



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Day 33**

**19<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Monday, August 24, 2020**

Pages 1221 - 1226

**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**  
(Nunakput)

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

**Mr. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**  
(Thebacha)

**Hon. Katrina Nokleby**  
(Great Slave)

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Hon. Shane Thompson**  
(Nahendeh)  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**  
(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Justice*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER .....</b>	<b>1221</b>
<b>RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>1221</b>
<b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS .....</b>	<b>1223</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>1224</b>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION.....</b>	<b>1224</b>
12-19(2) – Notice of Motion - Revocation of Appointment to the Executive Council .....	1224
<b>MOTIONS .....</b>	<b>1225</b>
12-19(2) – Revocation of Appointment to the Executive Council (Cochrane) .....	1225
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>	<b>1225</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, August 24, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr):** Members, welcome back to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for being here today.

Motion 10-19(2) grants me the authority to recall the House before October 15, 2020, if, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, I am satisfied the public interest would be served by meeting. Last week, prior to giving notice of this recall, I consulted with the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council and was convinced that the public interest required this House to sit.

As you know, last Wednesday, the Premier revoked the Member for Great Slave's appointments as Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Minister of Infrastructure.

A Minister without portfolio is a serious question in consensus government that all Members of this House must consider.

Members, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic adds to the seriousness of this situation. In this time of crisis, our residents expect us, as their elected representatives, to lead. Each of us must be the leaders our people need now. Due to the pandemic, our Chamber remains set up to allow Members to physically distance during the proceedings. I remind Members to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 by handwashing, hand sanitizing, and wearing non-medical masks when we cannot physically distance.

Members, this sitting will be a difficult one. While in this House, I ask that you conduct yourselves with the utmost respect for one another, this House, our rules, and our unique forum of consensus government. As Speaker, I will do my best to be a positive example for each of you. If you are unable to maintain an appropriate level of decorum, it will

be my duty to enforce the rules, and I am prepared to do so.

The Legislative Assembly building remains closed to the public. However, the media can still attend and observe our proceedings. It is important that residents can see and understand the work being done. We continue to broadcast and live-stream our proceedings. This sitting will have interpretation in Chipewyan, French, and Tlicho languages. I want to thank our interpreters for their work.

Members, on June 15, 2020, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories gave her assent in writing to the following bills:

- Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021;
- Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2020-2021; and
- Bill 10, Temporary Variation of Statutory Time Periods (COVID-19 Pandemic Measures) Act.

Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

**Returns to Written Questions**

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 12-19(2):  
VIRTUAL CARE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 12-19(2), asked by the Member for Kam Lake to the Honourable Diane Thom, Minister of Health and Social Services, on May 26, 2020, regarding virtual care.

As noted previously, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has set up a COVID-19 virtual-care initiative. It would be incorrect, however, to perpetuate the assumption that because we are conducting virtual care during

COVID-19 that we have incorporated recommendations from the Virtual Task Force Report.

We immediately deployed virtual-care capacity to meet the urgent needs of the pandemic and limit an initial viral outbreak. This included setting up virtual visits by phone and expansion of video-conferencing, as well as remote access to the electronic medical records. A second phase is currently being planned and will add secure messaging between healthcare providers and patients and potentially between the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Alberta.

The Department of Health and Social Services will continue to explore the many aspects of virtual care post-COVID-19. We may consider the Virtual Task Force Report recommendations going forward. However, there will need to be extensive consideration and collaboration amongst provinces and territories to advance a virtual care model that can address both cross-jurisdictional provision of services as well as services provided within the NWT. The work required to address each of the barriers noted is not known at this time. However, it is likely a multi-year process. We will need to align investments, policy, and care delivery to support virtual care longer term, using the COVID-19 virtual care response to inform and guide future direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 13-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COVID-19 TESTING  
AND CONTACT TRACING CAPACITY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on May 28, 2020, regarding Northwest Territories COVID-19 testing and contact tracing capacity.

For regular tests, the territory-wide average turn-around time for final confirmed test results remains just short of three days. The biggest contributor to testing delays is transport to Alberta Precision Laboratories. Once the tests arrive at their destination, results are available within hours. There is currently no shortage of the type of swab used for regular testing on Alberta Precision Laboratories machines. Our current stockpile of these Aptima swabs is 9,500, which is enough for three months.

Currently, the only type of rapid test unit in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is the GeneXpert. Its turn-around time is about one hour. However, each test unit must have a minimum of 65 tests confirmed by Alberta Precision Laboratories before they can be considered a valid and independent means of testing. At this point in time, the biggest challenge with the GeneXpert is the global shortage

of reagents and cartridges needed to run the tests. The swabs used on the GeneXpert are the same ones typically used during influenza season, and there is currently no shortage of these.

There are currently two GeneXpert test units at Stanton Territorial Hospital laboratory. Two more are anticipated, although the timelines are unknown at present. The National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) has taken responsibility for ordering for certain provinces and territories, including the NWT, and for allocating based on need. NML had anticipated sending a minimum of 40 test kits per week to the NWT. However, as the bulk orders have not been arriving to the NML as expected, test kit availability for individual provinces and territories is inconsistent. The number of kits delivered to the NWT will continue to fluctuate as a result. To date, we have received between zero and 20 test kits per week. In the absence of a guaranteed supply of GeneXpert materials, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) has established a protocol for use of these rapid tests and is allocating a limited number of tests for weekly use. This will help build a small stockpile for later use, when urgent rapid testing is required, such as in response to an outbreak.

In the NWT, all Community Health Nurses (CHN) and Public Health Units have the initial responsibility for contact tracing. Community nursing staff and public health nurses are supported by the Territorial Epidemiology team in carrying out contact tracing. There is a decision-making process and on-call system established for urgent contact tracing. Additional support within our current Population Health and CHN resources can also be mobilized virtually.

Further planning is underway to refine our contact tracing approach in the event of a second-wave surge. A process to deliver large-volume contact tracing is the priority. The NTHSSA is using guidelines from Alberta to adapt to NWT needs. We have been approved to have up to six CHNs in Yellowknife to redeploy in the case of a community outbreak. As of yet, we have not been able to fill this resource completely, but staffing is ongoing.

A process for redeploying and training Community Health Representatives and local Canadian Rangers to monitor contacts is also being developed and should be finalized with the next couple of weeks. We also have access to the Public Health Agency's contact-tracing surge team, which can be mobilized in the event that we require additional resources outside of our system.

As initial contact tracing is carried out by community nursing staff and public health nurses, we rely on our health system's existing Indigenous-language interpretation services. In regional health centres

and long-term care facilities, this often includes staff who have received the bilingual bonus for Indigenous languages. When fluent staff are unavailable, CanTalk services are used. CanTalk is available 24 hours a day by phone, on-site, e-mail, and the internet. They offer services in Chipewyan, Cree, Tlicho, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, North Slavey, and South Slavey, as well as over 200 other languages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-19(2):  
CONTRACTS FOR WORK RELATED TO THE  
TALTSON HYDRO EXPANSION PROJECT

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Speaker, I have a provisional Return to Written Question 14-19(2) asked by the Member for Frame Lake on June 10, 2020, regarding contracts for work related to the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project.

Unfortunately, due to the recall of the House, the return is not fully complete and the final return will be provided to the House on October 15, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 15-19(2):  
FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF AND SUBSIDIES  
TO THE DOMINION DIAMOND GROUP OF  
COMPANIES

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by the Member for Frame Lake on June 11, 2020, to the Honourable Caroline Wawzonek, Minister of Finance, regarding the financial obligations of and subsidies to the Dominion Diamond group of companies.

At the appropriate time, I will table the spreadsheet that identifies outstanding payments from the Dominion Diamond group of companies, as well as the amount of carbon tax subsidies they receive.

Regarding Workers Safety and Compensation Commission assessment information you requested, and in consultation with the responsible Minister, I will explore any privacy issues regarding releasing assessment information and will provide you with an appropriate response. Regarding your request for mining royalty information, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment can speak further to this request, if required. However, royalty information is confidential in nature and not able to be disclosed per company.

While Dominion is eligible to receive relief on all land tenures for 2020-2021 as part of the rent relief program, the total amount that they receive is confidential in nature. Further questions regarding land tenure rent relief can be directed to the Minister of Lands.

In the course of developing a response to your questions, the GNWT has determined that other portions of the information you requested are excepted from disclosure under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or "the act." The GNWT has determined that Section 24(d) of the act applies to your request regarding tax liability, as public bodies cannot disclose information about a third party, gathered for the purpose of determining tax liability or collecting a tax.

Additionally, we have determined that Sections 15(b) and 15(c) of the act are applicable to your request for an itemized listing of amounts spent by GNWT in connection with the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, proceeding in relation to the Dominion Diamond group of companies.

Section 15(b) allows for the refusal of disclosure of information prepared by or for a lawyer or agent for the Minister of Justice involving the provision of legal services, while 15(c) allows for the refusal of disclosure of information in correspondence between a lawyer or agent for the Minister of Justice and any other person in relation to a matter involving legal advice or services by the lawyer or agent. In this case, the costs associated for outside counsel and consultants that were incurred with respect to the GNWT participating in Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act proceedings would have been established by bills made by or for them, as agents of the Minister of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 16-19(2):  
INCOME ASSISTANCE REGULATIONS

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a provisional Return to Written Question 16-19(2) asked by the Member for Nunakput on June 11, 2020, to the Honourable R.J. Simpson, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding Income Assistance Regulations.

Unfortunately, due to the recall of the House, the return is not fully complete and the final return will be provided to the House on October 15, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to Written Questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Nunakput.

### Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 3:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC HIGHWAYS ACT

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The committee would like to report on the consideration of Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act.

The bill received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on March 13, 2020, and it was referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure for review.

Today, I am advising on the committee's wish to extend our review of Bill 3, with intention to report back to the House when it was to reconvene on October 15, 2020. The short extension will allow my committee to continue to review what was previously scheduled, including a clause-by-clause review to be held next month.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 74(1)(c) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the review period for Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Highways Act, be extended to October 15, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nunakput. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 156-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 197-19(2): BUSINESS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

TABLED DOCUMENT 157-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 279-19(2): HOME INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

TABLED DOCUMENT 158-19(2):  
OUTSTANDING PAYMENTS DOMINION  
DIAMOND GROUP OF COMPANIES

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents: "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 197-19(2): Business Incentive Program;" "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 279-19(2): Home Internet Connectivity;" and further to the return to the written question 15-19(2), I wish to table "Outstanding Payments Dominion Diamond Group of Companies." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 159-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 312-19(2): ABILITY TO VISIT PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS

TABLED DOCUMENT 160-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 329-19(2): COVID-19 AND INFLUENZA DATA

TABLED DOCUMENT 161-19(2):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 339-19(2): EMERGING WISELY PLAN

**HON. DIANE THOM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents: "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 312-19(2): Ability to Visit Patients in Hospitals," "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 329-19(2): COVID-19 and Influenza Data," and "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 339-19(2): Emerging Wisely Plan." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 162-19(2):  
INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER'S REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO A COMPLAINT FROM MEMBER FOR NUNAKPUT

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members, pursuant to Section 102(4) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the report of the Integrity Commissioner of the investigation in a complaint by Jackie Jacobson, MLA, against Minister Diane Thom and Premier Caroline Cochrane, alleging breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

Tabling of Documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Honourable Premier.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 12-19(2):  
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Wednesday, August 26, 2020, I will move the following motion: Now therefore, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Assembly formally revoke the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the Honourable Katrina Nokleby as a Member of the Executive Council; and further, that this Assembly recommend that a new Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I would seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. Notice of motion. Item 16, motions. Honourable Premier.

### Motions

#### MOTION 12-19(2): REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with the motion I gave notice of earlier today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. The Premier is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the notice of motion she gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is a nay. We will deal with this matter on Wednesday afternoon as we will not proceed. Thank you. Motions. Item 17, notices of motion for 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. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. 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 Tuesday, August 25, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions

8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
  - Motion 12-19(2), Revocation of Appointment to the Executive Council
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
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 Tuesday, August 25, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:47 p.m.

