners, the DEAs, on doing this. I want to be clear, though. I will not support this government just saying there will be no more social passing, period. There are children out there, and my niece is one of them who has disabilities to the point that she will never be sitting behind these chairs. She will have obstacles for the rest of her life. She is so proud she got a completion certificate, so she is holding that up. She cannot get a job, but she has that. So there are children, is what I am saying, Madam Chair, who, if you hold them back, will stay in grade kindergarten, JK, for the rest of their lives. Is that fair to our students? So there has to be an informed decision by parents. We need to do better communicating, but we also have to make sure that we are not losing the most marginalized of our children in this new way of doing business. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Next on my list, I have the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. When we did our briefings and just after we got sworn in, the stats kept playing in my head over and over, and it's almost like a nightmare now, but it's the rates for our high school graduation for Indigenous populations in small communities. The 2018 graduation rates are 33 percent in the small communities, and, well, that made me sad. You look right below that stat I have in front of me right now is there was really steady attendance rates right from kindergarten to grade nine. All of a sudden, for the key grades where your grades are on a transcript, it just significantly drops. I have in front of me from 82 percent attendance rates, all of

a sudden, it goes down to like 70 percent. That is pretty significant.

I am just wondering, that is a big disconnect, you know. Especially, I know in my riding, attendance is not great, and we are only have one or two people, sometimes no kids, graduating in a given school year, and a big part of that in my interviews of the teachers and them telling me is kids are not coming to school. We are trying to, some schools are trying to, be creative and innovative to try to get the kids to school. Like, you know, if you hit a certain attendance benchmark, you get a little prize or whatever. We have got to be innovative. I am just wondering if there are any sort of suggestions you have, Madam Premier, in trying to help out, get kids into the school, get the attendance rates up or maybe even the Minister could have some sort of programs or anything, sort of like incentives that they are working on right now. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. I do not think that that's really addressed in this area, but I will invite the Premier to respond to your question. Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the last Assembly, when I was the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the attendance was a huge issue for me, and the graduation rates, so I began conversations with all of the education bodies to actually look at addressing that. It's a scary topic for any education body because everybody is wondering: what do I do; is that my job, to actually get them there? It might be your job to actually get them there. I am not sure. So that is why, when we are talking about daycares and accessibility, that is why I have been, not just from this time, from the last government, I have been probably one of the strongest advocates to say we need hubs in our schools. We need to start bringing the parents there for daycare programs, for parenting programs, for cultural feasts, for sports events. The more that we can get parents engaged, and I don't know if that is the answer, but I am willing to try it, and I think we need to try whatever is possible. However, I also think that we need to be open, and again that goes back to my telling the Ministers: you need to engage with stakeholders; you need to work with your partners. Because that is only my idea. There are ideas out there, and I think that all of us have to be open to whatever ideas we can get to help our children succeed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Premier, for the response. Yes, I guess I was not too clear on that. That was not really

mentioned in here, but I think it's such a key thing and needs to be mentioned at some point in here. If we get these attendance rates up, even like by whatever benchmark, I guarantee we will see some better KPIs or key performance indicators come up, like graduation rates. I know that will happen. I am not sure how we are going to get there, but that is just a comment.

My next question is on distance learning and making sure there are opportunities available in all NWT communities. I know in mine riding that it's used a lot in Deninu K'ue but not so much in Lutselk'e. It's tough because the Internet is not that great there. When we have our Caucus retreat, we are going to get a good taste of that, so download your movies now. I think, to do distance learning, you need really good infrastructure like internet and a really fast internet connection to help to teach distance classes, so I am just wondering for those communities, because I know that not every community is going to have really quick Internet, so I'm just wondering if there are any solutions that the Premier might have for that. Mahsi cho, much.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think there is, and I don't remember which one now, but there is a priority in here, or a mandate, addressing the bandwidth within communities. It is specific. It's not for communities like Yellowknife where we have lots, although it'd be nice to have it quicker, I guess. I don't even watch TV. It's definitely for the smaller communities. Again, it has to be a partnership with the private market and also the federal government. We can't do this on our own. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Anything further, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh? Are there any further comments on "Increasing student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada?" Seeing none, we will go to "Enable seniors to age in place with dignity." Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the increased supports for seniors to stay in their homes, I know that they're mentioning more of a financial in the mandate, but I didn't really see more of a support like homecare or home support. Is that going to happen in this government so that we have after hours and weekend home support for those who do need it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Green):** Thank you. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Remembering this mandate, those

who were in the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly remember what the mandate looked like, and it became a huge document with a whole bunch of checklists, and I don't even think any of us really got back to it, it was so cumbersome. We've tried to keep this mandate more condensed, so it doesn't have every single thing that we're doing in it, or else it would become a checklist, and we wouldn't be creative any longer. I think we got federal government funding for homecare, so homecare will continue. Based on that, I don't know. The Minister of Health and Social Services, do you want to expand on that, or are you okay with that?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are some things the department is doing now. We have heard from many of our stakeholders about how our elders don't go to sleep at 5:00. There needs to be that aftercare, and that is something that our department is looking into because we feel the need of having, and right now, we're in the process of what does that look like. That is something our department is looking into. It will include many things like looking at the collective agreement on some of the staff who don't just work 8:30 to 5:00. What would it look like? It is something we've heard, and it is something that we definitely need to look into, because I agree, elders don't go to sleep at 5:00. Bingo's at 7:00 and finishes at 9:00. They need help getting tucked in, and all that stuff.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Although it doesn't say it in here and I know we get federal dollars, homecare dollars to enhance homecare, and I thank the Minister for her department that they're looking into this because I really feel, like Jackie said it before, we need to keep our elders, especially in our small communities. I see them coming to my community, and they go right into the long-term care. They don't need to. I think there's a study that shows that, to be in long-term care, you don't need to be there, it should be like the last year to year-and-a-half of your life. Some of our elders are in there 10 years. That's their residence because they need some after-hours care, and they just can't get it in the smaller communities. I look forward to that in this government, to seeing how that evolves. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will take that as a comment. I didn't

hear a question in it, but thank you for your confidence and affirming, as many of us believe, that we need to try to keep our elders in the home, and homecare is a part of that solution. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Are there other comments on "Enabling seniors to age in place with dignity?" Mr. Simpson from Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I've dealt with a few of those issues over the last few months. I guess I'm curious as to what we have for a budget. I guess it would be with the Housing Corporation. For seniors to age in place, we're looking at ramps. We're looking at possibly wider doorways. If there are stairs, we have to have something to assist going up and down the stairs. Access to cabinets. Safety if they fall. How much help does this government provide? Because I know, just as an example, if you put a ramp in place, is about probably anywhere between \$12- to \$20,000 outside. It depends whether it's a couple of feet or four feet. That's the question I have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do know that we have a few programs. Care and mobility, the Safe program, the CARE Major program, but I'll let the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation expand on that and how actually we actually support seniors to age in place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As we go forward and look at the programs that the Housing Corporation currently has, one of the things I'm interested in doing to support the seniors aging in place is I would like to enter into a partnership with Indigenous groups in smaller communities. I find, honestly, with the red tape that we have, and the paperwork that we have, these programs are very difficult to access. One of the things I would like to see is partnerships with the Indigenous groups that are in those communities. I want to try this, and I want them to put forward a business plan. If they're looking at there are 10 ramps that need to be built in Lutselk'e, I don't want to keep on accepting applications and program delivering for one program, and it costing X amount of dollars. I would like the bands or the Indigenous groups in those communities to apply, put forward a business plan, so they can say, "We're going to take care of these 10 ramps, and this is how much

it's going to cost," and we could just pay the band, and they can do the work. It's just a strategy that I'm thinking of, that we are talking about, but something to try to give funding to the communities so they can deliver the programs. I hope that answers your question. I could follow up with a list of senior programs that we do have within the Housing Corporation. I could forward that over to you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess you kind of referred more so if it's predominantly Indigenous community. In Hay River, it would be a little bit different. The other thing is you could put up maybe five ramps, but a month after, there might be somebody who falls down and is permanently disabled, and they're going to need a ramp. I guess the question was: how much funding do we have there available for this, and how accessible is it? It seems like there always seems to be red tape, or we have no money. That's usually the go-to answer for the department. How is this government going to change that and do what we say we are going to do? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Housing Corporation, I believe, has a budget of approximately \$100 million a year. It is quite substantial. It used to be \$80 million. I just want to make sure that she checks on that and gives you the right figure. I believe it used to be 80, but I think we got an increase in it. The second bullet within our mandates, if you look at that, it says that we are going amend the NWT Housing Corporation policies to allow more low-income seniors access to housing supports. That is in our mandate that we will do that. There is money available currently from low-income seniors. We need to make sure we keep our programs affordable. I would love to be able to provide universal supports to all seniors. Our demographic is aging quickly throughout the world. We need to make sure it is still affordable.

You can get care mobility funding I believe. I will have to correct it if I am wrong but it is up to \$10,000 per person. You can get the Safe program again up to 10,000. You can get CARE Major; I believe that is \$25,000 that you can access. Those programs also can be bundled. Our goal is to try to help as many seniors as possible. Like I said, there are programs already in place for low-income. Our mandate says that we will be reviewing the policies to help more low-income seniors stay in place. That is our commitment. Again, I can't stretch that to say that we will not be for all seniors or elders because

some can afford to buy their own ramps, et cetera. For example, when I retire from here, do I need to have the support? Probably not. Those are questions that we have to have. We need to take care of the most marginalized. The most marginalized are seniors, children, but seniors who are low-income. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess when I am reading this, on page 29, it says increase supports for seniors to stay in their homes and communities. It doesn't say seniors with money or seniors without money. I would like that clarified because what is the cost to keep somebody in their home, whether they have money or not. If they are going to stay in their home, what is the actual cost savings to this government if we help somebody stay in their home? If we spend \$10,000 or \$20,000 a year to keep them in their home, what is our cost if we have to house them in a public housing unit? I think there is probably a big cost difference there. I suspect that the department looked at it. I would like to know that number. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not sure if the department actually did a cost analysis to see what the cost would be. What I would like to say, Madam Chair, is that sometimes we have to agree to disagree. I think on this one, we have to agree to disagree. We don't have a lot of money. Our economy is bad. We know that there is not a Member here that does not know that and is not aware of that. We need to make sure that we focus our funding during this time towards our most marginalized. I beg to differ. I think that people who are making \$200,000 a year plus should be able to afford their own ramps. I bet that those people, elders, seniors who are making over \$200,000 will not stay in public housing if they can stay in their own homes. They will pay for that. Our goal is to provide services to as many low-income families, elders as we can. That is our commitment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree we disagree because, really at the end of the day, I look at these seniors, even if they have money. They have a choice: they can stay in the Territories or they can leave. If we don't give them the little bit of support even to help them and keep them here, that is \$35,000 roughly a year. If there are two of them, that is \$70,000 that we are getting from the feds. It just doesn't make sense to me to



say, "No, we can't really help them." They have been paying taxes and they have been contributing, as well, all their lives, just like a senior that maybe is not as well off. I see where you are coming from, but at the same time, I guess we kind of have to look at the bigger picture because those same seniors who maybe you are saying can afford something also contribute to the community, as well, after the fact. I think we have to look at that, and there is a cost associated with it. When we say we are going to put money into keeping seniors in their place and we don't really know what the benefit is, then maybe we don't really have to spend any money in keeping them in their place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Absolutely. It is not that I don't care about our aging population or seniors as a whole. The reality is that once we take care of our most marginalized people in society, once we can make sure that all low-income seniors have adequate housing, then we should be looking at expanding the income threshold. We have to start somewhere. A society is judged by how we treat our most marginalized populations. We have to keep that in consideration. When the economy is good or we have lots of money or we have dealt with all the low-income families who are needing services, then yes, we should be expanding. We have 22 priorities. Do I take the money out of one and put it into seniors who are making over \$200,000 a year? That is a question that we have to ask. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Time is up. We will move to Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In July of 2019, the Minister of Health and Social Services at that time tabled a report on seniors' access to Government of the Northwest Territories programs and services. This was a gap analysis study of what was offered to seniors. I am trying to understand, then, point number 1 on page 29. It sounds like a brand new gap analysis. Could the Premier please explain how this work is different than the work completed less than a year ago? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Honesty is a strength and a weakness. I will admit that I didn't know that there was a tabled report. I will commit that we will pull that tabled report, and all applicable Ministers who

have an interest in this will be directed to read that report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that commitment from the Premier. We don't have the time or resources to redo work, especially work that is so recently done. At the time this work was undertaken, what the NWT Seniors' Society asked us for was a seniors' strategy. Instead of a seniors' strategy, we got this gap analysis. Is there any possibility that, within the life of this Assembly, the government will undertake a seniors' strategy to roll up all of these services for seniors into one place? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to clarify on the last question, Mr. Goldney actually clarified for me and said that the report that was tabled last year was more of an internal document done with Seniors' Society, but we are looking to expand that actually. This gap analysis would be more working with other partners such as Indigenous governments, et cetera, that might not be part of one organization. We will be looking at that. As for doing the seniors' strategy, at this point, I don't want to commit to that. It is not that I don't care. It is that we have got huge amount of mandates that I am already worried about getting through. That might be a question on the floor, but at this point, I think I need to stick with the mandates that we've already adhered to. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. Going back to this report, it's 54 pages long. It was undertaken with a multi-stakeholder group who have responsibility for seniors. I feel that it is a very robust document, and as I have already said, I would really discourage the government from spending the time and money to do a second gap analysis. I really urge you to consider what you have in mind in light of the work that has already been done.

The next thing I want to ask about is helping to protect seniors from abuse and neglect. It's my understanding that the Government of Canada is looking at changes to the criminal code that will make elder abuse a specific crime. That's at that level, which we are not at, but I'm trying to understand what "Review and implement regulatory and service delivery changes required to protect seniors," I'm trying to understand what that point

means. Maybe if you have an example, it would help me to understand it better. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Just one minute. Sorry, Madam Chair. If my deputy minister can answer that question?

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

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize if I don't get this exactly right, because I think we're all a little tired at this point in the day. My recollection of those discussions was really recognition that we could be doing more with our programs to ensure that there are the appropriate safeguards in place. We have heard reports, for example, of programs related to the provision of home heating fuel subsidies and making sure that we have those designs so they're not as prone to potential abuse by family members who might be taking advantage of elders. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. That makes sense to me that there is some safeguarding around our own programming. I'm just going to finish here with a comment. It has been my experience from the elders in my life that their lives can change dramatically almost overnight. They can fall and break a hip, and they go from living independently to needing some kind of sustained care right away. There's just no time to lose. They end up going to hospital, which is a really expensive alternative for them, and also one that has a lot of risks attached to it.

What I'm asking for with respect to enabling seniors to age in place, in all respects, is a great deal of flexibility in the programming, so that when seniors' circumstances change, their needs are met on an expedited basis; that they don't end up having to wait months and years for a solution that fits their new circumstances. With all of the program offerings, the fact that life changes rapidly for seniors sometimes is something that needs to be considered so that we can respond to them as quickly as possible. I have nothing further. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I agree. We do need to be flexible in our programs, and I am hoping that that's kind of covered within service delivery changes required to

protect seniors, but also as Mr. Goldney had stated, we need to make sure that our seniors are safe from financial abuse. That's why one of the actions is to make a separate income assistance program specifically designed for seniors and people with disabilities. Again, they are some of our most marginalized populations. If the systems aren't working as they are, then we need to change the systems. We need to stop putting people in boxes and say, "You need to work with the system"; we need to change systems for people. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will move on to Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to increase in seniors home heating, we have been having a little bit of issues in regard to my home community with the fuel and the amount they're allotted. I'm just wondering, with the increases in that, people are wanting wood as well. Is the department willing to start looking at, when the increases come, being able to use it for wood or fuel? That's what I've been asked. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Because we have a new education Minister, it would be his decision. I will make the education Minister make a decision on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll look into it. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you. Your dad told me to ask you that question. No, thank you. For single-door units in Tuktoyaktuk, I have houses in Tuktoyaktuk that have one single door. No safety, no back door; you're going to jump out the window. I have some elders in units like that. With that being said, the safety aspect of that, housing should not be building any more single-door units and putting elders there. It's not safe. If you're going to do that with ramps and stuff, are you going to be doing that on some of the units that you do have? How does that work now? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will let the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation address whether she's going to do single doors or not anymore. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I would like to confirm that, right now, the Housing Corporation is reviewing that and looking at constructing units that are disability accessible. We would end up having ramps, and then widening the entrances and the doors. The one-door entrance units, that is something that I will also address, as well, too.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to creating the new income assistance program tailored to seniors and persons with disabilities, how does that work with increasing? It should not be decreased; it should be increased for that. That's happening in 2022. Is there another study going on? How is that going to work? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For creating a separate income assistance program tailored to seniors and people with disabilities, it's not meant to actually give more money or more services. It's actually meant to address some of the issues around like what we talked about, financial abuse that is happening, making sure that the income support program is meeting their needs, do they need to report every month, if you've got mobility issues. Those are things that they need to be looking at. It's about accessibility of the programming versus actually increasing the amount of supplement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to that, I think there should be an increase looked at, because of the cost of living. These individuals who are elderly, and people with disabilities, do not have the opportunity to work extra, if they're allowed to. If you're going to do that, I think that the program established should be monitored in regard to increasing, because the cost of living in the North is only getting higher and higher with the cost of food and just the cost of

living as a whole. If they're going to do this, they should be increasing in regard to helping our disability and our elders. Because, right now, if you're not employed, everybody goes to nanak's and dadak's, your grandparents' house, to go eat and they're not going to say no to you. These are the ones who are hurting the most in regard to that, because they get their pension cheques and, you know, it's tough to see in regard to that because they're utilizing all their monies just for food, to help their family. Everybody is like that. You know that, Madam Chair, in regard to how we treat our families back home. So I think something like that, the Minister should really take a look at it; increasing for our elders. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point, I'm not going to make a commitment that we will actually specifically increase more money for elders or disabilities within our Income Support Program, because, I'm trying to remember back, now, I believe, and it is late and I am tired, but I do believe that it was only a couple of years ago, if not, that we actually increased it. I think it went from \$300 a month to \$405 a month for people with disabilities and Income Support. So, again, we have a lot of priorities. It was just increased, so we need to make sure that we can spread the money around as appropriate. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I don't think the Premier has been shopping in our local communities. For \$405, you probably get about two or three bags, if you're lucky. I think that has to be looked at, in regard to that. That's just a comment to that, but my next question is the 25 beds that you have in the Inuvik long-term care facility, already, and you're looking at another 44, so that's going to take it up to, how much, 48. Wow. I need some of those beds, Madam Premier. The thing is, what we have to do is aging, everybody in our communities, I have of my friends who watch their parents until they're 99 and 100 years old, and sacrifice themselves to take care of their mum or their dad. I think aging in place, people, like I said, I brought this up a few times, Madam Chair, in regard to people who are shipped out to Inuvik. The only time you'll see them is at medical. The travel is over \$2,000 for some of those return tickets, just for Sachs Harbour to Inuvik, or Paulatuk, or Ulukhaktok. You'll never see the person who is in long-term care unless you're going for medical. I think something has to be done in regard to working with the community, and that's what I'm trying to do.

Because, for me, seeing all those beds in Inuvik, it's good for Inuvik, and the jobs are going to be good; I have no problem with that, but, at the end of the day, I want my elders, because, as Inuvialuit, we take care of our elders, and it's really disheartening to see family, when they're being pulled away and they know it, and the only time they're going to come home is in a box. That's how it works. That's got to change; the mentality of that has got to change. If we could build six beds for long-term in Ulukhaktok and maybe four in Paulatuk, same thing in Tuktoyaktuk; but the thing is, again, it's really tough to see. Like I said, I have nothing against Inuvik in regard to getting those beds, but at the end of the day Nunakput needs to take care of our own elders.

As an Inuvialuit beneficiary and working with the Inuvialuit Development Corporation, our government wants to work together with local community governments to do stuff like this. I really need this for my communities, Madam Chair, and within the next four years I'm going to have it. That's what I want from our Premier, and the commitment. I know you're going to say, no, we can't do that, we're broke; but you have to find money. We're finding money for Stanton. You're finding money for all these other big projects for you guys. Thirty-three communities; we need help. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a heartbreaking story that you share, and I understand the need to be with your family members. I've also got aging relatives who I love dearly. If it was as simple, Madam Chair, as just saying, "I will give you five beds and you can take care of your own in your community," I would do that right now. I would go down to Quality Furniture, or wherever, a Brick and buy five beds, out of my own pocket, and give it to the Member. The issue is not about the beds. The issue is one of our priorities: we don't have enough staff, health service staff, so one of our priorities is increasing our health professionals by 20 percent. We don't even have the staff to meet the needs of the buildings that we have now, so to expand on a program that we're not doing an adequate job with currently, is that best practice, Madam Chair? That is the question we need to ask. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. I will go to the Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm very happy to hear discussions around a seniors' strategy being brought up, and also the seniors home heating fuel, so it's nice to know that we're all

on similar pages on this side of the House. My first two are comments, and then I have a question. My first comment is just in regard to the identifying gaps, and that being in summer 2021 that is our targeted timeline for that. I feel like a year and a half to just identify where we're not doing enough seems like not enough. Then, also, in terms of "amend NWT Housing Corporation policies to allow more low-income seniors to access housing supports," and not starting that until summer 2021 doesn't seem like enough to me, as well, but those are just comments. My question is: the mandate item of amending NWT Housing Corporation policies to allow more low-income seniors to access housing supports, how can we see that the policies are amended if we can't see the policies anywhere online, and is the Premier or the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation willing to post the policies online right now so that we can see them as they stand right now? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That would be a commitment the NWT housing Minister would have to address, so I'll turn it over to the Minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a commitment I am going to make, because we are reviewing that right now and I want those policies online so people can access them themselves. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That makes me very happy to hear. So I'm happy, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I was really happy to see this one, and word it the way we did; dignity is so important. Just before the session we were downtown here in Yellowknife and I saw an elderly lady, it was just busy, moving really slow, and I stopped my vehicle. I didn't care if people were ticked off behind me. I stopped my vehicle, I got out, and I helped this lady cross the street, and she had a handkerchief on, slow, and had a cane. I took my time and I talked with her, I joked with her. She thanked me; she spoke really good English. She still had a little accent, but she

said, "Mahsi cho," and I said, "It's all good. You're going to be good for another 30 or 40 years." Of course, she laughed really loud and got a good laugh out of it. That's how you have to treat your elders. You have to joke with them and talk with them, and make them feel important. To me, that's what's important, to treat them with dignity. That's the way I operate, and any time I see, when our elders are having any sorts of barriers, it just angers me; it motivates me, I guess. I want to try to do as much as I can.

One of the things, too, with the policies I see here, there are changing policies with the NWT Housing Corporation. For example, there are still a lot of elders having lots of troubles. There are still a lot of mobility issues. I brought some up in the House, and I know that the Minister from the Housing Corporation wanted me to ask some questions. I still haven't asked. I just want to let that sit for a little bit, because it's important. I want to give a lot of departments, let the Ministers think. We have to treat our elders like royalty, like gold; that's what they deserve. They brought many of us up, and that's how we should treat them.

Going back to what I was saying about many policies, I'd like to see a little bit more of that. I know that we made a change for NWT Housing Corporation to help with small businesses, but I want to see a little bit more for getting more policies and getting more funding to help out with mobility, for example. I don't know what that's going to look like. I know that we're under some fiscal constraints, but in these areas, I think it's really important, especially mobility. It helps; if you help elders around their homes be mobile around the home, it will keep them in their homes longer, so we don't have them ship them off to places like Inuvik. It's not right.

So I just want to see if the Premier or the Minister would be committed. I want to hear what kind of commitments they're going to make in terms of changing policies. I want to hear specifically what kinds of policies they're going to change. Mahsi cho, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll let the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation address the policy changes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Madam Premier. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, I don't want to display a commitment or

specific policies that we are reviewing, because I want to look at them all. I know that there is quite a bit, but then I need them to meet the needs of the Northwest Territories and I want to work with the programs that we have, because I do hear the Members. Our programs are hard to access. So, going forward, as we progress within our department, I will inform the Member of the policy changes we are making going forward. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, I'm getting a little bit fatigued. I have nothing further, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. Are there any further questions on "Enabling seniors to age in place with dignity?" Seeing none, committee, seeing the time, what is the wish of committee, Mr. Norn?

**MR. NORN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Chair rise and report progress. Mahsi cho.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? Put your hands up; I can't see you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness from the Chamber.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I have the report of the 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 17-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2019-2020, and Tabled Document 12-19(2), 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and would like to report that consideration of Tabled Document 17-19(2) is concluded and that the House concur with those estimates, and that the appropriation bill based thereon 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:** Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Member for Great Slave. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 24, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 27, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

### Orders of the Day

---ADJOURNMENT

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Thursday, February 27, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

The House adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Replies to the Budget Address (Day 3 of 7)
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Motions
18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. 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 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day