



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

2nd Session

Day 22

19th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Pages 825 - 844

The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.
(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge
(Deh Cho)

Ms. Caitlin Cleveland
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Paulie Chinna
(Sahtu)
Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for Homelessness

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

Ms. Julie Green
(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Jackie Jacobson
(Nunakput)

Mr. Rylund Johnson
(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Ms. Frieda Martselos
(Thebacha)

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

Mr. Steve Norn
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
(Frame Lake)

Ms. Lesa Semmler
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Rocky Simpson
(Hay River South)

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

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

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

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

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerks
Mr. Glen Rutland
Ms. Kim Wickens

Committee Clerks
Mr. Michael Ball
Ms. Cynthia James
Ms. Jennifer Franki-Smith

Law Clerks
Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Ms. Alyssa Holland

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	825
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	825
42-19(2) – Setting the Stage for the Finalizing Budget 2020 (Wawzonek)	825
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	826
COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts on Small Businesses Operating Outside of the Northwest Territories (Simpson)	826
Community Alcohol Restrictions in Behchoko (Lafferty)	827
Border Check Point Vehicle Crossing (Bonnetrouge)	827
Marine Transportation System Shipping Season (Jacobson)	827
Wage Top-up Program and Minimum Wage (O'Reilly)	828
Enforcement of Chief Public Health Officer's Orders in Apartment Buildings (Green)	828
Business Advisory Council and Support for Small Businesses (Cleveland).....	829
On-going Issues Facing the Northwest Territories (Semmler)	829
Fort Smith Regional Airport (Martselos).....	830
Lack of Support for Tourism Operators (Norn).....	830
Guaranteed Basic Income (Johnson).....	837
ORAL QUESTIONS	832
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	843
NOTICES OF MOTION	843
8-19(2) – Revocation of Appointment of the Honourable Member for Great Slave to the Executive Council	843
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	844
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	844
ORDERS OF THE DAY	844

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, May 27, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-19(2):
SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE FINALIZING
BUDGET 2020

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: When the Legislative Assembly shut down in March due to the COVID health state of emergency, the Government of the Northwest Territories was well into its annual budgeting process. As we continue that discussion, we are also moving forward to other financial matters to be discussed during this sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic do not change the Government's need to continue providing programs and services. At the same time, we have been responding to the immediate needs of the Northwest Territories economy, communities, businesses, and residents as a result of the health restrictions.

Since the 2020-2021 budget was introduced, the government's fiscal situation has worsened as the COVID-19 pandemic has created declines in own source revenues and increases in expenditures while the government has developed and launched a variety of economic relief packages. The significance of the negative effects of the fiscal framework will be better known as the Emerging Wisely plan is further implemented.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate that Canada has provided \$23 million in support to the GNWT response that will partially offset costs directly related to COVID-19. Right now, departments are responding to COVID-19 in ways that have not been included in their budgets through existing appropriations. These include the establishment of Emergency Management Operations, which are

likely to be ongoing for some time; the roll-out of managed alcohol; check stops at borders; monitoring of incoming air traffic passengers; self-isolation centers in regional centers; and homelessness supports. The Department of Finance is working with all the departments and public agencies to track all of the incremental costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, the Government of the Northwest Territories has spent almost \$7.9 million in COVID-related costs, and we project an additional \$31.1 million will be needed, of which \$11.3 million is allocated to the health response.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has also provided targeted assistance to various sectors in the territory including funding for childcare providers, airport landing fee holidays, airport lease fee holidays, and increased income assistance which to date totals over \$30 million.

I believe we must work continue to work creatively, use further assistance to advance the 19th Legislative Assembly's mandate. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting health measures being implemented across the planet have thrown the global economy into the economic equivalent of a 100-year storm. Given the economic disruption, and despite all immediate government actions to support the economy, things will not be the same when the COVID-19 pandemic health measures have lifted. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a responsibility to support the recovery as quickly as possible or much of the private sector may simply not have the ability to recover. We need to act quickly and strategically to invest in the future economy and in all of our residents and businesses in a way that reflects the core values held by Northwest Territories residents and builds on the priorities of the 19th Legislative Assembly. It is my expectation that, through the structure of the Emerge Stronger dialogue and process, we will be able to gather ideas and proposals that reflect needs from across regions, communities, and sectors in order to take responsive and responsible funding decisions.

Mr. Speaker, departments have provided high-level assessments of COVID-19 impacts on the mandate priorities and associated actions that indicate that a lot of the mandate items can be fulfilled by the end

of the 19th Legislative Assembly with few delays or issues. As we adjust to a post-COVID environment, I look forward to working with all Members to keep the mandate largely aligned with the economic and social recovery by recognizing priorities that may no longer be relevant and embracing new priorities that may have emerged.

As part of the 2020-2021 budgeting process, a fiscal strategy has been presented that spans the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Part of this strategy identified \$25 million to fund mandate priorities over the next four years. This funding is proposed to remain in place and the supplementary appropriation to be considered this sitting will include an advancement of immediate funding to begin work on several initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, back in February, I indicated we would hold public discussions on the next budget as soon as possible so that the Assembly would have the benefit of residents' priorities in advance of finalizing the four-year business plans. These plans and increased program evaluation, among several policy initiatives, are intended to lead to governing so that "the Northwest Territories is a premier destination to live, with a positive economic future; strong educational opportunities for our children; quality health care; a respectful approach to honouring lands, water, and wildlife; and collaborative relationships with Indigenous governments based in a commitment to reconciliation." We want to understand how residents interpret what is essentially our mission statement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not changed this commitment. Over the summer months of 2020, supported by the Department of Finance, I will endeavour to meaningfully engage with residents of the Northwest Territories to determine their views on a variety of topics related to how and why the Government of the Northwest Territories spends money. Of particular interest to me, given the drastic changes that have taken place as a result of COVID-19, is how residents and stakeholders think the government should change the way we do business and what measured risks they would support the government to take to aid with the economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTS ON SMALL BUSINESSES OPERATING OUTSIDE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to discuss the matter of NWT small businesses conducting cross-border services who may now lose out on contracts due to the fact they are required to self-isolate upon their return.

A real-life example would be a business that currently has a contract to pick up vehicles in the NWT and deliver them to a location in Alberta. The contract this business has is with the southern company. This service is intermittent and requires the business owner, upon his return, to self-isolate in Hay River, while his home base is Fort Simpson. The consequence of this is the loss of 14 days of business and revenue.

The contract is now coming up for renewal, and the NWT company will most likely not be invited to bid. This is due to the fact they are required to self-isolate upon their return and thus not able to follow through with timely service due to the stringent self-isolation requirements in the NWT. The contract will now go to a southern service provider, who is allowed to come into the NWT, retrieve a vehicle, turn around, and go back south with no requirement to self-isolate. This puts our northern businesses at a disadvantage.

This scenario is not only affecting this particular company. It is also affecting other northern companies in similar positions. These homegrown northern companies are now considering moving a good portion of their operation to Alberta in order to keep their businesses afloat. The move to Alberta would remove the requirement to self-isolate in the NWT, which is costing these companies both contracts and loss of revenue.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the reasoning behind the self-isolation requirement, but we also need to use a common-sense approach to some of our decisions.

We in the NWT are fortunate to have some very competent people in our health department, Dr. Kami Kandola being one of them, and I am sure she, with her team and working with other departments, can come up with a solution to this issue and help save some of our small businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COMMUNITY ALCOHOL RESTRICTIONS IN
BEHCOKO

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Behchoko has issued a temporary ban on all liquor in the community. It was a response to an alarming upsurge in bootlegging. The community prohibition supplements the territorial government's own COVID-19-related liquor restrictions implemented on April 16th. My understanding is that that prohibition ceases tomorrow, May 28th.

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, today, we know there have been all sorts of problems and issues in the communities related to drugs and alcohol in most of the communities and my community, because we all know that we have access to travel, and we also know of the bootleggers in the communities. How can we provide services to the community so that we would be able to ban bootleggers? Much later on in the day, I would be able to then ask the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation ends].

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BORDER CHECK POINT VEHICLE CROSSING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mr. Speaker, the Chief Public Health Officer prohibited all travel into the Northwest Territories to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. This was March 21st. There were exceptions to allow persons deemed as essential services in and out of the territory, such as long-haul truckers, health and social services providers, federal and territorial wildlife officers, peace officers, forest firefighters, and the list goes on and on.

The Emerging Wisely document, the phased approach to lifting restrictions, was aptly introduced, and phase 1 was in effect in time for the May long weekend. I know many NWT residents were out in full force all over our highway system. This was great to see.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to run some numbers of the vehicle crossings and occupants at the border checkpoint. I believe this was in Enterprise, which is quite the distance from the actual NWT-Alberta border, which is at the 60th parallel. This information was taken from the Deputy Minister of MACA's report of May 25th:

- On Wednesday, May 20th, there were 46 transports, 11 private vehicles, with 13 occupants total;

- Thursday, May 21st, 33 transports, 14 private vehicles, with 23 occupants;
- Friday, May 22nd, there were 22 transports, 12 private, with 19 occupants;
- Saturday, May 23rd, 22 transports, 26 private vehicles, with 43 occupants;
- Sunday, May 24th, there were 19 transports, 22 private vehicles, with 43 occupants.

I would also like to note that, on Sunday, May 10th, which was Mother's Day, there were 57 private vehicles, with a total of 101 occupants. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SHIPPING
SEASON

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to bring up the MTS sea lift for Nunakput for the 2020 season.

Mr. Speaker, in this House before, I brought up that the sea lift for Nunakput is a vital lifeline in remote coastal communities in my riding. The sea lift gives families the annual chance for lower cost of food, fuel, and building materials shipped into our communities, and also vehicles and snowmobiles. It's more cost effective shipping by sea lift than by air. This is even more important, Mr. Speaker, with the economic impact of COVID-19.

In 2016, Northern Transportation Company Limited was out of business. GNWT purchased the assets, and the Department of Infrastructure took over the company. They started shipping up and down the Mackenzie River. The barges could only reach our communities, Mr. Speaker, when the ice was gone. This means: start the boat, Mr. Speaker, right now. Start getting it ready in regards to our communities and the shipping.

The GNWT has one chance every year to get this job done. Those years, the sailing was a disaster for MTS. It was unable to deliver for Paulatuk. They blamed the high water and the ice blockage, which happens on the ocean side, comes in and out. They are supposed to be resupplying Sachs Harbour. Actually, they are returning from private contracts. That is what was the delay. We can't have that this year.

It cost the former government \$3.9 million in flying essential goods to the communities that didn't have salvage season for the residents. Materials and equipment stayed on the boat for a year, and the

materials were rotten, mould. The barge had another year to arrive into the community. When the materials did arrive, again, they spoiled on the barge.

Mr. Speaker, Nunakput has not forgotten the 2018 sailing season. I want to repeat that so it reminds the Minister to keep an eye on that, to make sure MTS is on the ball and ready to start shipping north when ice is cleared. This is so important to our constituents up in my riding. The sea lift schedule is posted on the MTS website. The schedule of Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk cargo acceptance is July 12th, Sachs Harbour, August 2nd to the 14th.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok, their last shipping acceptance date for cargo in Hay River and Tuktoyaktuk is July 12th. Sachs Harbour is the 2nd of August to the 14th. The Ulukhaktok barge is expected between July 29th and the 16th. For Paulatuk, the barge is expected between August 6th and the 19th. For Tuktoyaktuk, we have the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway. Plus, we have the shipping for out of Hay River July 10th, expected July 24th. Remaining two barges, last of the year, cargo acceptance for the community of Tuktoyaktuk is July 23rd for those barges, arriving August 6th and 10th, respectively. These dates subject to change, but keep an eye on MTS website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WAGE TOP-UP PROGRAM AND MINIMUM WAGE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. To support low-income workers during the pandemic, the Department of Finance has implemented a wage top-up program. NWT workers aged 15 or over and earning less than \$18 per hour are eligible. Program covers April 1 to July 31, 2020. Workers who receive commissions or tips must include those amounts as part of their income for the purpose of the program. Students who, as part of their school curriculum, are employed in the work program and those who are self-employed are not eligible.

Employers are required to apply and receive one-time compensation of \$50 per eligible employee, and their portion of Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance costs for the top-up will also be covered under the program. A grant is paid to

each business that successfully applies based on the hours worked for each employee during a given month. The employer is required to include in the employees' paycheque a lump-sum wage to top-up payment in the business's next available payroll cycle. Total cost for the four-month program is estimated at \$6.2 million, with the federal government covering \$4.74 million or about 75 percent.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, I support the wage top-up program as it can support many of the service sector workers who provide key programs and services and will assist in economic recovery. However, the need for this program is the clearest sign that our minimum wage is too low. Thirteen dollars and forty-six cents per hour is not enough to get by on, and it is no surprise to many Northerners.

In March 2019, Alternatives North released research reports that calculated each parent in a family of four would have to earn \$23.95 hourly in Yellowknife, \$24.75 in Hay River, and \$23.78 in Inuvik for a decent standard of living.

This government uses a multi-stakeholder process to review the minimum wage. Committee has two government reps, one of whom shares two employee representatives, two from employers, and one from a social agency, two finance employee service consultants. The committee's 2014 and 2018 reports are almost verbatim. The report observed raising the minimum wage will have "little bearing on many Northerners living in poverty because fewer than 1,121,000 workers the NWT make less than \$15 an hour." I will have questions later today for the Minister of Finance on how we can keep the wage top-up program as the floor for new NWT minimum wage. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENFORCEMENT OF CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER'S ORDERS IN APARTMENT BUILDINGS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about issues relating to the enforcement of the Chief Public Health Officer's orders in apartment buildings. I have heard many complaints from constituents about orders not being followed despite the creation of the enforcement task force at the beginning of April.

Mr. Speaker, most of the complaints are about people gathering inside who are not part of the same household. About two-thirds of the constituents in Yellowknife Centre live in

apartments and condos, so their neighbours' behaviour has a direct impact on them. Here is a sample of what I heard.

On April 13, one constituent said, "I don't know what's the point in all my email and calls to this GNWT line if no one is actually going to do anything. For the past four days, I've been calling about unit 106. In the past two hours, I've kicked out nine people, and there are people in and out of there every three minutes."

On April 15, another constituent in a different apartment building said, "Why is it okay for the neighbours to have people coming and going non-stop and partying non-stop when we are all facing something bigger than ourselves? This type of negligence shouldn't be tolerated. The amount of traffic has not slowed down here since this illness has began."

These complaints highlight a grey area in enforcement. Landlords, including public housing, seem to be reluctant to stop the parties. Without their say so, bylaw won't go into apartment building for noise complaints. I've been told the RCMP aren't responding to complaints about ignoring the public health orders. That leaves the enforcement task force. On this front, they have been missing in action.

Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the enforcement task force has focused on public education about the health orders. That's a good idea since we are all new to this kind of lockdown. But what happens when people ignore and flout the orders? The enforcement task force has access to progressive sanctions for not following the public health orders, but no one in the NWT has received anything more substantial than a written warning. While that action may be adequate in most situations, it is not working in the Yellowknife Centre apartment buildings.

Mr. Speaker, here's why this issue matters: many of my constituents in apartment buildings are vulnerable to this virus because they have pre-existing conditions. They are trying hard to keep themselves safe, but in some cases their neighbours are undermining their efforts. The parties believe there aren't any consequences, and shockingly, it seems they are right. I will have questions for the MACA Minister. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL AND SUPPORT
FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, it has not been lost on me that, had this pandemic occurred a year ago, I would have been amongst those northern business owners facing little option for financial support and the threat of closing my business.

Being a business owner in the North is a challenge. In the wake of this pandemic, our small-to-medium business owners are struggling to keep staff on payroll while incurring close to no billable hours. The federal Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy does not subsidize related employees. This means that, in the North, where so many of us are family, many northern businesses don't qualify. While northern businesses do not have to pay their WSCC premiums today, they are, incurring an eventual debt for staff at home.

On March 20, this government released its first economic relief package. It offered loans through the BDIC, along with freezes to fees and payments owed to the GNWT. On the same day, the GNWT promised the business community a Business Advisory Council to identify gaps in financial supports and to plan how the government could build up our struggling business community. It is now 10 weeks later, Mr. Speaker, and this council still does not exist.

Phase 1 of the GNWT's Emerging Wisely plan is allowing businesses to gradually reopen. Some businesses will find that, because of restrictions for public safety, it actually costs more to operate than the income being generated. Some will find they are cut off from federal supports once they start generating an income, even though that income is not yet at a liveable level.

Mr. Speaker, this fall, a second wave of COVID is expected. Businesses may need to again close their doors, so now is the time to get a plan in place. Around the world, local economies have a vigorous interest in building resilience to shock as they regenerate, a silver lining in the midst of this pandemic, but, to begin building resilience, we need to make it to tomorrow. We didn't start our containment phase willing to lose people to COVID-19. We cannot start our business recovery plan willing to lose long-time northern businesses.

We have seen great innovation from many northern businesses, and I commend them for displaying creativity in chaos, but not every business has the resources or ability to make it on their own. Local business owners have been there to support our sports teams, help when tragedy hits our communities, and offer the services we rely on. They are the backbones of our communities, and now, more than ever, they need our support and the leadership of the GNWT. This government must do more on an urgent basis to help our local businesses.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ON-GOING ISSUES FACING THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we as a government deal with the COVID pandemic, it will and is becoming very clear that we will need more resources to address the needs of our residents. People will look to the government to help them during these trying times.

While we face this pandemic and all that it involves, we also have other ongoing issues here in the North. Some of the issues have been called a crisis. I'm speaking of issues like housing; health of our people; the cost of living; our children in care; protection of our vulnerable women and children; infrastructure needs, just in the town of Inuvik alone; and economic development, as just some examples that my constituents bring forward.

Mr. Speaker, while we are not in normal times as a result of the pandemic, unfortunately, some of the other issues that I just mentioned are far too common and normal for my community and for the communities of the North. It's my opinion that these issues of things like housing and our children in care do not need to be considered normal, and we as a government need to do as much as we can to ensure that Canada understands that the issues we face are not normal, but at times in fact are unacceptable. We must find ways to ensure that the federal government invests not only in normal operational issues, but invests in the resources that we need, as a government, to address these issues we face and what some people consider normal.

I will have questions for the Premier later on how we can better access federal resources to deal with our issues, because the investment dollars that I'm speaking about, just for my community alone, will require a massive federal investment, and that is long overdue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I delivered my response to the Commissioner's opening address, where I outlined my priorities for the 19th Assembly. In today's Member's statement, I am going to expand on one of these priorities, the Fort Smith Regional Airport.

In my speech yesterday, I was very clear in what I and the constituents of Thebacha want to see done with the Fort Smith Regional Airport. I will reiterate that what needs to be done is the following:

- a new and improved terminal to be built;
- the runway to be restored to its original width;
- all LED lights to be properly reinstalled and in working order; and
- ensure the stakeholders of the town of Fort Smith are properly involved and consulted during the entire process.

Mr. Speaker, one of the key reasons that I decided to run for MLA in the first place was to help rebuild Fort Smith in order to correct errors such as that which was done to our airport. I have spoken about this issue multiple times during this Assembly already, but people don't seem to understand the genuine sentiment that the people of Fort Smith have about this issue. I spoke to many of my constituents about this airport issue since these changes were done, and everybody agrees that Fort Smith was wrong with those changes to the LED lights, some of which don't even work, along with the bizarre decision to reduce the runway width.

All of the constituents of Thebacha want to see better and proper improvements made to our airport. Our community is long overdue for a new airport terminal, given we have been using the same terminal since 1969. Plus, considering the damage done to our economy from COVID-19, this type of infrastructure project is a great opportunity to help spur economic growth within our community, as well as the broader South Slave region and the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, until I start seeing results on this issue, I will continue to bring this issue up and fight for the betterment of Fort Smith. I assure you, as long as I am a Member of this House, this will not be the last time you will hear me talk about this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LACK OF SUPPORT FOR TOURISM
OPERATORS

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This week is National Tourism Week, from May 24th to the 31st of this month, and I wish I could stand here today to celebrate the incredible success of my constituents, the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation, the LKDFN, for

their leadership and successful acquisition of the Frontier Fishing Lodge, which has operated for 40 years on the doorstep and has a global reputation as one of the premier fishing lodges in the Northwest Territories, but unfortunately, I can't.

Mr. Speaker, in December 2019, the LKDFN purchased the lodge and the entire business, including the operating company, of all its assets. The community intends the lodge to be the gateway to the Thaidene Nene, drawing tourists from all around the world to discover the beauty of the East Arm and the Dene way of life. They see the lodge as critical infrastructure that will become an economic engine for the community, and one of the primary employers in a village that already suffers from high unemployment.

However, in my opinion, the GNWT is standing in its way. The only thing that has changed is the business ownership, yet the GNWT has required the LKDFN to apply for brand new permits to extend the operation of the lodge. Over the past few months, the LKDFN has sought and obtained the transfer of its tour operator's licence and has obtained conditional health and occupancy permits. In the process of obtaining a remote lodge liquor permit, the LKDFN was advised that it would also require a MACA business licence. Previously, a lodge required a business licence, as remote lodges until recently had been regulated by ITI under the Tourism Act. However, changes to the liquor regulations now appear to require MACA to issue business licences to remote lodges. After more than two months of unresponsiveness and delay, MACA has informed LKDFN it needs to develop new policies in order to issue the licence. Lutselk'e and the Frontier Lodge are apparently the first remote tour operation subjected to these new policy requirements in obtaining a MACA licence.

Mr. Speaker, instead of granting the LKDFN a temporary exemption to operate while MACA develops these new policies, MACA's Office of the Fire Commissioner has instead advised the LKDFN that it is cancelling the temporary occupancy permits for the lodge that were previously issued. I am seeking unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Marsi cho, colleagues, Mr. Speaker. Simply put, MACA is withholding critical permits from the LKDFN in the middle of a pandemic that is already having a devastating effect on our tourism industry. The effect of this decision is obvious; the lodge cannot open for business, and the LKDFN will have received no revenue. Something has got to give, and I sincerely hope that this does not result in a defunct business in the NWT.

I want to take a quote here from the website for the National Tourism Week. It says, "Tourism matters, and Canada cannot afford to lose another tourism sector." I think I will take that a little bit further. The Northwest Territories cannot afford to lose any of its tourism operators. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the MACA Minister later on.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this House, we have the honour of debating and discussing some of the larger policy ideas. One you will hear me speak about over the next three years is a universal basic income.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that, despite the fact that I talk about this large, very lofty program that would change the nature of government and society, and it's a program I fundamentally believe in, I don't believe, since we're having that debate, that all other conversations around social assistance programs are just kind of put on hold. One of my concerns is that I recognize that a universal basic income would take, probably, ten years and millions of dollars and require support from the federal government, but that doesn't mean we can't start now. What happens is while we are having that much larger debate, we don't set ourselves up for success in starting small now.

I want to clarify some of the terms that often get thrown around in this world. A universal basic income is the proposal you give everyone money every month. You've seen different jurisdictions do this. It can be \$1,000 a month. It can be \$3,000 a month. It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor. Such a policy would cost millions of dollars and be a complete transformation on how government operates.

Then, there's a guaranteed basic income, not necessarily universal, which would guarantee an amount of income to every person in the Northwest Territories. What that amount is, is up for debate. It could be \$12,000 a year. They could say, no one in the Northwest Territories is going to make less than \$12,000 a year, and it doesn't matter if you don't do your proactive step, or you miss your income assistance program. We're just guaranteeing that.

Then, there's a guaranteed livable income which actually kicks that up to an amount so you're not just squaloring away in poverty, say, \$36,000 a year.

There are a variety of options, but meanwhile, while we have this debate in this House, I want the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to be picking away at some smaller non-controversial changes. I believe we could start a guaranteed basic income pilot project tomorrow. We could take ten people out of income assistance who have been on it for years. We could guarantee them a liveable income for a year, and it would probably cost us less than a half million dollars to do it, and it might in the long run actually save us some money. I would like departments to start small, to look at the next smallest policy change they can make that gets us to that bigger picture. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, returns to oral question. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 233-19(2):

MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SHIPPING SEASON

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. I would like the Minister to assure that everything is going as planned for the MTS shipping season, the 2020 shipping season, without any delays. Yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can commit that everything is on track with MTS for this upcoming season. We are looking for new ways to provide reliable community resupply and ensure that we are gaining our maximum value. We will have the four double-hulled barges delivered to Tuktoyaktuk. August 12th or 15th, it will show up in Tuktoyaktuk. We were the first to be approved under the Oceans Protection Plan on that. This one is a 75/25 percent funding. The seven other projects that we have in under that plan will all be at 100 percent funding. We are looking at the changes. We are reviewing at the moment the changes that we could be making to MTS and the structure of the organization. We are not at a stage yet where we have determined what that is going to look like, but it is generally viewed that creating a Crown corporation would provide the maximum benefit and flexibility going forward.

A marine business consultant has recently been engaged to review and build upon the previous work and make recommendations of viable options

as to the business structure that is best suited for the way that we do business in the North. In addition to the four double-hulled showing up this year, we have the two double-hulled pre-owned barges that we purchased in 2017. We have two new 1500 series conversions. MTS will have a total of eight double-hulled fuel barges. We are looking at new markets. I think I will conclude there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: For the cargo acceptance dates, are those finalized at this time on the website, just to make sure that the people have proper notification in regards to ordering their food and their trucks or building materials for the community? Also, with our government purchasing bulk fuel from Edmonton rack price because the prices up there, they only change once a year when the barge comes in. Right now, at the pumps here, 97 cents. Back home, it's \$1.51 and it only gets higher, so to try and get cheaper fuel into the communities.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Yes, the website is updated, and things are finalized. We do encourage people to continue to check the website regularly as things do change, and if the situation were to change. We are looking at our fuel supply model. That has definitely been something that has been raised with us. We did have a discussion yesterday about that. I believe the Member had to leave. We recognize that we need to look at our model and ensure that it does meet the efficient supply and resupply of the communities. As well, too, to make sure we have some reliability and redundancy within the models. We are definitely evaluating the fuel supply model.

MR. JACOBSON: Could I ask the Minister to have a commitment from her in regards to advise us if there's any delays or anything with MTS for the outlying communities, just to make sure that the department stays on top of it? They are our lifeline in our small communities that I represent, and we have to make sure that any potential problems be rectified as soon as possible. Just a commitment from the Minister and her department?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Yes. I will commit to that personally and notifying the Member, and the other relevant Members, every time there is a delay in the resupply or any changes.

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

QUESTION 234-19(2):

TEMPORARY ALCOHOL RESTRICTIONS IN BEHCHOKO

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. The enforcement of Behchoko temporary liquor prohibition, Mr. Speaker, the first question I have is

for the Minister of Justice. What measures have the RCMP adopted to meet increased law enforcement challenges of the Behchoko temporary ban on liquor? Masi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Justice.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is always an ongoing dialogue between the Department of Justice and the RCMP, and this dialogue has been particularly keen in the last couple of months. There has been a lot of attention paid to the situation of bootlegging and illicit drug activity across borders. That dialogue continues. Mr. Speaker, I know that, later this session, I expect to be speaking to the police and priorities and would continue to encourage every community to develop their own community police priorities which can also then be a direct link into the activities of the RCMP in their regions. The RCMP have been, I also believe, particularly active of late in terms of enforcing alcohol and drug measures and have been putting out a number of their own press releases on that front. To that extent, all of that work continues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LAFFERTY: From what I've been hearing from my constituents and in the community of Behchoko is, obviously, there is a lack of enforcement, a lack of officers at the Ray Junction area. I live in Edzo, and I go there, and I haven't seen cops on the road yet. I am hoping that they are enforcing it.

Mr. Speaker, the second question I have is, how many vehicle searches and check stops have the RCMP conducted at the Ray Junction since the introduction of the Behchoko temporary liquor prohibition compared to other jurisdictions as well?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: We don't necessarily keep detailed track at the Department of Justice about all of the actions of the RCMP. I can certainly commit, for one, to just follow up with the RCMP and determine exactly what statistics they might maintain so that we can ensure that they are provided. Certainly, they do provide reports to every community on a regular basis, but on this specific discussion, we will follow up with them. I can indicate, Mr. Speaker, that between May 19th and 25th, Behchoko RCMP did make five seizures of alcohol within the prohibition boundaries.

MR. LAFFERTY: Along with that second question, this is a follow-up. If the Minister can provide that if she doesn't have it with her, along with that consultation with the RCMP. How many charges have the RCMP laid under the Behchoko prohibition order? Masi.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes. Again, I don't know that the Department of Justice has right

now, on track, that specific information, and it may well be that it's held by the RCMP. However, again, what I can do is at least ensure that that question is transmitted to the RCMP directly and see that they can follow up.

As I mentioned, the RCMP does have regular updates they provide to communities, and it's a good opportunity to ensure that, when they are doing that, that they are providing updates to the extent that they have the information about Liquor Act violations, Liquor Act prohibitions, since that certainly has been of significant interest of late.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Right now, when they put the restriction on liquor, we were told by the RCMP that they were going to help and do the check stop. When this sort of stuff happened within the community, people were trying to help themselves, and the leaders are doing work for the people and also get help from the RCMP to do the check stop, because we all know that the restriction is there and that the RCMP are not there most of the time. Thank you. [Translation ends].

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I certainly am pleased to be able to say that the Tlicho region will be getting two further officers under the First Nations policing program, so, to the extent that there is a need for greater enforcement by the RCMP, with more manpower in the Tlicho region, that is at least one piece of good news I can give to the Member at this point.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I can also say I have now had several hours of conversation with some of the Indigenous leaders, including some of the chiefs from the Tlicho region, and certainly intend to continue to do so as or when necessary, regarding bootlegging or other matters that may arise in relation to the enforcement of bootlegging. I appreciate that question. Again, it's certainly my hope that, with these two officers, enforcement measures can only continue to be improved upon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 235-19(2):

BORDER CHECKPOINT VEHICLE CROSSINGS

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My question is related to my Member's statement though on the border check point. For the number of occupants who cross the border, I am certain we could quarantine all of them for 14 days, but that would have stretched the amount of available rooms in the nearby hotels, and the nearest hotels

are in Hay River. Can the Premier provide information as to the data collected from the vehicle occupants at the check points? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any person who enters the Northwest Territories and lands at either an airport or on a highway at the check points, the first thing you are asked for is a piece of identification to prove if you are a resident of the Northwest Territories. If you are not a resident of the Northwest Territories, then you are asked to provide a letter from an employer or a proof that you are an essential worker. If you are an essential worker, then we will allow you through because, if you are in the territories for more than 36 hours, you need to have a self-isolation plan. If you are driving up, like our supply-chain truckers coming, the assumption is they will come to probably Yellowknife, drop off their load, and be back at the border within 36 hours, and so therefore they do not need that. Those are the exceptions for essential workers.

If there is a person from outside the territories who is not an essential worker and not a resident, they automatically have to return, and that is dependent on airlines. There was an incident of a person going into the northern communities, and we did put them up in an isolation unit for the one night until the airline could get back. People who are residents of the Northwest Territories, besides identification, they need to have an isolation plan. If they do not have one, we do give them 24 hours' notice to get one in place. We follow up on that. At the end of every day, a list of every name that came through is compiled and provided to isolation centres, and, if they are checking into the four regional centres, then we do follow up with them. That is the information.

MR. BONNETROUGE: The amount of crossings by private vehicles is very alarming, considering the Northwest Territories does have a public health emergency and a declared state of emergency during this pandemic. There are news reports of Alberta residents and alleged drug dealers gaining entry into the NWT. Perhaps this is an indication of our lax check point procedures. Does the border check point ask for the identification of all the occupants of private vehicles and transports?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, my understanding is that definitely everyone is asked for their identification. It does not matter if you are driving or riding. However, there is an issue with some things. People are coming up and, from what I have heard, it's not only across the highways or in our airplanes; it's coming from water. Those are things that we are looking at, as well. The bad thing

about COVID-19 is what's happening. The good thing about COVID-19 is we are having more checks at the borders, and so we are more conscious of illegal trades that are happening at our borders.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi for that. It's been about two months since closing our border and providing a check point to screen people and recommend self-isolation. In this time, check point procedures should have paid particular attention to all occupants in the vehicles and tested them for the coronavirus. Every day that I enter this building, I am temperature tested for signs of the fever, and I haven't even crossed the border. Will the Minister commit to providing more stringent controls and enforcement officers to check points in light of this pandemic?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At this point, I have not heard that having extra staffing at the border controls was an issue. We did know that, with the fire season, some of our public health officers had to go back to their positions in departments. We are actively looking for other recruitments in that area. I would love to be able to say that every person who came across, if we just took their temperature, they would be okay, and they could come in. My worry with doing that, in honesty, Mr. Speaker, is that sometimes people are asymptomatic. Not everybody will have a temperature. If we start taking that temperature, does that give people the false security that we are okay? That is my biggest worry for this whole summer, is people think that we are in this bubble. We are not in a bubble, Mr. Speaker. We do have gaps in our border, so my worry is about the caution and making sure that people take this seriously.

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

QUESTION 236-19(2):
GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME AND INCOME
SUPPORT PROGRAMS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier today about a guaranteed basic income, but I would like to start by focusing on what the closest program we have to that in the Northwest Territories is, income assistance. My question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is: is our current Income Assistance Program working? Are people actually incentivized to get a job, or is it simply just keeping people in a cycle of poverty? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have said before in this House that we could always do better with every program in the territory, and the Income Assistance Program is one of those. The Member asks whether it's working, and that depends on what exactly people want out of the program. There is a seniors' component where seniors are supported, and we are not trying to incentivize people who have aged out of the workforce to get back to work. There is a program for persons with disabilities who just can't work. We are not trying to incentivize them. The program is there to help people with their basic needs, and, in that sense, it is working. We make sure that, if there is a home for someone, if someone will rent a home to a person, we will pay for that. If someone can't afford a home but someone is willing to rent to that person, we pay for that, and we will give them money for food, so, in that sense, it's working. Is it a program that is allowing people to get back to work? For some people, it is. There are people I work with who have been on income assistance at a point in their life and have used it as a stepping stone to get further. With that being said, it's not the program that the Member is describing, one which is doing a very good job at getting people out of poverty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I appreciate that answer from the Minister, and I do recognize that the seniors and disability streams, the goal of those programs is not to get people back into the workforce. I do think, at the heart, both a guaranteed basic income and income assistance's goal is to get people into the workforce, but on their own terms.

I previously asked questions to the Minister regarding looking into a pilot project for a guaranteed basic income, and he said we simply don't have the policy staff. Given we are now in a global pandemic and entering into one of the largest economic recessions of any of our lifetimes, has the Minister's view on that changed?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: We actually have less staff now than we did when the Member asked that questions. There are dozens of employees from ECE who have moved over to Health to help with those efforts. There are employees working from home who are having issues accessing government files, and things like that, so we are in a worst position to do that type of work, especially given what we have.

I appreciate the Member's comments earlier that we could start this program tomorrow, if we wanted. This pandemic has shown that departments can be responsive, and they can move quickly. However, I don't know if we can move that quickly, spending half a million dollars on a program that doesn't exist today that needs to be put into regulations that we need to have metrics on, and things like that.

Since day one, I have been committed to improving the Income Assistance Program. I agree with the Member that we should adapt that program or reform that program so that it does incentivize getting people to work, and that is not an easy task. It's not as easy as giving people \$36,000 a year. That's not necessarily going to do it, so I'm working with the department to try and turn what we have into something approximating what the Member is talking about, understanding that, if we do want something like a guaranteed basic income, it is a decade away, as the Member stated.

MR. JOHNSON: I recognize that, perhaps, times when I say it can be implemented tomorrow, the program delivery model still needs to be there, and it will take some time, and I appreciate that many of the hard-working ECE staff have been redeployed. I guess that was almost a yes that the Minister is willing to work with me and have some of these further conversations. I'm concerned that he feels he doesn't have the policy staff in the department right now. What efforts are being made such that the department has the staff who can actually develop a program or a roadmap so that we can have a meaningful conversation about this issue?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: On a regular basis, I badger the Minister of Finance and the Premier to give me more policy staff so I can pursue some of these types of initiatives, but, in the end, ECE does a lot of work. We provide a lot of people with a lot of support, and that's what the focus is on right now, especially during the pandemic. I would love to be able to go out and get some more policy staff to do this type of work in the background, but I think that the staff we have right now are doing a great job at delivering services that are needed and being adaptive and responsive to the situation and, in this environment, those staff can learn from what's happening right now and work toward those types of improvements. Because, you know, this pandemic has taught everyone a lot of lessons, and I'm going to make sure that those lessons don't go to waste.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that, and I will pester my other colleagues in Cabinet to try and get you some more policy staff. In the interim, to me, one of the hearts of a guaranteed basic income is allowing people to work and have that income not be penalized. I recognize that, in Section 21 of the regulations, there is a formula for how people are penalized as they earn income on Income Assistance.

Right now, I believe this punishment is disincentivizing people from working, especially if you're also in public housing. By the time it comes

around, if you've been earning a little bit of income and you're reassessed, you're losing half of your money. If you're earning \$15 an hour in the Northwest Territories, it's more like you're earning \$7 an hour, and I don't see any reason for someone to work like that. My question is: is the Minister willing to look at increasing some of the exemptions to allow people to earn more income on Income Assistance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I've already done that work. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 237-19(2):
ON-GOING ISSUES FACING THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Related to my Member's statement, sometimes I think, Ottawa, I don't know who has been talking to them and telling them how it really is in the North, and so that was why my Member's statement was talking about what some of the people in the North almost consider as normal. Can the Premier tell us if the government is lobbying the federal government to give us more resources to deal with some of those issues that I mentioned in my Member's statement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will say that the Member has to be careful when she goes home to her riding. She might have offended a previous Minister who would say that every government in the Northwest Territories has lobbied hard to the federal government for additional money for the Northwest Territories, and I carry that forward. The reality is that every Assembly has asked for additional monies, and not only ourselves. We tend to partner as the three territories, with Nunavut and Yukon Territory, because we are all in the same situation.

Every government that I have known and that I have taken part in, and this government, too, has talked about our opportunity gaps. We are not even the same place as the South. We don't have the highway systems. We don't have the bandwidth. We don't have the health centres. We don't have the housing. We have been saying that for many years. Now that COVID-19 has hit us, we are going in stronger, so now we're talking about how we started at a deficit with our opportunity gap, and it would not be okay for us to go back 50 years from where we've come. That is the message we carry forward all the time, that we need additional money for the territories because of this. Every Minister

sitting here is carrying that message, and I have to give credit to Nunavut and the Yukon Territory, who are all carrying the message, all three of us together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Premier, for your answer. There's another component to my question: we know we have talks of an election, maybe, in the fall, so do we have an idea of when we can expect more resources to flow north to help us, as a government, to tackle some of these issues?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: How quickly they learn to be politicians. They know that there's an election coming up for the federal government. Actually, I have to say, in fairness to the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister has recognized, not only in this government, in the last Assembly, as well, that the territories are at a deficit. They have always given us extra money.

For example, for this Assembly, since COVID-19, I believe we got just over \$23 million for the GNWT for our own COVID-19 expenses. We got \$8.7 million for airlines. We got \$35 million for businesses, and my understanding is that more will be coming. This is on top of the money that was given to every other jurisdiction, so the three territories actually have built strong relationships with the federal government, and we will carry that forward right through the election.

MS. SEMMLER: With COVID, like I said yesterday and today, it really highlighted a lot of our deficiencies, and I think, when we saw the money coming from the federal government flowing, it was almost like they are living the life that we have been living every day. That is our normal. That is why, all of a sudden, Ottawa opened up its pockets. I just want to make sure that they continue, the Ministers, and I know you've said it, but continue to press because, if we do have a federal election, we don't know how some of these things are going to change. Would the Premier commit to that, making sure that we are pushing hard, especially over these next few months until the fall?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yesterday, I talked about being called names in here, some I don't accept and other ones I would accept. I haven't heard my name again being called as "easy." Talking about building relationships with the federal government is something that we are focusing on, positive relationships with them. It has proved to be fruitful. The other thing I am doing is also talking already about, and most Premiers are talking about, "What are we doing now?" We are starting to look at a recovery; but I have been talking about that since the beginning.

Every time we give something, like, for example, when we gave the extra money for childcare staff or childcare parents and stuff, and then, when we put people who were homeless into apartments, my conversations at the FMM table have been, "These are the right things to do, Mr. Prime Minister. How can you ask me to pull these back?" So I have already started the conversations and putting the bugs in. That is the message I will carry forward because, Mr. Speaker, it's right. How can I? If we have people who are homeless in housing, how can we put them on the street again? Those are not only questions that I ask because we need help. Those are the right questions to be putting at that table.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral question. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 238-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES WAGE TOP-UP
PROGRAM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Finance who administers the NWT Wage Top-up Program. As I said earlier today, I support this program. However, it's not clear how it relates to, for example, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. Can the Minister explain the relationship or difference between the NWT Wage Top-up Program and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The emergency wage subsidy provides a 75 percent subsidy to employers to encourage them to keep their employees on the payroll rather than laying them off during what might be more-than-lean times for those businesses, whereas the wage top-up program, Mr. Speaker, is one that is meant to support employees who are making under a certain level of wages, of earnings hourly. In that sense, the two aren't necessarily related. Rather, they are not related, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. Clearly, the wage top-up program serves a specific purpose just for us here in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister, though, tell us how well that is going in terms of the take-up for it, in terms of the number of applications received so far for the wage top-up program, the number of employees covered, and how quickly the applications are being processed? I did give the Minister a heads-up, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, I was able to marshal a bit of information here for the Member.

As of May 26, that is, as of yesterday, there have been 31 business applications to the wage top-up. The application has to come through the employer in order to top up the employee. Twenty-eight have already been processed, but three, we requested additional information. In total, this will benefit 242 employees, at least for the month of April. We are processing them retroactively. For April, that would be \$65,000 going out into the hands of employees in the Northwest Territories.

At this point, processing takes approximately one day, unless again there is need for some further information or clarification, although that does seem to be, fortunately, the minority. Then the payment cycles about three days thereafter to go to the employees themselves. It is our intention in Finance to fast-track these applications, fast-track payments, as well, which Finance has been doing really across the board as much as possible for any incoming invoicing.

I would just note: applications have been open and operating since May 12th. There hasn't been a flood at this point, Mr. Speaker, but there have been some coming in. To that extent, I would sort of acknowledge that perhaps the business community could continue to also work with their members to make sure their program is being promoted.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. It's great to hear that 242 employees here are going to benefit from this right now. That is great. The turnaround time, I am really pleased, and I want to congratulate the Minister and her department for the hard work on that. Our minimum wage, though, is a measly \$13.46 per hour, which is not enough for a decent standard of living in any of our communities.

Last time the minimum wage was increased was April 1, 2018. That process involved stakeholder committee. It looked a lot like the previous one. Given that the NWT Wage Top-up is a clear sign our minimum wage is too low and the evidence that it cannot possibly lead to a decent standard of living, can the Minister commit to a permanent increase of the NWT minimum wage to \$18 per hour or higher?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I need to just take 10 seconds and actually go back to the genesis of the program, which was that, when Canada, the federal government, ruled out this CERB program for individuals who were negatively impacted, lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, and they set a floor that would provide money to everyone, \$2,000 into the pockets of people who had been negatively impacted, there very quickly arose, particularly in southern Canada, the fact that a lot of front-line workers were now incentivized to leave what might have been considered, at least perceptually, a

higher risk profession, whether that was, in fact, true or not. It became a real concern in the labour market that we were going to lose really some essential service workers and front-line workers.

That wasn't quite the case in the Northwest Territories. More of our health services and long-term care services are provided by the GNWT, which pays significantly more. While we wanted to participate in the program, the motivation for it here became really one of putting money into the hands of residents for whatever their needs might be. Whether that is to pay off debt or just increase spending in the community or childcare, anyone who was working, we sort of deemed as being essential for the purposes of this program. It really wasn't, at least in terms of our modelling, tied to minimum wage.

At this point, this program is not going to be some sort of pilot that the Department of Finance is using in terms of modelling for future for minimum wage changes. It really is quite specific to COVID-19, to acknowledge that there are people at the front lines, whether that is in grocery stores or otherwise, who might be making below a certain cut-off in an effort to participate in this federal program with as wide a berth as we could find in the Northwest Territories for as many employees as we could find in the Northwest Territories.

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 explanation. Look, I understand where this came from, but it's where it's taken us. That is the issue here. We heard the Premier yesterday say that it would be a sin to roll back the progress on some of these programs. This is one of the ones that it would be a sin to roll back. This program was not limited to essential services. It was for all people here who are paid minimum wage. They have to get the employer to do it, but that is what this is about.

Can the Minister make a commitment that she is going to work with her colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, who actually is responsible for minimum wage, to fix this problem of a way-too-low minimum wage here for the Northwest Territories? We have started down that track. Let's fix it and make it permanent. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I have already been in touch with my colleague from ECE. Obviously, this does, as the Member has already identified, fall within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, my colleague was just on his feet, being asked if he was going to start a pilot for universal basic income.

Some choices have to be made sometimes. We certainly can't have every single program that moves forward under COVID move forward forever. There will not be sufficient money to do that.

That said, Mr. Speaker, two things: the minimum wage committee is already underway for this year for this two-year cycle. They are supposed to be delivering a report to the Minister of ECE. Certainly, I look forward to that coming in to the Minister for ECE and, I am sure, will come to Cabinet in due course. Mr. Speaker, what I would also remind is that we are about to go into the business planning process, which means that departments do have that opportunity to go in and look at programs that are under way, perhaps in response to COVID-19, and determine if, in fact, that is something they want to make a pitch for to go forward. Then they can do that in due course. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 239-19(2):
BUSINESS LICENSE FOR LUTSEL K'E DENE
FIRST NATION-OWNED FRONTIER FISHING
LODGE

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. On the way here, I just want to share something that made me chuckle a little bit. I heard on the radio a song by the band called Cake. There is a line referencing finding somebody who isn't afraid to cut through red tape with a machete. It made me chuckle. You know, I thought that was a pretty good song, and it made me think about this. It made me think about my Member's statement today, and I thought I will get right into my line of questioning.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Premier as Minister of MACA. It's quite simple: why is your department holding a critical approval from the LKDFN for Frontier Lodge when the only thing that has changed since then is that the lodge is now owned by an NWT Indigenous community instead of nonresidents? Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not about because the only thing that changed was Lutselk'e Dene band, because I didn't even know that was the owner or not or whoever it is. The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that there was a change in ownership, and, with the change in ownership, they are looking for a liquor permit. If you are looking for a liquor permit, it's a little bit more difficult. You have to have not only a business licence but an occupancy permit, and then the fire marshal has to go in and do an inspection, so that

is the difference. It's not only the owner; it's the request for a liquor permit at the lodge.

MR. NORN: It's the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, just to make sure I got that right. Thank you for the response from Madam Premier. My next question is: how will putting the regulatory burdens on a struggling tourism business help us emerge strong from this pandemic? Why is a MACA licence now required for remote tourism operations?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The assumption is that this is a new policy, and, actually, it's not. It's always been in there that, if you are looking for a liquor licence, if you are looking for a liquor permit, that you need to have both. The reality is that my opinion is that we were a little bit lenient with lodges before. We did a review of the Fire Prevention Act, and then it really did confirm that all remote fishing lodges are subject to the building code. It just happened that this lodge was one of the first ones after that review, so it's not that we want to penalize. We want to help them, but we also have to make sure that people do follow the law.

MR. NORN: Thank you for the response again. I guess where I want to go with this is I want to get some assurances for people of the LKDFN and their business interests, to make sure that they get this up and running, because I think enough is enough. I think two months to get this up and running is far too long. I know that, if I was running a small business and if I had to start up, I would go under right now, so all this is really unacceptable. My next question is: what will the Minister do to resolve this issue so that community-owned businesses continue to operate under the same licensing terms and conditions that they have held for many years?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I think it's important as elected officials to actually take ownership when things aren't too good, so I will take ownership on this one in that some of the delay over the couple of months was on our behalf, on the department's behalf, because COVID-19 hit us, and we were scrambling. All government departments were told, "You are now working from home," and we had to figure out what that looked like, so I do take ownership for some of that delay. That is our fault, and there is not much we can do about that. We are trying to work with them.

How I am going to fix it, though, is that we have already reached out and told them. We have reached out to the lodge. We have talked to the MLA. My commitment is, for any business, and not only this one because it was brought to the attention, when people are having problems with our systems, we are not trying to set businesses up to fail. We are trying to support them, but, if there is anything we can do, if people have obstacles, call

us. In this case, we have agreed to walk with them, work with them, help them fill out the paperwork. We have told them to perhaps get a consultant to go in and look at what they will need. We will work with people. We want people to succeed in the Northwest Territories. When you have issues, bring it to our attention, and we will try to address them.

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

QUESTION 240-19(2):
BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. On March 20th, the GNWT announced a \$13.2 million economic relief package for NWT businesses. This plan committed the GNWT to creating a business advisory council. This council has turned into a bit of a hurry-and-wait exercise for businesses that really want an opportunity to provide some feedback. Will the Minister make a commitment that the membership, meeting schedule, and terms of reference of the business advisory council be made public during this sitting? Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The business advisory council is one of the three advisory bodies that our government is looking to put in place to guide our actions going forward. We have received initial input from the Members, so thank you for that, and we have incorporated their feedback into our terms of reference as well as our composition.

I appreciate it has now been just over two months since I and Minister Wawzonek first announced the proposed establishment of the council. It was partly due to our subsequent decision to establish the other two councils and then create an overarching theme between the three, so it did create some delays with getting the advisory council out. Our intent is that the role of the three advisory councils will complement each other so that we do capture as much as we can under the Indigenous community one, the health and social sector recovery, and then, as well, the business council. We are working hard to ensure there is a broad, diverse representation on the council and that there are inputs. Admittedly, this has taken longer than we anticipated, and we do appreciate the Members' patience with that.

MS. CLEVELAND: Does the Minister have an idea when we will see the first meeting of the business advisory council?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: We have contacted the organizations that we are using to sort of staff or populate the councils, so the idea is to organize within either this week or by the end of next week a membership meeting with them.

MS. CLEVELAND: Is it safe to assume that the membership, along with the terms of reference, will then be made public during our sitting this time around?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: We definitely commit to having an open and transparent and collaborative government. I would like to actually have the conversation, though, first, with the membership as well as the two co-chairs of the council so that we can determine if that is the best movement for it. Personally, right now, I think that should be fine, but I do want to respect their privacy and their thoughts and whether or not they thought there needed to be some element of confidentiality around the council.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Should this be made public, which I hope it will be, is there an appeal process that the department has thought about, for if members of the business community would like to be able to be more readily involved or would like to be able to provide feedback to the terms of reference? Thank you.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: With the way the structure of the council is working, it is to have the representatives be fed up through the organizations that we have contacted, so the idea being that those organizations will do the work themselves, and then their representative will bring it forward. Through that manner, members of those organizations will input on things within the council. I would imagine, as anything else, I have always expressed that my department is open to any sorts of feedback or comments or conversations, so I would still commit that again. If there are people who have concerns about the council, they are very welcome to reach out to us and have that conversation, and we will go forward that way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 241-19(2):
FORT SMITH REGIONAL AIRPORT

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, in a letter signed by all the leadership in Fort Smith, dated June 17, 2019, the leaders were clear in their disapproval of the proposed changes of the Fort Smith airport.

However, Transport Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Infrastructure went ahead with them anyways. My question is: upon receiving this letter from the Fort Smith leadership, were there any attempts made by the infrastructure department to modify or delay the project to fit the community's liking? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since receiving the letter from Fort Smith leadership in June of 2019, the former Minister of the Department of Infrastructure and I have both provided multiple responses that explained why the decision was made to proceed with the project.

Transport Canada sets the standards by which airports are designed and operated. Airport owners and operators, such as the GNWT, apply those standards and construct and operate airports to meet current and future operational and regulatory needs. The GNWT reviews airport infrastructure on a regular basis to identify current and future needs and, Mr. Speaker, it was identified that the lighting at the Fort Smith airport was in need of replacement. As a result, the GNWT secured funding from the Government of Canada for the installation of the new LED airport lighting. Since the lighting replacement project would have required digging up sections of the runway, the GNWT decided to review the runway width requirements at the Fort Smith airport at the same time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Why does the Department of Infrastructure continue to proceed with the airport infrastructure changes despite the community's leadership opposing them?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Construction on the project began in May of 2019. Subsequent to that, Northwestern Air Lease, the local air carrier, and the town and local bands raised concerns to the Minister of Infrastructure and in the media. Additional information was provided to these groups to confirm that the concerns they raised were taken into consideration during the planning of the project, and to reaffirm that the level of service at the Fort Smith airport has remained the same. The project proceeded because it addressed the current and future operational needs of the airport.

MS. MARTSELOS: Will the Minister admit that the community stakeholders and leadership of Fort Smith were not properly consulted, if at all, about these changes to the Fort Smith airport?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Public engagement is a critical part of the way our government does

business. It ensures that the GNWT is visible, accessible, and answerable to the people it serves. In this case, while we engaged with industry and regulatory entities regarding the airport work in Fort Smith to ensure that the runway would continue to be safe and meet federal regulations and maintain a consistent level of service, we did not ensure that the community of Fort Smith understood the project's purpose and benefits before we completed the work. We understand that airport maintenance and improvements are especially important in Northwest Territories communities like Fort Smith, where residents and industry depend on safe, secure, accessible, and reliable air travel.

Our approach to public engagement continues to evolve. I think you've all heard me speak here, even just yesterday, about the need for my department to do better when it comes to engagement, so, in the future, we will work with the community of Fort Smith to ensure that its residents are informed prior to the work being completed, and not after.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister admit that errors were made during the infrastructure changes to the Fort Smith airport? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: No, there were no errors made during the changes to the Fort Smith runway. What I will acknowledge, though, is that it does sound like the engagement was not done properly, or to the liking of the Member and her community, therefore I do commit that the Department of Infrastructure will do better. We recognize that residents and community leaders in Fort Smith are concerned with the recent changes to the runway and the community, so we commit to having a conversation to explain why the runway narrowing happened. The improvements to the runway will position the department to effectively and efficiently maintain an important piece of infrastructure, while reducing operating and maintenance costs. Narrowing the width of the runway did not change the level of service in the airport. What it did do was allow us to access federal funding to maintain it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 242-19(2):
ENFORCEMENT OF CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICER'S ORDERS IN APARTMENT
BUILDINGS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and

Community Affairs. As I mentioned in my statement, enforcement of the Chief Public Health Officer's orders in downtown apartment buildings isn't happening or, if it is happening, it's not making a difference to the people who routinely report to me about the orders being ignored. The gap in enforcement is important because it could put us all at risk of the community spread of COVID when it recurs. My question for the Minister is: what responsibility does the enforcement task force have for ensuring that orders are followed, specifically in apartment buildings? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Compliance and Enforcement Branch is actually there to enforce the orders of the Chief Public Health Officer. A lot of that is, like the Member said, around public education. Some are verbal warnings. Some are written warnings. The last would be a fine. That is the purpose of the Compliance and Enforcement Branch. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: That wasn't really the question that I asked. Apartment buildings are kind of a complex environment because there's the tenant, there's the landlord, in some cases there is the Yellowknife Housing Authority, and by-law is not eligible to be there. RCMP can be there. What I'm trying to clarify is whether the enforcement task force members have the authority and the resources to enter apartment buildings to ensure compliance.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The big difference is that the public health officers who are doing the compliance and the enforcement are not RCMP officers. They come with a different set of skills. All along, we've said that, if there were huge parties and people were breaking orders, disturbances and stuff, we would not put our public health officers at risk within that. That is the job of the RCMP. I do think that sometimes our public is getting confused. They tend to phone us. What I have to say is that we have almost, I believe it was, 800 inquiries or calls in to Protect NWT. Every single one of them gets followed up. However, we will not put those officers at risk. If there are people partying in apartment buildings, there are laws. If they're disturbing, it is not to call the Protect NWT; at that point, it's to call the RCMP. I think that's the confusion. If tenants are having complaints about repeated parties, like I have heard in the statement, then it is the landlord who has to be notified of that.

MS. GREEN: Well, Minister, as you see, there are a lot of gaps in this because, when tenants call the RCMP, they are told that it's not up to the RCMP to enforce the Chief Public Health Officer's orders to

not gather in apartment buildings. I appreciate that the peace officers don't feel equipped to go into the apartment buildings if there is a big party going on, but it just seems to be no one's problem to put an end to this. I'm trying to say, look, this is really a significant problem. In the end, what can you do, as the Minister, to coordinate the response in the apartment buildings? I can tell you, from living across the street from one of them, this will be ground zero for the community spread. It's like a train station. Now we have a chance to figure out how to deal with that, so how can we make these gaps disappear, Minister?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I hear the Member's concerns, and I have the same concerns about people. We have been doing as much as we can to try to make the public aware that we are not in a bubble; we are at risk, and it takes every individual to do this. What I worry about is that we are trying to deal with an issue that has been long-standing. It's the partying, it's the drug dealers, it's the people who aren't being good neighbours in apartment buildings, and we're trying to deal with all of that with COVID-19.

I'm not sure if that's the answer, if we even have the capacity to do that. What I will commit to, because that was the question, was what I can do about it. I will actually meet with my colleague who is responsible for the RCMP. We'll talk about how it is. I think there might be confusion. If people call in to the RCMP and say, "I want you to enforce an order," absolutely, that's not the RCMP's job. If people phone in and say, "There's a big party going on next door and they're yelling and screaming and drinking and it's after 11 o'clock," that is the RCMP's job. It might be a communications thing. That, I will look into with the Minister. We will talk about that. It's also about working with landlords. It's about time that we actually talk to landlords as well.

I will commit to, not during this session because we're busy, but when session is over and we can get back to normal business, then, I will commit to meeting with the landlords in our bigger centres that have longstanding issues and see if we can actually talk to them about the risk that they're putting residents to as well.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is on the right path here. My specific ask is that there be a meeting between the COVID enforcement task force, and the RCMP, and the landlords, and the Yellowknife Housing Authority, which, in some cases, is the landlord, and Northview, in the other case; and to bring these people together to talk about exercising better

control over the apartment buildings so that they don't become a ground zero for community spread of COVID-19. I think it's really important to have the parties at the table and to discuss how this kind of enforcement can be made more effective. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The reason we have seven Members on Cabinet is because there is value in having many voices. I do appreciate. My first question was, "Can we do this?" and it was, "Yes, we can meet." Then, a wise Minister said to me, "That's why we have a committee of Cabinet for COVID-19, our social issues committee." What we will do, then, is bring that to our COVID-19, our committee, to address that issue, but we will be talking about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 243-19(2):
COVID-19 PANDEMIC TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS
AND SELF-ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS FOR
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESIDENTS

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This will be for the Premier. With the weather becoming warmer and people are starting to want to move around now, people are wanting to go south. They're wanting to come back. They're not wanting to self-isolate. They're looking to maybe self-monitor instead.

I guess the question I have is: how is the Chief Public Health Officer and the COVID task force working with departments to identify gaps or gray areas affecting our businesses and residents, such as the ones I've mentioned; and how are they going to deal with people travelling south and coming back? What we're going to have now is we're going to have more people trying to circumvent the system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The chief health officer has the autonomy to be able to do the directions herself. She doesn't need to work with departments. She has been very, very nice to actually work with us as much as possible though.

Actually complying with the enforcement, that is our biggest fear. I am just going to put it out there. People have this misperception, and I need everyone to help me with this. Not only MLAs in this House; municipal governments have brought it up; Indigenous governments; we need everyone. People have this misperception, Mr. Speaker, that we're in a bubble, and we haven't had any active

cases and we're fine. We're not fine. We are just waiting.

The only way that I can say is that all of us, as elected leaders, and that, I'm talking about municipal and Indigenous governments also, throughout this summer, this is going to be our biggest risk. I said that on the radio the other day. This may be the calm before the storm. My fear is that people are going to get too comfortable, too relaxed, and then, they will not be abiding the orders. I can't do this on my own. We all need to take a step on this. We will be doing more public campaigns right through the summer, and again, for residents, every time I get on the radio, I say that. Anybody that's seeing people breaking the orders, we need residents to call, protect NWT or 8-1-1 and inform us. We all are in this together, and we all have a role to play. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: I think she answers about everything I've got down here for questions in that one statement, so I'm good. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12 reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Lands.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 100-19(2):
MINISTER OF LANDS ACCEPTANCE LETTER
FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
SURFACE RIGHTS BOARD 2020-2021
OPERATING BUDGET

TABLED DOCUMENT 101-19(2): NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES SURFACE RIGHTS BOARD 2020-
2021 BUDGET

TABLED DOCUMENT 102-19(2):
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHT ACT ANNUAL
REPORT 2019-2020

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: "Minister of Lands Acceptance Letter for the Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board 2020-2021 Operating Budget" dated March 11, 2020; "Northwest Territories Surface Rights Board 2020-2021 Budget"; and the "Environmental Rights Act Annual Report, 2019-2020." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 103-19(2): ALTERNATIVES
NORTH "CLIMATE EMERGENCY: GETTING THE
NWT OFF DIESEL"

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, a report authored by Andrew Robinson and Lachlan MacLean entitled "Climate Emergency: Getting the NWT Off Diesel, Cost-effective investments to reduce the NWT greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent within five years." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 104-19(2): THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PUBLIC UTILITIES
BOARD ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR
ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2019

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: "The Northwest Territories Public Utilities Board Annual Report for the Year Ending December 31, 2019." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Notices of Motion

MOTION 8-19(2):
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT OF THE
HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR GREAT SLAVE TO
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, May 29th, 2020, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that this Assembly formally revokes the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the honourable Member for Great Slave as a Member of the Executive Council; and further, that this Assembly recommends that a Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council at the earliest opportunity.

Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Tabled Document 30-19(2) Main Estimates 2020-2021, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I call the committee to order. Can we take a short recess? What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. I move that we rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We'll take a short recess after that? I don't have anything here. Sorry. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole?

Report of the Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee has been considering Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, and wish to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Member for Hay River North. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, May 28, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address

11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021

21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 28, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:19 p.m.