



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, November 3, 2020****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms. Semmler): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 90-19(2):
THE BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE
MINERAL RESOURCE SECTOR**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Members of the 19th Legislative Assembly committed to "increase resource exploration and development" in the territory. This priority reflects the importance of the mineral resource sector to our economy both today and into the foreseeable future. Our efforts to support the mineral resource sector are further reflected in our commitments to develop regulations for the new Mineral Resource Act; to develop and implement regional mineral development strategies; and review our Mining Incentive Program, socio-economic agreements, and our territory's fiscal regime around mining. Later today, I will table the annual Socio-Economic Agreement Report for Mines Operating in the Northwest Territories. It will outline and confirm again the benefits of mining to our territory.

With a total impact of 27 percent of GDP, diamond mining was the largest private-sector industry in the Northwest Territories and the primary foundation of our economy in 2019. Our diamond mines employed 1,334 Northwest Territories residents last year, more than half of them Indigenous. Over and above the direct benefits of wages, skills training, and capacity building, the Northwest Territories mining industry contributed \$1.1 billion to related sectors like construction, transportation, retail, and real estate. The GNWT also realized revenue from the mining industry in the form of corporate income tax, fuel tax, property tax, payroll tax, and personal income tax. In total, \$370 million was spent with Indigenous companies in our territory. Royalties to Indigenous governments totalled over \$3 million in

the 2018-2019 fiscal year, in addition to benefits paid out under impact benefit agreements signed directly with Indigenous governments.

Madam Speaker, big companies can also make big differences in the communities that they are part of. From scholarships to donations to sponsorships, their contributions to our communities are evident well beyond their mine sites. Even through this COVID pandemic, where profits are often non-existent, the diamond mines have continued to be strong corporate citizens.

I want to acknowledge that our support of the mineral resource sector comes within the context of a regulatory regime that works to ensure that resource development occurs in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. We are confident that our system strives to achieve a balance between economic opportunity and the protection of our environment. We will keep that balance as we continue the work of developing a truly northern-centered and modern regulatory system.

In recent weeks, we have had to consider the very real possibility that the Ekati Diamond Mine will continue in a state of care and maintenance for an extended period of time. Madam Speaker, we want the Ekati Mine to return to full operations. It remains a valuable natural resource, and recent events do not change that fact. We also want to restore our mineral development sector, not just our mines, but also advanced projects and exploration companies, to a position of growth and prosperity.

These are trying times, and a difficult road of economic recovery lies ahead. There are several things the GNWT will do to help us advance down that road:

- Continue to recognize the value of mine workers to the territory, including the many benefits that flow through them into our communities;
- Highlight the competitiveness of our jurisdiction to investors;
- Complete the work required to implement the Mineral Resources Act, including developing new regulations;

- Develop and implement regional mineral strategies;
- Increase collaboration and investment with Indigenous governments; and
- Promote the Northwest Territories as a source of critical and strategic minerals and metals.

Madam Speaker, our government is committed to growing the Northwest Territories mining sector and, accordingly, its contributions to investment, employment, and Indigenous participation in the Northwest Territories' economy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ministers' statements. Minister for Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 91-19(2):
TRAINING, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND
PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Increasing employment in small communities is an important mandate of our government. This week, across Canada, National Skilled Trades and Technology Week will be celebrated as we raise awareness of the many career opportunities in the skilled trades and technology sectors in the Northwest Territories and across Canada. This week, we also honour the 31 Apprenticeship High Mark award recipients and the 36 individuals who have obtained journey person certification this year in the Northwest Territories. I want to offer my congratulations to all the award recipients on their achievements.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment supports the development of a skilled northern workforce on many levels, including through the delivery of designated trades and occupation certification programs. This year, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise that we have five new members on the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupation Certification Board to provide advice and link between the department and industry to lead and are finalizing a promotional campaign to reach out to apprentices and inform them of the many opportunities they can access in our territory. We are also working towards issuing a Blue Seal qualification, which will assist journey persons in a designated trade or occupation to have their business skills recognized. To further support the apprenticeship program, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is also moving forward with the Women in Trades Program and Journey person Mentorship Program, both of which will be implemented in 2021.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment works in collaboration with many partners to seek out and develop opportunities for residents and organizations in small communities. We have established regional training committees to collaborate on joint training and employment initiatives. These typically include regional Indigenous organizations and economic and labour market stakeholders, as well as the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Aurora College. There are currently three dynamic committees in the South Slave, Dehcho, and Beaufort-Delta, and we are working to establish training committees in any other region that express interest.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment actively seeks out opportunities with communities, businesses, and government departments and agencies to offer increased opportunities to NWT residents. One of our key partnerships is with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, through which we are seeking to maximize the use of journey persons in local housing organizations to target training opportunities for apprenticeships. Currently, there are more than 30 journey persons working in communities.

One of the programs we offer is the Small Community Employment Support Program providing designated community authorities access to annual funding to help address local labour market needs and priorities. From 2018 to April 2020, more than 1,400 jobs have been supported in small communities by this program.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise you and this House that, to support small communities in addressing the impacts of the pandemic until 2022, designated community authorities can use their funding under the Small Community Employment Support Program to hire local residents to assist in addressing any pandemic-related challenge or need.

Madam Speaker, I have some additional good news in relation to our partnership with the Government of Canada. We are currently working with the federal Department of Employment and Social Development Canada to secure new funding to support economic and labour market recovery in the North. I will have more information to provide my colleagues and the public in the near future once more details become available.

Madam Speaker, over the past number of years the department's approach to supporting the labour market and training opportunities in communities across the Northwest Territories has been strategic and collaborative. When the pandemic hit, we mobilized and responded quickly to ensure clients,

employers, organizations, and community projects were not penalized or impacted financially as a result of changes in the delivery of education or training programs. Training, skills development, and education are crucial to the Northwest Territories' economic recovery, and our partners and ourselves have demonstrated we are ready to respond quickly with innovation, consideration, and collaboration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The NWT's non-renewable resource economy has experienced many changes over that last several decades. The NWT has witnessed the development and closure of gold mines around Yellowknife, an oil and gas boom that we eventually saw slowly fade away and give way to diamond exploration and production which appears to also be moving in the same direction.

Madam Speaker, all these non-renewable industry activities provide the residents of this great territory with hope: hope of moving away from reliance on government as the economic driver; hope for well-paying jobs; hope for better education; hope of owning their own home as an option over public housing; and hope of providing one's family with a chance at a successful and wholesome future.

Madam Speaker, it was the oil and gas industry that allowed me to realize the dream of bettering my life, and I expect that many others have been provided the same benefits from our non-renewable resource sector, whether it be gold or diamond mines.

Madam Speaker, let us be clear here, the Northwest Territories is rich in renewable and non-renewable resources. I am talking about our forests; I am talking about wildlife; I am talking about an abundance of water; I am talking about the richness of minerals such as gold, diamonds, and rare earth minerals that lie beneath our feet; and I am talking about the untapped oil and gas trapped below us.

Madam Speaker, with the variety and abundance of non-renewable resources present in the NWT, we continue to be a have not territory. We as a government must promote and support the exploration and development of our non-renewable resource sector through clear and reasonable legislation and with timely decisions so projects can advance.

As government, we must be willing to support our constituents, and that support is to provide them with an opportunity for employment and business opportunities beyond government. Those companies that undertake non-renewable resource development provide jobs, whether directly or indirectly, through use of northern contractors. The non-renewable resource sector provides our northern businesses with the opportunity to build capacity and provide us with well-trained individuals.

Madam Speaker, with the loss or slow-down in the non-renewable resource sector, we will experience a decline in our GDP. We will experience a loss in resource royalties. We will experience a loss of a major employer. We have to do all we can to support this sector. Thank you, Madam Speaker

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LAND LEASES

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak once again about the issue of the unreasonable minimum price of lease rent costs for land leaseholders on that will lands in the NWT. Madam Speaker, this now marks my third Member's statement on this topic, and I am determined to continue to revisit this topic until I see some substantive changes to the current regime of minimum rent costs.

The primary reason why I continue to bring up this subject is simply because it's an important issue for my constituents. I know several people with land leases, and they're all very concerned about the new rent minimum cost that came in effect April 1, 2018. I'm talking about average people who have modest incomes.

Madam Speaker, as I stated in my previous statements, the minimum rent costs for territorial land lease went from \$150 to \$840 annually. Rather than side with the more reasonable approach of a gradual increase of these costs over a period of time, the Department of Lands decided to increase the lands all at once by nearly six full.

Madam Speaker, I don't know what went into this decision to initiate these changes all at once, but the decision-making process for this particular issue was seriously flawed, and I'm saying this as an attempt to embarrass the government for a bad decision, and I'm not saying this, I'm not saying this as an attempt to embarrass the government for a bad decision which it was. My goal, however, is to stand up for all rights-based land leaseholders and all permanent and long-time residents of the NWT

to ensure they get the best deal possible in this situation.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I once again urge this government, more specifically, I urge the Minister of Lands, to reconsider the current course of his decision and not to make these new rent minimum costs permanent, at least not at its current price. I strongly recommend a more staggered approach to increasing these types of costs on people as that is much more reasonable and acceptable for people to incur. I will have questions for the Minister of Lands today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Speaker. [Translation] This past week, we are talking about the apprentice, just like my oldest son, Edzo Lafferty. He had to receive, so I know that he has a journeyman paper, and all his brothers and sisters, his grandfather, are very thankful. While I speak, I'm very thankful for my son. [Translation ends].

Madam Speaker, just to continue on with my Member's statement on overall education, today, I want to talk about one of the greatest treasures in this territory, our Indigenous languages. Our Indigenous languages are rare, unique, in all the world. They are beautiful to hear yet ever so fragile. Our languages are also carriers of our cultures, a true conveyor of our values and world views. Without the languages, the NWT Indigenous communities would be lost, and the world would be a lesser place.

Madam Speaker, central to the survival of our languages, our elders are true standard bearers of North Slavey, South Slavey, Gwich'in, Chipewyan, Cree, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuqtun, and my language, Tlicho, but also professional language interpreters here in this building and outside the building. Professional interpreters are essential, Madam Speaker, because they allow Indigenous speakers to coexist in an English-speaking world. Without our interpreters, our language speakers would have no option but to speak English and our languages become marginalized.

Today, I want to express my deep appreciation for the hard work and commitment of our Indigenous language interpreters wherever they are, in hospitals, healthcares in our territories, in the courts, in the hospitals, government offices, and right here in the Legislative Assembly. I commend you all and thank you for helping us carry our language to the future. For that, I would like to say masi cho.

As important as our interpreters are, their profession is being taken for granted by this government. At one time, interpreter was a thriving profession. Now, I believe there are no more than 10 certified Indigenous interpreters in the entire territory, no more than 10. Most of these 10 are near retirement, as well, and little has been done to train more. There is nothing less than an emergency to this matter. I intend to ask the government how they are responding to this emergency. Masi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PAULATUK SEWAGE LAGOON PROJECT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week, MACA wrote to the Hamlet of Paulatuk, telling them they have to pay back \$53,000 in clean waste-water funding for improvements to Paulatuk's sewage lagoon. MACA says they gave the hamlet two extensions; there is no way to extend the project deadline. MACA says the only option is to cancel the project and for Paulatuk to pay back the monies. The hamlet started the work this summer. They cannot get the work done by January 31st due to freeze-up, Madam Speaker. MACA did give a deadline for construction to end in the middle of winter.

Paulatuk could not start the work in 2019 because it did not have the appropriate equipment in the community. In 2020, they prioritized the equipment for the drainage that came in off the barge. The sewage lagoon did not get done due to freeze-up.

When we talk about capacity issues in smaller communities, it's a stark reality. Paulatuk desperately needs this work to be completed and no claw-backs. The hamlet is doing the best with what they have, with limited resources. The government is underfunding our municipal governments by \$40 million a year. When the hamlet gets funding, this is how MACA treats them. Instead of acting as funding police, maybe MACA should be there being a champion for them and helping them. Why can't the deadline be extended? Why can't the department underwrite to secure the funding on behalf of Paulatuk?

Better yet, the department has to make it better for our communities. The equipment is needed in there for the work in this critical infrastructure that is needed for the community. Madam Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADES (STEM)

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. November 1st to 8th is National Skilled Trades and Technology Week, a Canada-wide event that promotes and increases awareness of the opportunities within the skilled trades and the fields of technology.

Skilled trades and technology encompass a vast array of specialties. Carpenters, electricians, hairdressers, water monitors, and supply-chain managers are all examples of trades that we see in our own northern communities. Some trades can start in high school or as on-the-job training, but all trades at some point require some degree of specialized training or education. As a territory built by the hands of tradespeople in support of our resource-extraction sector, occupations that support this industry must be of utmost importance for any of our northern academic institutions. The Northwest Territories' future polytechnic university must incorporate northern economic considerations when developing its curriculum as there must be programming for northern students that is relevant to the demands of our northern workforce.

As a woman in engineering, it is particularly important to me to see women in the North taking on roles in skilled trades and technology. It is important for young people to know that all occupational fields are open to everyone. It is my hope that our northern university will incorporate a goal towards diversity in all of its work, towards encouraging more women, as well as Indigenous students, to enter post-secondary studies.

This year, physically distant and virtual events will recognize and celebrate the achievements of NWT apprenticeship, trades, and occupational certifications. I encourage all Northwest Territories residents to participate in virtual events to learn more or to provide mentorship about careers in skilled trades and technology. I would like to celebrate all individuals in the North who occupy skilled trades and technology roles in their day-to-day work. Your work is important, and your hands are building a strong future for our North. I will have questions unrelated to my topic later today. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SENIORS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. In June this year, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, who is now the Minister responsible for Seniors, sponsored a motion calling for creation of a seniors'

and elders' strategy. As pointed out in those debates, action on this growing sector of the population is now guided by a 2014 strategic framework that focuses on health-related aspects of aging. The motion called for expanding that vision with an integrated strategy that takes into account issues beyond healthcare. The successful motion called for a strategy that "provides a whole-of-government approach to enhance and coordinate programs and services to elders." Each new demographic report shows the dramatic growth in our seniors population, with 60-and-overs growing from 2,787 in 2003 to 5,981 in 2018 and a projected 9,383 by 2035. We need a strategy more than ever and now.

The NWT Seniors' Society has lobbied for a renewed strategy and supported the June motion. They say improvements are needed in housing, homecare, transportation, income, and market rent supports. Aging in place is especially emphasized as a cost-effective and self-reliant alternative to institutional care, although long-term care also needs attention. We need more than health-specific programs to ensure a decent quality of life for our seniors. Boiled down, the main ask of the motion was for the government to provide resources to bring a broad stakeholder group together for the creation of a new vision and action plan.

The former Minister responsible for Seniors said a new strategy "may not be achievable... in light of... COVID" but that issues such as housing, health supports, community infrastructure, and personal safety are taken up in other mandate goals. I see from the new Minister's mandate letter that the development of a seniors' strategy is not one of her assignments. I will have questions for the new Minister responsible for Seniors on what action she will take to develop a seniors' strategy. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ORAL HEALTH

MS. CLEVELAND: Madam Speaker, I have spoken about oral health on numerous occasions in this House. I have focused on the need of the GNWT to change the regulatory environment to provide preventative oral health in small communities and the cost of not focusing on preventative oral care. One of the key objectives of the GNWT's oral health strategy calls for establishing systemic supports for improved oral health services, including improving the regulatory environment. This is one area where I feel strongly that the GNWT must reconsider its legislative position. The Dental Auxiliaries Act stipulates that no dental hygienist shall practice

dental hygiene except under the direction and control of a dentist.

Nurses work in our small remote communities without doctors; preventative healthcare professionals like chiropractors and massage therapists are free to work under professional accreditation using their professional discretion to provide services to NWT residents. Given the huge demand for oral health practitioners and the known fact that prevention saves future burdens on our healthcare system, the GNWT must commit to changing this legislative barrier.

In the Northwest Territories, 68 percent of dentists are men, whereas 86 percent of dental hygienists are women. Denying dental hygienists the opportunity to practice outside of the control of a dentist means that the government is inadvertently denying employment opportunities to an employment sector that is largely female. Today, all Canadian jurisdictions except for the three territories and PEI have legislation to support dental hygienists to be autonomous and self-regulated to varying levels. For example, some jurisdictions restrict the use of local anesthesia by dental hygienists.

Madam Speaker, I am told there are various reasons the GNWT does not allow experienced, certified, and registered dental hygienists to provide preventative oral care independent of a dentist. Given this government's commitment to ensure gender equity, I do not accept a simple no but rather see the value in working through the challenges defined by the department. Madam Speaker, the GNWT's oral health strategy is meant to be in place until the end of the 2021 fiscal year. I would appreciate the Minister's support for changing the legislation to allow dental hygienists to provide oral healthcare without a dentist's oversight. This is a win for both the final chapter of this strategy and the health and economic opportunity of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION BOARD**

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's been over four and a half years since the Northwest Territories Power Corporation board was removed and a board of deputy ministers was replaced. There have been a number of ministerial changes in that time, and I would just like to walk through why this is so important that we create a proper arm's-length power corporation and reinstate the board. This all began in 2014 and 2015 when back-

to-back subsidies were needed for the Power Corporation because they simply were not running a sufficient budget for a rainy day or, in this case, a non-rainy day due to low water levels. In response to that, the board was removed, and it came under the control of deputy ministers, perhaps a reasonable response had failed to keep a surplus and make sure the Power Corporation was running.

A proper power corporation will, through its ratepayers, be able to fund its own. A good example we see of this is the WSCC, where, when they make a rate increase, it is to balance. It's an evidenced approach, and it doesn't allow political interference to say, "No. You're not going to do that." Then, at the end of the day, we end up with a power corporation that is not sufficient."

However, I believe that is the case we are presently in. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation debt is rapidly increasing, and it doesn't seem like this change to a board of deputy ministers has addressed the underlying root cause. In our capital budget, we have millions and millions of dollars in power infrastructure, another rate increase is coming, and it doesn't seem that the systemic problem of providing power that is paid for by ratepayers is at all being addressed.

I know this system is not working. We have one of the highest rates of power in the Northwest Territories. In June 2016, then Minister Louis Sebert committed to a governance review looking at the board of directors and to bring that back and see a full governance model to get an arm's-length board, perhaps, and see if this could be addressed. Once again, Minister Shane Thompson, at the time, repeatedly was asked to come up with a governance model, and there was some back and forth about whether any direction was being provided to that board of deputy ministers.

One of the problems, I believe, is it's often said that these deputy ministers aren't arm's-length. That's a problem in itself; and they're not completely free from political direction. If I was the Minister of the Power Corporation, I would expand their mandate into heating; I would prevent ministerial directions to them, and that's failed to happen. Madam Chair, I'm seeking unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

--Unanimous consent granted

MR. JOHNSON: Here we are, four and a half years later, we still have a power corporation that has not addressed its underlying financial problems. We still have a board of deputy ministers. No governance review has been conducted. We now, once again, have a new Minister who has been passed the responsibility of completing this work. I believe this Assembly must look into the governance review,

must conduct a full review of the Power Corporation, and let's look at some of those underlying problems that means we continue to have an arm's-length corporation that runs a deficit year after year. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DENTAL SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Speaker. Today, I'm going to talk about dental services in the smaller communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has stalled much of our government's programs and services. Even the simple services like renewing your driver's licence, for example, or getting a dental cleaning has become a much more difficult task to complete compared to pre-COVID times.

Just yesterday, Madam Speaker, there was a CBC article published which described an increasingly dire situation regarding dental services for small communities in the NWT. In fact, two of the four communities that were mentioned in this article, Lutselk'e and Deninu Kue, are directly affected by this, and that is not okay with me.

Madam Speaker, the issue is that dentists are simply not being permitted to do their normal work in the smaller communities as they would normally do prior to COVID. Some patients have not seen a dentist since February, and that's almost 10 months ago. This is unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, I'm not the only one who is worried about the situation, but the dental community and even the federal government are concerned about it, too. Dentists want to see and help their patients because that's what they're there for, they made an oath, and that's what other medical professions do. Why are we enforcing some of the most stringent dental guidelines in the country when our small communities have only one treatment room? This is something to consider and unrealistic, I know. There is a capacity issue there, as well.

Madam Speaker, another aspect of this situation I'm concerned about are the medical travel costs of flying all our referred patients from their home communities into Yellowknife to receive dental services. This current system is not cost-efficient and not sustainable for the long term. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I urge our government, our department, to work with the dental community, the federal government, and create a different arrangement for providing dental services to people in the small communities. That's for the remainder of the pandemic, and there are other aspects to think about, such as NHIV and that's another thing

to consider, as well. With that, Madam Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services today. Marsi cho.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RETIREMENT OF MARK GERLOCK

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Madam Speaker, it is with great joy and sadness that I learnt of Mark Gerlock's retirement from Enbridge in Fort Simpson. His dedication and service throughout the past years in the Northwest Territories has been greatly appreciated by the residents of the region and myself.

Mark has worked in the North for 43 years with 36 of them with Enbridge. Mark had worked road maintenance and construction for seven years before wanting to better himself and develop his career. He applied for the pipeline position with Interprovincial Pipelines in Fort Simpson in 1984, now known as Enbridge. Mark's devotion and positive attitude throughout his career at Enbridge has not gone unnoticed and will be sadly missed by his colleagues and communities across the region. Mark's loyalty to the position has proven effective to his fellow colleagues as they thrive in their day to day responsibilities largely due to Mark's example.

Madam Speaker, Mark is a source of encouragement to help people better themselves and build their strengths not only professionally but personally. His kindness, courtesy, and passionate attitude was always apparent as he dealt with various issues.

Mark spent eight years working on the Fort Simpson Ambulance as a first responder and I had the pleasure of working with him for a couple of years. I'd like to thank him for the years of service to the community and ensuring that residents received excellent emergency services during this time.

Mark was a powerful force to be reckoned with during his years of playing in the Fort Simpson Rec Hockey Team and now in the Old Timers League. I'm able lucky to call him a teammate and most importantly a line mate. Look forward many more years on the ice together. As a true community champion, Mark also dedicated himself to coaching the younger athletes to share his skills and knowledge of the sport.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank Mark for everything that he has accomplished, and I would like to congratulate him on his retirement and I wish him the best in the years to come. I know his wife and daughter look forward to having his full

attention and some tasks to keep him busy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 6, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Frame Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 6-19(2): REPORT ON REMOTE SITTINGS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. Your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its report on remote sittings.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to report on remote sittings.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has presented new difficulties and challenges to legislative assemblies. On June 10, 2020, the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act was amended to add Section 4.1 which:

- Allows the Legislative Assembly to conduct all or part of a session by video- or teleconference if the Speaker believes exceptional circumstances require it.
- The Speaker may allow a Member to participate remotely for all or part of a session.
- A Member participating remotely may vote as though they were present in person.

Background

During the debate on this amendment, it was noted the Speaker would need some guidance on how and when to use his or her discretion. On August 12, 2020, the Speaker wrote to the committee with three questions for consideration:

1. What exceptional circumstances would warrant conducting a sitting by way of teleconference or videoconference?
2. In what circumstances would it be appropriate for the Speaker to authorize an individual Member to participate in all or a portion of a sitting by teleconference or videoconference?
3. What practices, policies, or rule amendments would be required to address the situation of a Member appearing and voting by teleconference or videoconference who loses their connection?

The committee discussed each question at length, and this report lays out the committee's position and recommendations on each question, as well as other changes to the rules that should be considered.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to turn it over now to the Member for Hay River South to continue the report.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When should a session be held remotely?

The committee discussed several potential scenarios, including severe weather, pandemics, massive travel disruptions, the loss of the Assembly building, and declared states of emergency. The committee agreed that states of emergency declared under the Emergency Management Act or the Public Health Act could be a reason to hold part or all of a session virtually. The committee decided against an exhaustive list of other scenarios and felt it best that the Speaker consult with the Executive Council and Members and then make a decision. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the rules of the Assembly authorize the Speaker to conduct part or all of a session remotely using an approved platform in the event of a state of emergency declared for the entire territory under the Emergency Management Act, or a public health emergency declared under the Public Health Act.

Further, that the rules authorize the Speaker to convene part or all of a session remotely if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the health, safety, or well-being of Members would be at risk by meeting in person.

The committee also discussed whether a remote sitting would require the Speaker or Deputy Speaker to preside from the Chamber with the Mace. The committee decided that making the Speaker or Deputy Speaker travel to preside over the sitting was unnecessary.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Mace, as a symbol of the authority of the people of the Northwest Territories, should be placed in the Chamber on its normal stand, if possible, and, if not, displayed in another

manner in keeping with its symbolic significance during any remote sitting of the Assembly.

The committee decided against making a formal recommendation on whether table officers need to be in the Chamber, leaving that decision to the discretion of the Speaker.

When should a Member be allowed to attend a session remotely?

The committee had a lengthy discussion on what reasons an individual Member may have to appear remotely for a sitting. The committee discussed whether the Speaker should have the discretion to approve any reason or if the committee should provide some guidance. The committee felt that being an elected Member is both a privilege and a responsibility. The committee believes that Members should make every available effort to be present in person when the House is sitting.

The committee discussed when it would be appropriate for a Member to attend remotely. It was agreed that the Speaker should only allow a Member to attend remotely upon request of that Member. The committee felt that the guidelines to attend remotely should be clear, consistent, and narrow. The committee believes any absence from the territory for personal travel was not reasonable grounds to allow a Member to attend remotely. The committee felt that Members travelling for official business should not be expected to attend remotely.

The committee agreed on the following reasons for a Member appearing remotely:

- a state of emergency in the Member's home community that prevented travel;
- an order of the Chief Public Health Officer prohibiting the Member's travel; and
- any other time when the Speaker believes the Member's safety or health would be at risk.

Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the rules authorize the Speaker to allow a Member to attend all or part of a session remotely when that Member is unable to travel due to a state of emergency being declared in the Member's home community; the Member is under an order of the Chief Public Health Officer prohibiting travel; or the Speaker believes travel would put the Member's health or safety at risk.

Madam Speaker, I will now turn it over to the Member for Nahendeh. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Nahendeh.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What practices, policies, or rule amendments are required for a Member participating by teleconference or videoconference?

Any Member participating remotely has the same rights and privileges as if they were physically present in the Chamber.

The committee discussed various issues that could affect a remote sitting, including experiences of other legislatures during the pandemic. There are several rules that will need to be revised to allow for remote sittings. Other rules need to be clarified, and some new rules are needed. The committee is also recommending revised Orders of the Day for when the House is meeting remotely.

Decorum

Rule 12(10) states, "When in the Assembly every Member shall be attired in traditional Indigenous attire or in a manner that does not offend the dignity of the Assembly." While it should be clear that any Member appearing remotely should follow this rule, the committee also believes some flexibility should be used when interpreting this rule, as Members may not have their normal business clothing with them. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that Rule 12(10) apply when a Member is appearing remotely.

The committee discussed examples from other legislatures and their committees which could have an impact on House proceedings. These included family members interrupting a Member when on a teleconference or videoconference; campaign materials being visible on screen; pets blocking the camera; and other behaviours that would not be acceptable if they happened in the Chamber. The committee felt that there should be no unnecessary distractions to the House by a Member appearing remotely.

To minimize the amount of background noise and to ensure a Member is heard as clearly as possible, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that training and orientation for online sittings should be provided. Furthermore, the Board of Management should look at providing a headset to each Member to ensure consistency and any Member attending remotely be required to wear a headset.

The committee felt it would be inappropriate for a Member appearing remotely by videoconference to have anything onscreen that could be considered a prop, display, or exhibit. This would include items such as election signs, anything that could be considered commercial advertising, or a visually distracting background. Legislative Assembly staff should investigate a consistent or common background that could be used by all Members. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that any Member attending remotely by videoconference be required to have a neutral background on screen.

Further, if the Speaker determines a background is distracting to the House, the Speaker be empowered to order the Member to rectify the issue and, if the Member refuses, to turn off the Member's video and allow the Member to participate via audio only.

Voting

The committee discussed how best to conduct voting when all or some Members are participating remotely. The main concerns were making sure that all Members are able to vote and what to do if a Member is disconnected before or during a vote.

As the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act allows teleconference or videoconference options, the committee felt the best way to vote was by recorded vote instead of relying on a visual count. The clerk would call upon each Member to vote, the Member would say how they are voting, the clerk would record the vote and move on to the next Member. As there are many routine voice votes during a sitting day, the committee felt that only those votes dealing with bills or motions should be recorded.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, whenever a Member is attending session remotely, all votes on readings of bills or on any motion that requires notice be conducted as a recorded vote.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. At this point in time, I wish to turn the floor over to the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Speaker.

In the event a Member loses their connection before voting, that Member must contact the table officer on duty as soon as possible to register their vote. If there is no response when the clerk or designate calls the Member, the clerk would call the Member two additional times and, if the Member has still not responded, proceed to the next Member and continue the vote. After the clerk has gone through the list, he or she would confirm if the Member who had lost connection has submitted a vote through alternative means and announce to the House how that Member voted. If a connection is re-established before the results of the vote are announced by the Speaker, the clerk shall call on the Member to cast their vote. The Speaker should allow three minutes from the end of the roll call for a Member to contact the table officer with their vote before announcing the results.

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, when a Member attending remotely loses their connection just prior to or during a vote, the Member immediately contacts the table officer to register their vote, and that the clerk will announce to the House how that Member voted at the end of the roll call. Three minutes will be counted from the end of the roll call to when the Speaker announces the results if a Member has lost connection prior to voting to allow the Member time to contact the table officer.

The committee also discussed what should happen if a Member loses connection and is unable to contact the clerk. An example is if all telecommunications are lost in their community. Another scenario considered was if the Member, while still connected, did not respond when called to vote. In both of these cases, the committee determined that Rule 12(5) would apply, notably, "If a Member enters the Chamber when a question has been put, not realizing this is the case, they shall not vote on that question." In other words, once the Speaker calls for a vote, it is the responsibility of each Member to vote. The committee understands the difficulties of remote sittings and, therefore, makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 9

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, when conducting a roll call, the

clerk call on the mover of the motion, followed by each Member attending remotely by order of their normal seat in the House, then each Member seated in the Chamber. For Members attending remotely, they will be called no more than three times for their vote before the clerk moves on to the next Member.

Oral and Written Questions

The committee discussed what would happen if a Member attending remotely lost their connection partway through asking a Minister a question. The committee felt that, if the Member was able to reconnect before the end of oral questions, the Speaker would allow the Member to continue their questions. If the Member could not connect before the time allowed for oral questions expired, the Member should be allowed to submit the question and up to three supplemental questions in writing and to have the question included in Hansard with a note that the question was submitted in writing due to a lost connection. The Minister would have two sitting days to respond under returns to oral questions. The committee felt that this should not be treated as taking the question as notice, as that would prevent another Member from asking a related question. The committee also felt that the submitted question should not count towards the Member's limit of written questions on the order papers.

Recommendation 10

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, during oral questions, if a Member attending remotely is disconnected while asking a question, if the Member is successful in reconnecting before the allotted time expires, the Speaker will allow the Member to continue their questions. If the Member is not able to reconnect before the allotted time expires, the Member may choose to submit the full question and up to three supplemental questions in writing and that the Minister would have two sitting days in which to respond.

If a Member of the Executive Council attending remotely loses their connection during oral questions and a Member asks a question under that Minister's portfolio, the committee felt that the Premier or, in her absence, the Deputy Premier should take the question. The Premier or Deputy Premier could choose to try and answer the question or may take it as notice.

Recommendation 11

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, if a Minister attending remotely loses their connection when a question has been

asked to that Minister, then the question shall be redirected to the Premier or designate to respond.

The committee discussed the process for written questions. As all written questions must be filed with the clerk prior to the sitting day, the committee had no concerns with the established process being conducted remotely. The only issue committee could identify was in the event that a Member lost their connection before being able to put their written question to the House. The committee felt that the question should be announced, but not read by the clerk, and added to the order papers, as well as being printed in full in Hansard. Therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 12

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, when a Member files a written question with the Office of the Clerk, the Member should note if, in the event the Member loses their connection, the written question can be announced by the clerk and be printed in its entirety in Hansard.

With that, I will turn it over to the Member for Nunakput.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ministers' and Members' statements

The committee discussed what rules were needed for Members' and Ministers' statements during remote sittings. For Ministers statements, the committee felt that, as these were well circulated on government websites and social media, in the event a Minister was unable to conclude a statement due to lost connection, no special provisions were required.

As Members do not have the same level of support to make the public aware of a statement, the committee felt a new rule was needed for Members' statements. The committee decided that a Member participating remotely can file their statement with the clerk in writing at least one hour before the House sits. In the event a Member loses their connection while giving their statement, there are two options available. The submitted statement could be printed in Hansard with a notation, or, if the Member reconnects before the end of Members' statements, the Member can ask to be put back on the list to speak. The Member would then be allowed to conclude their statement. The statement would then be printed in full in Hansard with the first attempt printed up to the point when the Member was cut off.

Recommendation 13

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that, in the event a Member loses connection while delivering a Member's statement, that the Speaker ask the Member to conclude their statement once they are reconnected, provided the House has not moved to another order. In the event that the Members' statements have been concluded when the Member reconnects, the Member's statement would be printed in full at the end of Members' statements.

Revised Orders of the Day for fully remote sittings

The committee reviewed the orders of the day for any orders that may need changes during a remote sitting of the entire Assembly. In addition to the changes already discussed in this report, the committee recommends that the following orders, or the rules associated with those orders, be amended:

Prayer

Members should remain seated during the prayer and keep a respectful demeanour.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

Only an executive summary of the report should be read. The rest of the report will be deemed read and be printed in full in Hansard.

Replies to the Commissioner's Address

As this item allows Members to speak with no time limit on any topic, the committee felt it could present issues during a remote sitting. Since Members can make one reply at any time during a session, the committee felt it was reasonable to drop "Replies to the Commissioner's address" from the orders of the day during a fully remote sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Replies to the Budget Address

In the event that a budget address is given during a remote sitting, under the rules, there are only seven possible days a Member can reply. The committee discussed how best to deal with replies. In the event that a Member is disconnected while giving a reply, the Member can resume with the time remaining on the clock on the next day. If the Member was cut off on the last day, the Member may submit their full statement in writing, and it will be printed in full in Hansard.

Motions

During a remote sitting of the Assembly, the committee felt allowing motions to be called for three days, rather than two, before being dropped

from the orders. If a Member is disconnected during a debate on a motion, that Member must make every effort to reconnect. The proceedings will not be halted, and if the Member is unable to reconnect, they can contact the table officers to record their vote. All votes will be recorded votes conducted pursuant to recommendation 9.

Second Reading of Bills

Members will have the option of submitting a written statement to the purpose of the Bill that will be printed in full in Hansard.

Recommendation 14

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the House adopt a revised daily order of business in the Rules of the Legislative Assembly for a remote sitting, pursuant to the changes listed in this report.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will now pass it down to my colleague, the Chair of the committee, Mr. O'Reilly.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente.

Conclusion

The committee recognizes that how legislative assemblies across the country operate have had to undergo many changes due to the pandemic. The operating procedures have been adapted quickly with mixed results, with numerous technical issues that may impact individual Members or the Assembly as a whole. To ensure all Members are aware of different procedures during a partial or fully remote sitting, the committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 15

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Legislative Assembly direct the Office of the Clerk to produce a reference guide for Members and staff outlining key changes and best practices to be used while sitting remotely. Further, that the Office of the Clerk be mandated to update the reference guide as needed as new practices are identified.

In the event of a fully remote sitting, the committee felt that a review should be done afterwards to see if any additional changes would be needed. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 16

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that after any remote sitting, the

Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures be tasked with conducting a review and to provide any recommendations for improvements.

Finally, nothing proposed here limit's the Speaker's authority to manage the daily operations of the Assembly and the sittings of the House. The Speaker must retain discretion to apply the rules of the House to accommodate any Members participating remotely and to ensure the dignity of the House is upheld.

This concludes the committee's report. The committee thanks the Speaker for the opportunity to provide recommendations on this timely and important matter. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 6-19(2) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I move that the report of the committee be moved into the Committee of the Whole for further discussion. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order and is non-debateable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The report will be moved into Committee of the Whole.

Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Thebacha.

COMMITTEE REPORT 7-19(2):
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2017-2018
AND 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on the review of the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Annual Reports of the Official Languages Commissioner and commends it to this House.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Annual Reports of the Official Languages Commissioner. The committee thanks Mrs. Shannon Gullberg, the Official Languages Commissioner, for her appearance on October 26, 2020.

The Official Languages Act requires the Commissioner to prepare annual reports. These reports include information on the numbers of complaints filed. It can also include recommendations. The Speaker tables the report in the Legislative Assembly. Once tabled, committee reviews the report.

The committee is currently conducting a five-year review of the Official Languages Act as required under Section 35 of the act. At the meeting with the committee, the Commissioner provided a number of recommendations regarding possible changes to the act. Her two annual reports included a number of recommendations addressed to the Legislative Assembly and the government.

The committee normally reviews the Commissioner's report and then makes their own recommendations to the Assembly. However, this year, the committee will consider the Commissioner's recommendations relating to the Official Languages Act as part of its review and will make recommendations in that report.

The Commissioner also included a number of recommendations specific to the use of official languages at the Legislative Assembly. Committee has shared these recommendations with the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, which is currently reviewing the use of official languages at the Assembly, and will be making recommendations to this House.

The committee wishes to thank Mrs. Gullberg for her service as Official Languages Commissioner. Mrs. Gullberg has been involved with the office for more than 15 years, both as Commissioner and as a lawyer for the Commissioner. Mrs. Gullberg has been a strong advocate of the language rights provided for in the act and has served the residents of the Northwest Territories well. Committee looks forward to working with her replacement. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Reports of standing and special communities. Item 7, returns to oral questions. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 456-19(2):
LAND LEASES

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, can the Minister explain if there are any plans to change or delay the current minimum land lease rent costs for territorial land leaseholders? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Due to COVID-19, no lease fees are being charged for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Public land in the NWT is one of our most valuable resources, an asset, and must be priced accordingly. I can confirm that any changes we've considered and analyzed as we undertake the necessary work in developing a new Public Land Act regulation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Can the Minister explain why his department decided to initiate the new minimum rent cost for land leaseholders all at once rather than a gradual approach as done with taxes?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: In the 18th Assembly, departments were tasked to find revenue or cut costs. The department realized that lease fees had not been addressed over 20 years. They used a cost-of-living index calculation, as well. As well, they were trying to align both territorial and Commissioner's land. Fees for exclusive use of land were increased at the beginning, in April 2018, almost after 20 years for no increases. Lease rent minimums have been set at \$840 for all types of leases. Lease rent changes are being implemented through a phased approach. Lease rents will increase at the current rate until a lease comes up for renewal, or a lease comes up for a five-year renewal, or upon issuance of a new lease. Lessees can arrange payment for the rent in installments by making appropriate arrangements with the Department of Finance.

MS. MARTSELOS: The last time I asked the Minister about this topic, he mentioned the development of public land regulations on the way. Can the Minister explain how he intends for those regulations to ease the financial burden on people from the new rent minimum cost?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: To ease the financial burden during COVID-19, a regulatory minute was put in place so that no lease fees are being charged for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. I've heard concerns for both increases, and I'm working with the department on a way forward. Reviewing the pricing for exclusive use of public land is a key piece of Public Land Act regulatory work. We will be engaging IGOs, municipalities, committee, and residents have that opportunity, as well.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Speaker, will the Minister admit that this whole situation could have been handled better, and will he commit to improving the decision-making process for future decisions like this issue? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I would like to thank the Member for that question. Simply put, yes. This was one of the reasons I asked for Department of Lands upon being elected as a Minister. I am happy to advise the House that we have identified a team who will focus on regulatory process. I have committed previously to this to engage Regular Members in the development of the public land regulations so that there will be opportunities for you to review and provide comments on any changes to public land pricing or administrative fees as part of the process. Again, I would like to thank the Member for her hard work in advocating for all residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 457-19(2):
INTERPRETERS

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Speaker. [Translation] I have talked about regarding the interpreters. In the Northwest Territories, there are less than 10 interpreters in the Northwest Territories. Some of them are ready for retirement. Some of them will be retiring pretty soon. I would like to ask a question to the Minister of culture regarding the interpreters. The courthouse, medical interpreters, they all need interpreters, so I have a question for the Minister. [Translation ends]. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Madam Speaker, could the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment explain the process currently in place for training and also certifying professional interpreters in the territory? What is our current system? Masi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is currently no accreditation body in the territory for accrediting translators. I have a list of translators here who the department uses. I think there are 33 names on there. I think 16 of them have interpreter/translator certificates from bodies like Aurora College, and a number also have qualifications in linguistics and things like that. I don't say it enough, but I do want to take this opportunity to thank the translators. I stand in the House, and I listen. Sometimes, I do not know what Members are saying, but the translators have to listen to that, understand it, and then translate it back into another language. It's an amazing skill, and I want to thank them. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. LAFFERTY: [Translation] In 1990, we had a language bureau. There were a lot of interpreters then. There were a lot of interpreters with the

GNWT at that time, but today, we do not have. I would like to ask the Minister that question: how many today? Is there any training? Are there any interpreters to be trained at this time? [Translation ends].

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: The efforts of the department right now are focusing on revitalization because we realize that there is a need to revitalize languages so that they can be in wider use and then so that we can start utilizing interpreters more. Currently, there is no training program in the territory, but under the Indigenous Languages Action Plan, one of the deliverables in the next two years, less than that now, about a year and a half, is to create the partnerships with translating programs -- there are some in Alberta and BC -- and be able to make those connections so that we can encourage and facilitate more translator/interpreter training.

MR. LAFFERTY: [Translation] Just regarding the interpreters' training, we do not have interpreters' training as of today. You can see there are interpreters here. Most of them have white hair, and now, in terms of their jobs, they are ready for retirement. We know that they are ready for retirement. What if they retire? We want to have another interpreter to take over. At this time, Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister. [Translation ends]. [Microphone turned off] ...interpreters are essential for the use and survival of our official languages. Could the Minister describe the government's plan for building and also sustaining a strong core of interpreters here in the Northwest Territories?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: There is a plan. I think it's too big to talk about right now because it starts when children first enter school. I was looking just a few minutes ago at a framework or a strategy from 2010, when the Member for Monfwi was the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I am happy to say that a lot of the actions identified in there are things that have now been completed; there is progress being made. Just the other day, I released or officially launched the Our Languages curriculum, so now, there is a curriculum, a solid curriculum, in schools, that can be implemented across the territory. That is one of the things we are doing in the early years.

There are also immersion programs. We have a mentor-apprenticeship program where language speakers are paired up with elders and with fluent speakers to help them learn and become more fluent. We are working on adult immersion diploma program so that we can get more speakers to the point where they can become interpreter/translators. There is a lot of work, and it's one of the bright spots of the government, I would say. As a new Minister, you come into a

department, and there are some areas that have not been looked at maybe in 10 or 20 years. Then there are some where there has been a recent push to get work done. Indigenous language revitalization is one of those areas, and it really is a bright spot. I am confident that we are going to see the numbers go up in the coming years.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Speaker. I am glad that the Minister is confident and that there is work in place hopefully to develop some more or establish more interpreters here in the Northwest Territories. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I am more focused on expediting the process. What we talked about is: there are two years or could be less. Will the Minister commit to developing a fast-track program for development of a new generation of professional Indigenous language interpreters here in the Northwest Territories, which is badly needed as we speak? Masi.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: There are programs under development, such as the diploma program. I want to make sure that we focus our efforts where they are needed. I take the Member's point that we do need interpreters. I will go back to the department. I will find out what the plans are in terms of the diploma and other efforts that are happening and to see how we can ensure that we do have people capable of performing translation and interpretation services. Perhaps it's not a certificate program at this point. We do need those people in place, and I will have those conversations. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 458-19(2):
SENIORS AND ELDERS STRATEGY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. My question is for the Minister responsible for Seniors. In the debate leading to the adoption of the motion calling for creation of a seniors' and elders' strategy, it was the position of the then Minister that a specific strategy would likely not be possible owing to COVID. He said that action on senior-related activities would be pursued piecemeal. I would like to know from the Minister: is this still the position of the new Minister responsible for Seniors? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for Seniors.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There will be an elders' strategy developed within this Assembly. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: That is a great commitment. I appreciate that from the Minister. My statement earlier today cited a number of statistics indicating the proportion of seniors is growing quickly, but it is not clear whether the strategy is going to include all services. How will the Minister not just complete a seniors' and elders' strategy but also see that seniors' planning is a lens applied to all GNWT programs and services?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you for the question, Member for Frame Lake. We are collaborating across all government departments to identify what the gaps are and what the resources are available to seniors to figure out how we can develop a strategy that meets their needs in a holistic way. I also want to say that we plan to collaborate with the NWT Seniors' Society and other seniors' organizations and seniors as individuals in order to develop this strategy. It will be a collaborative process from top to bottom.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister. It's a great day in the House when we get such fabulous answers. No, seriously, I do appreciate them very much. The poverty strategy talked about an integrated continuum of services, and I think that sets a good benchmark for how the seniors' strategy might roll out. How does the Minister intend to integrate cross-departmental delivery of coordinated services now until the development of a strategy with a view to the needs of seniors and elders?

HON. JULIE GREEN: We do now collaborate with other government departments in order to provide services to seniors, but we could be doing better. For example, I am very interested to see whether it's possible to have a common application for all seniors' services across all government departments, rather than having seniors having to apply to each government department for the service that they require. That is the kind of initiative that I'm looking at going forward. Of course, there is a lot of work related to seniors going on now around our priority to have seniors age in place with dignity. That involves housing, homecare, and other supports that will allow seniors to stay in their homes, and that work will continue alongside the development of the strategy.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I love this new Minister. This is great. In a presentation earlier this year to the Standing Committee on Social Development, the NWT

seniors said that they are ready to work with the new Minister, or the Minister responsible for seniors I think they've got a great ally, now, but how does the Minister propose to collaborate with the society and other stakeholders on the development and implementation of a new seniors' strategy during a pandemic? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Of course, the pandemic makes it more difficult. I have to say that I have attended three meetings of seniors' organizations via Zoom, and the seniors are up on Zoom. It's not a problem. They will connect and give their input. The department is hiring a person full-time for two years to lead the process of developing a seniors' strategy. It will be the job of this person to figure out how the consultation is going to work and to include the voices of everyone who needs to be heard. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 459-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ECONOMY
SUPPORT FOR SERVICE INDUSTRY

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Yukon government has been very creative and proactive in their support for the business community, with the creation of programs with CanNor that were rolled out six to eight weeks before our Northern Business Relief Fund. The Pivot Program at the Yukon University and the Tourism Accommodation Supplement are such examples. I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI: why has the GNWT been so slow in its response to the business community and resistant to meet with them, specifically in the hospitality industry? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to suggest that maybe, rather than slow, the response here has been different in terms of its approach. We certainly were, I would suggest, faster than the Yukon in terms of delivering some of the relief and expenses for the industry, but then, rather than rolling out money quickly, the Department of ITI here opted to wait and see how the federal government was going to be putting forward their programs and their money, which have been significant. The goal was to find a way to fill gaps rather than duplicate efforts. The Department of ITI has partnered with CanNor and provided relief funding in the form of the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, as well as the GRIT Fund, which is directed specifically at the tourism industry.

Madam Speaker, I am also quite happy to say that one of the first things I had done as Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment was to actually cohost a tourism conference for all federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of tourism to discuss the shared challenges we're all facing in this industry. I have also had the opportunity to meet with our local tourism association, and we are collaborating with them in terms of developing the GRIT funding, in terms of developing marketing programs that are obviously going to have to change for the short term. Again, we'll actually be attending tomorrow at the AGM put on by the Northwest Territories Tourism Association. The Department of ITI is very much involved with the tourism industry and is looking for ways to fill those gaps. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: For the most part, both the GNWT and the federal government have failed to provide the hospitality industry with relief funding that works. In order to apply for the Northern Benefit Relief Fund, businesses can only break even on a monthly basis, which is not sustainable given that they have gone months with little to no revenue. We have heard that taking on additional borrowing from the various loan programs is not suitable. Many of our hospitality businesses operate on such fine profit margins that they would go further into debt trying to pay off the loans. How will the GNWT support this vital sector to make sure we do not lose any further businesses?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I am glad that the dire situation that is facing hospitality is being spoken of here. I think that, as the Minister of Finance at one point, under that hat, I had spoken of the fact that we're seeing a recovery in so much of our employment sectors, but that is not true in the hospitality sector and the tourism industry. That is an area that is going to continue to be struggling for some time. Really, the response has to be to be able to fill those gaps, so the Business Advisory Council that was brought about by ITI to assist us in figuring out what the best ways are to support relief and recovery, they are coming out just now, or have come out just now, with identifying some of the gaps by looking at that. By speaking to them and, as I described in my last response, by engaging with the tourism sector, we will be able to make sure that we are best helping them fill those gaps, while acknowledging the vast number of needs that are being created by the COVID pandemic.

MS. NOKLEBY: The GNWT is the largest client for the accommodation sector. Without any of the duty travel and no tourists coming in, their future is very bleak. We are currently slated to spend more than half of the COVID secretariat budget on isolation centres, but that contract was sole-sourced. Will the GNWT look at creating a program similar to the Yukon's Tourism Accommodation Supplement?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes. I am actively looking at that. That material came across earlier on, and right now the department is looking at what we can do and whether or not there are some elements of what's happening in the Yukon that we can adapt here. Similarly, with respect to the isolation centres, we are using, to some degree, some of that hospitality industry here with the isolation centres and are continuing to look at whether or not there are ways to better support the hospitality industry while having the isolation centres up and running. That is a very active question, and I am glad to have that question here on the floor.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am going to read something that was issued by the government yesterday. This is a quote from the Business Advisory Council: "With the hard work that the GNWT, the business community, and the residents of the Northwest Territories have put in over the last six months, we are optimistic that the territory will not have to go back to the restrictions required during phase 1 of Emerging Wisely. The Business Advisory Council will continue to work with the COVID secretariat and will be vigilant in monitoring its efforts to achieve the objectives of greater transparency, efficiency, and cost reductions." Not exactly a ringing endorsement of the COVID secretariat. Can the Minister tell us what she has been hearing from the business community with respect to spending these funds on the COVID Secretariat? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: That has been an evolving conversation, and one that has happened largely in the public sphere. It's not necessarily for me to speak for the private sector here on the floor, but the Business Advisory Council, I have had the opportunity to meet with them more than once already, as well as with the chambers, as well as with a number of individuals who are bringing attention to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment at all times, around how to navigate their needs during COVID as well as how the government is navigating the need to support people, which is a large part of the COVID secretariat.

Again, once there is an understanding of what the secretariat is designed to do, why it is designed to that, and a recognition of the supports that it is providing to the residents of the Northwest Territories. I believe not only the Business Advisory Council but other business entities have actually come around and said that they indeed support the work of the secretariat, want it to continue, and recognize that it's because of the secretariat and, because all of the efforts in COVID, that we are not

returning to a full lockdown, we're not returning to the doors closed, and that we're not shuttering the businesses as is so sadly happening across much of Canada, right now. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 460-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION BOARD

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. For years, a governance review of the Power Corporation since its board was removed and replaced with deputy ministers has been requested. It's been promised by previous Ministers, but it has not been delivered. We now find ourselves with a new Minister asking the board to review themselves. My question for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation is: what has happened in the last four years since the board was removed in regard to a governance review, and how much longer is this going to take? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I recognize that this is a long-standing issue and the Member will be happy to know that I'm committed to looking into and completing the governance review of the Power Corporation. The last four years have been critical in gaining hands-on understanding of NTPC's governance structure and also options for some improvement. Work has been underway to identify and assess the governance options to further advance this work ultimately towards the goal of approving the accountability and framework for this important organization. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I'm very happy to see that this Minister is committed to a governance review. One of the fundamental problems with this governance review is we as government are asking our deputy ministers to review themselves and see if there is the proper accountability. Much of the Power Corporation's bookwork is done behind closed doors. Much of this review and these decisions come to Cabinet, which is also behind closed doors. My question for the Minister is: given the just inherent conflicts and trouble navigating accountability of a non arm's-length corporation that's supposed to be, will the GNWT do any public engagement on this review?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Again, I mentioned the governance model. Again, I committed to working with the Members of this House on the review and

the offer to briefing to Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment. I also look forward to discussing and to advancing some of this work together.

MR. JOHNSON: I recognize that the Minister is willing to work standing committee, but I don't believe that was public engagement. I'm going to try this one more time. Does the GNWT recognize and acknowledge that deputy ministers -- I know they work hard and probably that's one of the problems is that they are so busy working that they don't have time to completely review a corporation. They have expertise in public service. They don't have expertise in managing a Crown corporation and energy interests. Does the GNWT recognize that is an inherent problem, that we have the wrong people on the board?

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: NTPC is a large organization providing public service and deputy ministers have brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the board. Since deputy ministers were appointed to the board, we have seen improved ties and implementation of GNWT energy policy and have been able to integrate the corporation's decision-making with the policy decisions and even the programs and services that are provided by GNWT departments, so a review of the board composition will also include the government's review work and assessment of some of the options.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Madam Speaker, perhaps the deputy ministers have been doing a good job. We've asked them to serve on a board at the expense of their other work, and we all know that no such senior management is overworked. There is some serious work that needs to be done here. There is a level of expertise that is not necessarily found in the public service. I believe a third-party review needs to be done. I believe there needs to be scholarly research. We really need someone who is not the GNWT or its senior management to look at the Power Corporation. Is the Minister willing to conduct a third-party review of the Power Corporation? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: The GNWT has completed many studies of this corporation over the past 10 years. Many aspects of the corporation have been studied in great depth, from rating settings to governance and accountability aspects to the economic viability of the corporation. These studies have formed the basis of the review that is currently underway. I look forward to discussions with the committee on this matter and advancing this important work. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 461-19(2):
DENTAL PRACTICE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Speaker. I hope I can get on the roll that my colleague with Frame Lake was on here with the Minister of Health. Going back to my Member's statement on dental services in our small communities, I also, with my research on this, found out that the eye teams are still going out into the communities and still providing that service, so that's something to think about. I'm hoping that we have some common-sense approaches and this crucial service, dental services, done in the North in our small communities. With my first question: can the Minister explain what the restrictions are for dental practice in small communities? Marsi cho.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for the question. The department doesn't restrict dentists from going into small communities. The issue at the moment is about infection control in some of the health centres where they are not adequate to meet the challenges of COVID-19. There hasn't been as much travel as there was previously. As an alternative, emergency cases are being flown to Yellowknife for service. Thank you.

MR. NORN: I'm just trying to get at the heart of the issue, and I thank her for the response. I want to see this service brought back. My next question is: what can be done to allow full dental practice to resume?

MS. GREEN: The service here is primarily in NIHB service. What's happening is that senior leadership from Indigenous Services Canada and the department of health authorities are meeting this week to get an update on a resumption plan that they have all been working on for the last little while that deals with current air exchange requirements and infection control standards so that the services are delivered safely to the people in the communities. What I'm anticipating is that an announcement will be made next week on the timing and locations of phase 1 resumption of dental services and that that will answer the Member's concerns and our concerns about making sure that everyone has access to dental services.

MR. NORN: Yay!

---Laughter

That's good to hear that there is going to be some work done here. These next couple of questions, I

don't expect an answer very quickly. I'd like to know: how many people have been flown in town here for this service and at what cost?

MS. GREEN: I'm sorry. I don't have that information. That information we would need to obtain from the NIHB, both the numbers of patients and the cost of the service.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Speaker. My last one, again, I don't expect a response right away on this, is: what is the expected backlog of dental requests?

MS. GREEN: I don't know if the department or Indigenous Services Canada has collected that information, but I can certainly find out and make sure the Member gets it. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 462-19(2):
EXTENSION OF WATER AND SEWER PROJECT
IN PAULATUK

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, I brought up in my Member's statement regarding MACA and clawing back funding for the Paulatuk sewage lagoon. I am just wondering if the Minister of MACA would be able to give an extension. The extension was given to January, and you know that in our riding it is freeze-up, frozen solid, can't do anything. Would the Minister be willing to extend the project for the community of Paulatuk until August? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. These, I want to say the project for the water and sewer, as a department, we encourage the community governments to access federal funding. I did do a statement on the water quality in the Northwest Territories, and that was a federal engagement that we initiated in the territory. I would have to look at this file further to see what kind of funding was available to Paulatuk. Looking at the extension, I would have to verify whether that was federal funding. Should it be federal funding, I am not too sure how much authorization we would have as a territorial government to encourage an extension. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: If the requirements, federal funding requirements, are the barrier here, did MACA give any consideration in finding an innovative way to get around it, working with the

community to make sure that all the expenditures are done, notification given to the community, other than just saying, "Your funding is pulled"? Is there a way that we could talk to our federal counterparts, the Minister, to extend this? Because it's \$53,000, and that is a lot of money for the community of Paulatuk, clawing back on water and the sewer program.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I will have my department reach out to the Hamlet of Paulatuk. I just need to slow down. I remember hearing that from the interpreters. I am just so anxious to answer the question. I will just have to get further information on what they may have for their CPI and their gas tax money and how much of this could be applied to the water and sewer issue in Paulatuk. I will have my department follow up with the hamlet.

MR. JACOBSON: It's more important to get the work done than to meet arbitrary funding deadlines. How does MACA expect the Hamlet of Paulatuk to pay back the funding and still update the sewage lagoon? Is there a way that we could do a letter of intent to say that we could do the work? Then, we could work with the gas tax or whatever funding that is available to them. Is that possible?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The funding provided to the communities, they submit their capital budget, and I am looking for flexibility within that budget to see how we can work with the Hamlet of Paulatuk. I did mention the gas tax money and the CPI, as well. The department will be reaching out to the hamlet to further offer more assistance on how we can look at either an extension or having conversations with the federal government.

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

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is it okay if I blame COVID-19 for the extension, please and thank you? I just want to make sure that the Minister commits to the community of Paulatuk and to the people of Nunakput that she would come to our community and do a community tour here soon, but I need a commitment from her to say that she will work for the people of Paulatuk on this issue. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: My department will be reaching out to the hamlet. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 463-19(2):
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES SECTOR
SUPPORT

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have asked the people of the NWT to give up a lot here since March, and I am going to ask some questions on resource development. However, I think that, when we think about non-renewable resource development, we think of the diamond mines. I think that, with what people have had to go through, we should give them all a diamond when this is over. That will help our resource sector, as well. Madam Speaker, we seem to not appreciate the non-renewable resource sector until we start to see it disappear. This sector is not only important but is essential to the growth and development of the NWT. Knowing COVID-19 is impacting all economic sectors, can the Minister of ITI confirm if and how the department is working and supporting the non-renewable sector? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister of ITI.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think there is a sort of general rule that I am not supposed to run down the clock, but I could easily talk about the resource sector for 20 minutes. I won't do that, Madam Speaker. The mineral resource sector is, I would say continues to be, extremely important. It's still the foundation of the economy here from the private sector and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

There are quite a number of things that are happening right now in the Department of ITI to support that sector. For example, there have been quite a number of active conversations just in the last several weeks with federal counterparts as well as with the territorial Ministers also responsible. The territorial Ministers are all aligned that we need more geoscience in the North, for the North, and built in the North in order to actually help make our tremendous amount of resources accessible and to help make people aware of them around the world. There are a lot of conversations about critical minerals and strategic minerals. There is a task force that has been developed on a national level, and we want to have an active role in it to make sure that we are one of the jurisdictions where critical minerals and strategic minerals have a real place.

There is obviously, as well, remediation, Madam Speaker. There is a huge amount of funding that was announced for some of the provinces in that regard, but it's an area where we have a number of shovel-ready projects. Hopefully, we will be able to participate with that area of funding. As a part of COVID-19, there has been a working group developed with the Chamber of Mines, and we are continuing to work with them to identify whether there are gaps in areas where we can help provide more direct relief.

Another major area, I am happy to speak about it here, is with respect to regional mineral development strategies. This is where funding is provided directly to Indigenous governments for them to develop their own regional strategies. This is such a tremendous opportunity for regional development and for strategies that are really meaningful for each region of the Northwest Territories that can then feed into a bigger strategy. I think that is a good overview, Madam Speaker, and I am sure there will be more questions so that I can speak to more things. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: As time progresses, our government, along with federal government, continues to tighten regulations that make the non-renewable resource sector reluctant to work in the NWT. Can the Minister confirm what the department is hearing from the non-renewable sector with respect to barriers causing their reluctance to consider the NWT as a place to do business? What are we doing to deal with that reluctance?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: A lot of the barriers here are not new, nor are they unique to the Northwest Territories. They are barriers that are experienced across northern Canada, certainly. That is including the high costs of operating here, both in terms of the initial exploration and then in terms of developing a profitable mine site. There are also some concerns that continue to be raised, of course, around uncertainty and the benefits and importance of having certainty in the regulatory system.

Fortunately, Madam Speaker, we are taking some good steps to advance in dealing with some of those barriers. For example, the Mineral Resources Act regulations are actively being worked on right now, and that will allow the Mineral Resources Act to be implemented here in the Northwest Territories. There is a socio-economic review, which is of course a big part of what supports the mineral resource sector in terms of providing their certainty when they are engaging here in the Northwest Territories. The Mining Incentive Program, Madam Speaker, is another one where there have already been some modifications to reduce the amount of equity required from industry when it's participating and also to increase the funding that is available. Of course, then there are a number of strategic and infrastructure investments that are being looked at, indeed, in part of the capital planning process that we are looking at this session.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: It is important that this government, the Indigenous peoples, northern businesses and residents receive benefits from any and all resource development. Can the Minister

confirm what is being done to strengthen our socio-economic agreements and to support those IBAs entered into with Indigenous peoples in industry?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Of course, the IBAs themselves are confidential themselves as between the industry proponents and the Indigenous governments themselves, but by continuing to be engaged with both Indigenous governments as well as with the industry, we're certainly able to help navigate the development and the strengthening of all of those levels of cooperation and collaboration. I'll go back to what I had mentioned earlier, which is the development of regional mineral development strategies which helps give a voice to individual regions so that they can better finetune what it is they want to see out of the mineral resources sector. As I mentioned earlier, we are going to review the socio-economic agreements. That work, as I say, I think is just only beginning now internally but with a view to having that done in the near future.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The renewable resources sector provides real benefits to the NWT. Can the Minister confirm that the department is supporting working or cooperating with NWT Chamber of Mines to encourage mineral exploration development, and also when all our residents can expect their diamonds? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes. I'm happy to confirm again, as I said, that the Department of ITI has engaged a technical working group with Chamber of Mines, grew out of the need to respond to COVID-19, but it's been an opportunity to have that conversation on a direct level. I expect that that will continue. As to receiving the diamonds, Madam Speaker, I think I'll have to take that under advisement. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 464-19(2):
CHANGE DENTAL AUXILIARIES ACT

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Given that the Minister has actively supported the economic and health benefits of preventative care in her new role and also given that she values gender equity in our economy, I'm wondering if the Minister will commit to changing the Dental Auxiliaries Act to allow dental hygienists to self-regulate and work without the direct or indirect supervision of a dentist? Thank you.

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

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the question. The Dental Auxiliaries Act is a dated piece of legislation that doesn't align with our other medical professions' legislation or with that, that exists in the province, so what the department would like to do is create new legislation for dental hygienists under our umbrella act, the Health and Social Services Professions Act. This isn't something that is on our radar right now and is time consuming to finish. The request can be made now, but it's not likely there will be legislation for another two or three years at a minimum. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'm happy to hear this little bit of progress from the Minister and definitely willing to explore that further with the Minister. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to some of the barriers that the Department of Health and Social Services has identified in why that act wouldn't come forward right away, or what timeline they might be able to work towards.

HON. JULIE GREEN: The barriers just have to do with the fact that the Department of Health and Social Services produces a lot of legislation. We do a queue of what needs to be advanced or a triage, and so this is a fairly new request. It would have to be evaluated against the other pieces of legislation that are in the queue now. I can't, unfortunately, be any more specific about when the legislation might come forward.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'm wondering if the department has hired a chief oral health officer as identified in their oral health strategy.

HON. JULIE GREEN: No, we haven't done that. Unfortunately, there is no funding available for this position at this time. We're concerned about funding for this position going forward because the Territorial Health Investment Fund expires on March 31st next year, and the federal government has not yet recommitted to funding this pot of money which would provide for the oral health coordinator.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Given that the current oral health strategy expires in March of 2021 and also given the drastic health effects of people not having access to preventative healthcare, what are the go-forward plans for the Department of Health and Social Services as far as oral health and prevention in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: There is, in fact, launching next month, an oral hygiene campaign which will include the distribution of toothbrushes, toothpastes, and dental floss to all NWT residents through the regional health centres. That is accompanied by a preschool book written by the author Richard Van Camp, and it has been translated into all 11 official languages. It's been available since March of this year. There are four dental therapists who work in the department, and they are in the regional centres, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Fort Smith. There is usually one in Fort Simpson, but fortunately for her, she's now on mat leave. There is also a territorial specialist who works here out of Yellowknife. Clearly, with the department, there is a focus on oral health. There is an understanding of its importance. There are plans in the short term to highlight that, and in the longer term, obviously, with the action plan expiring, we will need to look at renewing that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 465-19(2):
ISOLATION CENTRES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There has no doubt been a lot of talk about the COVID-19 secretariat and its budget. I'd like to speak specifically about the isolation centres today considering they make up over half of the COVID-19 secretariat budget. I believe that there is a consensus that the spending in this area is too liberal. There are a number of ways we could save money on isolation centres, whether that's increasing the number of hub communities, shortening the isolation periods, increasing rapid testing, making sure people have kitchens so they can cook their own food instead of being catered. Each of these solutions come with some pros and cons, and I'm not suggesting we have to do all of those. My question for the Premier is: is she committed to finding some cost savings in the isolation centres portion of the COVID-19 secretariat budget? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will start by saying yes because we've been on a roll, so I just want to say yes. There are many ways, the Member is absolutely correct. Our isolation costs are the major contributing factor to the cost of the secretariat. However, they are critical, so we are just doing that work right now. We're talking with Indigenous governments, municipal governments, other stakeholders in the communities to look at ways: do we pay for discretionary travel; do we look at RFPs or other options? The other thing, too, is:

we've been working with the federal government to ask for more support for our costs related to COVID-19. We're looking at all options. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. JOHNSON: I am glad to hear that. Considering this is \$17 million projected for this fiscal and ongoing, we plan to be running these isolation centres for a number of years. They're quite big contracts. My question for the Premier is: did these isolation centre contracts go out for tender?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, when we first started addressing the issue of COVID-19 back in March, we didn't have time to put it out to tender. We just kind of grabbed what we could, trying to get people in safe isolation spaces. We've been operating in that. Again, one of the issues that we had when we didn't have a secretariat is all different departments were taking on different aspects of it. Now that we've formed the secretariat, Madam Speaker, we are currently actually looking at an RFP process so that we can provide better services, more efficient, and more effective services.

MR. JOHNSON: I completely understand that, in the midst of COVID-19, perhaps, we had to just get the isolations in place and not tender them. Now that we're looking for operating these multi-years, I really think it's important that we send them out for tender. I note there are hotels that could be interested. There are smaller hospitality places and communities. There are catering contracts. There's a lot of money flying around within the COVID secretariat right now that I believe we have to have an economic lens to.

One of the other suggestions I've heard is whether apartment rentals were considered? I know many people would, in fact, prefer to stay in an apartment where you have access to a full kitchen and it's, perhaps, a little nicer stay than two weeks in a hotel. My question for the Premier is: is apartment rentals something that we are considering and, perhaps, this would even save us money? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just because we want to wrap it up on a good note, again, apartments are being considered. We are looking at all options, so yes, Madam Speaker, we are looking at apartments as well as all options to provide support. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Oral questions. Members, we are going to take a

break, and we'll resume with the remainder of the orders of the day after that.

---SHORT RECESS

DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will continue with the orders of the day. Item 10, written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to Commissioner's address. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of ITI.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 218-19(2):
2019 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENT REPORT
FOR MINES OPERATING IN THE NWT

TABLED DOCUMENT 219-19(2):
ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF EKATI DIAMOND
MINE CLOSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 220-19(2):
2019 SURVEY OF MINING EMPLOYEES: NWT
BUREAU OF STATISTICS

TABLED DOCUMENT 221-19(2):
2019 EKATI DIAMOND MINE SOCIO-ECONOMIC
AGREEMENT REPORT

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents: "2019 Socio-Economic Agreement Report for Mines Operating in the Northwest Territories," "Economic Context of Ekati Diamond Mine Closing," the "2019 Survey of Mining Employees: Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics," and "2019 Ekati Diamond Mine Socio-Economic Agreement Report." Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Table of documents. Minister of ECE.

TABLED DOCUMENT 222-19(2):
AURORA COLLEGE CORPORATE PLAN, 2020-
2021

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following document: "Aurora College Corporate Plan, 2020-2021." Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 223-19(2):
GOVERNMENT REVENUES AS REPORTED BY
ANGLO AMERICAN UNDER THE FEDERAL
EXTRACTIVE SECTOR TRANSPARENCY
MEASURES ACT, ANNUAL REPORTS 2016-2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 224-19(2):
GOVERNMENT REVENUES AS REPORTED
DOMINION DIAMOND UNDER THE FEDERAL
EXTRACTIVE SECTOR TRANSPARENCY
MEASURES ACT, ANNUAL REPORTS 2016-2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 225-19(2):
GOVERNMENT REVENUES AS REPORTED BY
RIO TINTO UNDER THE FEDERAL EXTRACTIVE
SECTOR TRANSPARENCY MEASURES ACT,
ANNUAL REPORTS 2016-2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I wish to table the following three documents: "Government Revenues as Reported by Anglo American under the Federal Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, Annual Reports 2016-2019;" "Government Revenues as Reported by Dominion Diamond under the Federal Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, Annual Reports 2016-2019;" and third one, "Government Revenues as Reported by Rio Tinto under the Federal Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, Annual Reports 2016-2019." Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 22-19(2):
Appointment of Law Clerk

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, November 5, 2020, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Legislative Assembly recommends the appointment of Ms. Sheila McPherson (ph) as law clerk and Mr. Toby Krueger (ph) as deputy law clerk as recommended by the Board of Management; and further, that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of appointment to the Commissioner. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MOTION 23-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF SOLE ADJUDICATORS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, November 5, 2020, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North that the following persons be approved by the Legislative Assembly as sole

adjudicators, the honourable Maurice Herauf and Jeffrey Schnoor, Q.C. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notices of motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MOTION 24-19(2):
CHANGES TO COMMITTEES MEMBERSHIP

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I give notice that on Thursday, November 5, 2020, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho that the appointment of Mrs. Freida Martselos to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment be revoked; and further, now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North that Mr. Steve Norn be appointed as an alternate member to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

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

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, November 5, 2020, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when the House adjourns on Thursday, November 5, 2020, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 3, 2021; and further, that at any time prior to February 3, 2021, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it had been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 20:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT
STANDARDS ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 20, an Act to Amend the Employment Standards Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

Bill 20 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 17:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CORRECTIONS ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act, be read for the second time. The bill amends the new Corrections Act which is not yet in force. The bill amends the section of the act dealing with rule breaches and the imposition of disciplinary and corrective measures. It ensures that reasons must be provided for both a finding of guilt respecting an alleged breach of a rule and any disciplinary or corrective measures imposed. It ensures that an inmate can appeal both a finding of guilt and any measures imposed. Finally, it ensures that the director of investigations and standards has all the necessary powers on appeal to address both the finding of guilt and any disciplinary or corrective measures imposed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 73(2) to have Bill 17 moved directly into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Justice is seeking unanimous consent to refer Bill 17 directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Are there any nays? As there are no nays, Bill 17 is referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

---Unanimous consent granted

Second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 18:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the second time. This bill amends the Legal Profession Act to remove the requirement that an applicant for admission as a member of the society must be physically present in the Northwest Territories to take and sign the oath or affirmation that is required before engaging in the practice of law in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 18 has had second reading. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 73(2) to have Bill 18 moved directly into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Justice is seeking unanimous consent to refer Bill 18 directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Are there any nays? As there are no nays, Bill 18 is referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

---Unanimous consent granted

Second reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

BILL 19:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the second time. This bill amends the Student Financial Assistance Act to prohibit the inclusion of student's personal information in the public accounts, notwithstanding the Financial Administration Act. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. Yes. I wish to speak to the principle of this bill. The current practice is that, of course, we provide good assistance and support for our students when they go off to study in post-secondary institutions, and that's a good thing. We also want to encourage them to come back to the Northwest Territories, and we have a loan remission program, and I think that is a way to ensure that our investment is protected. We want our students to come back here to the Northwest Territories.

The problem has been, in my view, that, when they come back to the Northwest Territories, the remissions that the individual students receive have been reported publicly with their individual names in the public accounts now for a number of years. That practice takes up space in the public accounts and has been characterized by some as an invasion of the students' privacy. The Standing Committee on Government Operations in the last Assembly reported several times and recommended that this practice stop, that it was an unnecessary disclosure of the students' private information. There was correspondence between the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Comptroller General that I tabled in the last Assembly, as well, on this matter.

In working through it, it appeared that the best way to stop this practice was to actually amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, so I want to commend the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for working with me as an individual Member to bring forward this change. It's something that I support and have worked toward for several years, so I'm very pleased to see this come forward today. I want to commend the Minister, again, and I think this is an illustration of how consensus government can truly work. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 19 has had second reading. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive rule 73(2) to have Bill 19 moved directly into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is seeking unanimous consent to refer Bill 19 directly to the Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Are there any nays?

---Unanimous consent granted

As there are no nays, Bill 19 is referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-investment Fund; Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2), Report on Long-term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on the Long-term Post-Pandemic Recovery, Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT; Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2020; Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act; Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act; and Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, with the Member for Member for Hay River South in the chair. By Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House. Thank you.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the will of the committee? Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Chair. The committee wishes to consider the following documents: Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act; Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act; Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act; and, lastly, Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021. Marsi cho, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will take a short, five-minute break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act. I will ask the Minister of Justice to introduce the bill.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here today to present Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act. I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for their review and for Members supporting the expedited consideration of this bill. As work progressed on the development of regulations to support the coming into force of the new NWT Corrections Act, the department concluded that Section 42 of the act lacked clarity. This section deals with the process for when the rules of a correctional centre are believed to have been breached by an inmate and when disciplinary or corrective measures are subsequently taken.

The amendment will ensure that inmates are properly informed of the reasons for both a finding of guilt and the imposition of a disciplinary or corrective measure. It will clarify their right to appeal both decisions, and it will ensure that the director of investigations and standards has sufficient authority to either reject an appeal or provide an inmate with redress. This will support procedural fairness for inmates and their right of appeal under the act. This concludes my opening remarks, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have regarding Bill 17. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, I would.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have Mr. Mike Reddy, director of legislation, and Mr. Blair Van Metre, director of corrections services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 17. Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title under the consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. Clauses 1, does committee agree?

---Causes 1 through 3 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): To the bill as a whole, does committee agree that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act, is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and our thanks to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act. I will ask the Minister of Justice to introduce the bill.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here today to present Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act. I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for their review and to Members for supporting the expedited consideration of this bill. The purpose of Bill 18 is to remove the requirement that an applicant for admission as a member of the NWT Law Society must be physically present in the NWT to take and sign the oath or affirmation before a judge that is required before engaging in the practice of law in the NWT.

This amendment is expected to remove unnecessary costs to lawyers associated with the current requirement and to increase the pool of lawyers that can be accessed to provide services in the Northwest Territories. This issue was raised by the law society, which has indicated its support of the bill. This concludes my opening remarks, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have regarding Bill 18. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the

Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, we have Mr. Mike Reddy, director of legislation. [Microphone turned off]

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 18. Would the Minister please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Perhaps we could have the witnesses introduce themselves.

MR. PATZER: Brad Patzer, assistant deputy minister, the Attorney General's side. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 18. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am going to keep this pretty short. This and the previous bill got moved into committee vote because I think they are largely non-controversial changes. On this one, it would be my preference that this issue of having lawyers getting restricted appearance certificates if this new process was just during the pandemic, but I understand that the profession wants this done on a permanent basis. I am not going to stand in the way of that, but it is kind of unusual that we move these straight into Committee of the Whole. Given that it's, as I said, non-controversial and I think there is some other important business that we need to deal with, I am fine having an expedited review and support this bill. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. First, I want to apologize to Mr. Patzer, whose name escaped me. He is probably the first person in the Department of Justice that I met, about six years ago, so my apologies on that one. This bill, it's also important because we are in a situation where, for a lawyer to come up to the territory, they would have to self-isolate for two weeks. We are in a situation where there is a backup of cases, and we need this service. I thank the committee for working with the department to move this along. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Does the committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill.

---Clauses 1 and 2 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, to the bill as a whole. Does committee agree that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and our thanks to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. I will ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to introduce the bill.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here today to present Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. This bill seeks to amend the act to prohibit the disclosure of personal information of individuals who have successfully applied for remission of student loans. The proposed amendment, by forbidding the publication of personal information, will protect the privacy of successful applicants to the student loan remission program. This will allow residents to take advantage of the remission program without having their names published in the public accounts or any other public documents.

I am pleased to bring forward this amendment that addresses the recommendations of stakeholders, including the Standing Committee on Government Operations, in 2017. I want to thank the Member for Frame Lake in particular for raising this issue time and time again, and thank Committee for fast-tracking the bill this sitting. This concludes my opening remarks, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have regarding Bill 19. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Yes, I would.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: I would like to introduce Mr. Michael Saturnino, the assistant deputy minister of Labour and Income Security, and Ms. Mikaela Robertson, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 19. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to keep this really brief. Again, I want to thank the Minister and his staff for working collaboratively on this issue and bringing this forward in a timely fashion and all my colleagues for agreeing to expedite this so that we don't have to publish the names and amounts of student loan remissions in future public accounts. Thanks again to the Minister for his work on this. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Is the committee agreed that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill.

---Clauses 1 and 2 inclusive approved

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, to the bill as a whole. Does committee agree that Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and our thanks to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses

from the Chamber. Committee, we will take a 10-minute break as I get reorganized for the next part.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): We'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No. 2, 2020-2021. Does the Minister of Finance have any opening remarks?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Chair, I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures) No. 2, 2020-2021.

The Supplementary Estimates document proposes to add \$88.7 million to the 2020-2021 operating budget, comprised of the following major items: \$79 million to support the GNWT's health and economic response to COVID-19, including:

- \$31.7 million under the umbrella of the COVID secretariat to protect the territory from COVID-19. Bringing existing functions together under the secretariat will help us better meet demand, ensure more efficient use of the GNWT's fiscal resources, and provide a clearer point of accountability for the ongoing implementation of the public health orders. The costs associated with the secretariat will be partially offset by funding received from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada under the first Northern Bundle.
- \$29.1 million to support programs under the Canada-Northwest Territories Safe Restart Agreement and second Northern Bundle, including: \$2.7 million to support childcare for returning workers; \$9 million to support increased capacity in the health system; \$3.6 million for personal protective equipment for health and non-health care workers; \$3.5 million to support testing, contact tracing, and data management;
- \$29.1 million to support programs under the Canada-Northwest Territories Safe Restart Agreement and second Northern Bundle, including: \$2.7 million to support childcare for returning workers; \$9 million to support increased capacity in the health system; \$3.6 million for personal protective equipment for health and non-health care workers; \$3.5 million to support testing, contact tracing, and data management; \$5.6 million to support our vulnerable population; and \$4.7 million to support communities. \$26.7 million of these costs will be offset by funding from the Government of Canada.
- \$23.2 million to support the NWT aviation

sector, of which \$17.1 million is offset by funding from Transport Canada.

- \$9.7 million to support the safe re-opening of schools in the Northwest Territories, of which \$4.8 million will be offset by funding from the Government of Canada.
- \$3.9 million to establish the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, which is fully offset by funding received from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.
- \$1.6 million to support Northwest Territories sports organizations by providing relief under the COVID-19 Emergency Support for Sport Organizations agreement, which is fully offset by funding from the Government of Canada.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I would be happy to answer any questions that Members might have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes I do.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, today we have the deputy minister of Finance, Sandy Kalgutkar, and Jamie Koe, deputy secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now open the floor for general comments. Seeing no further general comments, we will review the supplementary estimates by department. Committee has agreed to begin the review with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will begin at page 4. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, early childhood and school services not previously authorized, \$10,901,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Please turn to page 5. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, income security, not previously authorized, \$2,551,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see there is an increase to income security here, but I also remember previously that our projections for income security as a whole and income assistance, which is income assistance, were going to be much higher due to COVID-19. Can I just get an update of whether we have those projections or if we expect another supplementary appropriation under the income security head? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do not have any information. I don't have those numbers in front of me, but I would ask that you check if the deputy minister might have those numbers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Deputy minister.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are in the process of updating our department total variance reports for the second quarter, and as we go through the year and look at our third quarter variances, if some departments are showing some pressures in specific areas, then we might be looking at doing a supplemental for some of those areas. The uptake in income security might be one of those areas. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, income security, not previously authorized, \$2,551,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, total department, not previously authorized, \$13,452,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, page 8. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. If there are no further comments, does

the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we are on page 6. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$58,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, total department, not previously authorized, \$58,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Finance on page 7. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Finance. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we are on page 7. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, information systems shared services, not previously authorized, \$2,412,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was looking for this money in Education, Culture and Employment, but I see some of it is here in Finance, the money to safely reopen NWT schools. I know some of this money came from the Government of Canada. I am very happy to see it. I know many of our school boards are struggling. They don't have the ability to run a deficit or to rack up debt such as we do, so their fiscals are much tighter. I guess my question is: after we approve this, when can we see that money actually get to the school boards, and is it being agreed upon how it will be distributed to the education authorities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I suggest that go to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is money in Finance and there is money in ECE because the funding initiative was a joint venture. Finance provided funds for the technology, primarily, so the Chromebooks, Internet access, and things like that. The work to get those out the door is underway. For the most part, the total amount of money is being split evenly between the school boards. There were some school boards that needed additional teaching positions, so note that money is flowing to those specific school boards versus those that did not need those positions. We have allocated a good chunk of the education authorities' budget already, so it's not like this money is needed at this point. Right now, they do not need to spend this money. They have the money they can spend right now, but this is to cover additional expenses that will be incurred. I have not heard any concerns from any of the school boards about being able to spend the money. It's getting to them when it needs to get to them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. No further comments? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can I just get a little bit more detail on the split here between Education, Culture and Employment and Finance? What specifically are these funds for with the Department of Finance, and what do they have to do with safely reopening schools? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The portion of the funding that is coming from the ISSS is for the technology component so, more specifically, to include a procurement of 1,641 Chromebooks, as well as Turbo Sticks, which is meant right immediately to provide an ability for students to access online school resources and to help reduce the costs to their families. There is also a reserve of 750 units that is also being procured so that, in the event that they may need more of those units quickly, they are available. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Look, I think it is worthwhile to make sure that students have computers for distance education, so can someone explain to me who is eligible for these

Chromebooks? Is it public school students, high school students? Is it based on need? Is there some geographic distribution? Who is actually eligible for them? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. While the acquisition, distribution, and inventory does go through ISSS, I would suggest that we go to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment again for any details with respect to the students specifically.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Primarily, most students are able to attend school full-time, and that is especially true for most students between junior kindergarten and grade nine. There are a few students in grade 10, 11, and some in grade 12 who do have to, at this point, attend school part-time, whether it's every second day, whether it's in the mornings and not the afternoons. Those are the students who are being targeted. There are also students who are over 19 who aren't allowed back in the schools by order of the Chief Public Health Officer, and so they have to participate remotely.

ECE, Finance, and the school boards are all working collaboratively to determine where to best put those resources, so there are daily conversations with the superintendents and with ECE to make sure that those units get to where they need to go to. Some schools have also used their own funds to purchase Chromebooks and other technology, and they are distributing that as they need. I won't say it complicates the matter, but it means that there won't be a division of these units on a per-capita basis. It's being done collaboratively, I can assure the Member of that. The school boards are full partners in the distribution of this technology. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. No further comments? Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, information systems shared services, not previously authorized, \$2,412,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, Management Board Secretariat, not

previously authorized, negative \$185,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm just trying to figure out why there is a negative figure in here. Did we overpay airlines? What is happening here? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are two things being reflected under this section. The first is the funding to the airlines, a large proportion of which did come through Transport Canada. Then the second part is that there is a transfer of funding here to Health and Social Services that came in through Finance as part of the federal government supports. It's just the way that it has worked out that it looks like a negative, but it's because it includes both those two portions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to thank my colleague from Nunakput who raised this concern earlier this week, about what, if any, strings were attached to the airline assistance, maintaining minimum levels of service to communities, and so on. Can someone just explain to me a little bit more about how that works? What kinds of strings are attached, if any, to the funding to the airlines? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The first round of funding came in without the same sorts of strings attached, but when a second round of funding came through, there are requirements now that the airlines that are benefitting do have to sign an agreement with the Department of Finance. It includes minimum service schedules. I would also note, Mr. Chair, there is a small hold-back amount where they have to report back to the Department of Finance before the complete amount is paid out to them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't need this information now, but can the Minister commit to sharing what those minimum service levels are with Regular MLAs so we have some sense of what the airlines are committing to? I think that is probably of interest, particularly for the MLAs from smaller, remote communities. Can the Minister commit to sharing that information with us? If it needs to be

done in confidence, I'm fine with that, but I think it would be helpful to have. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. I see her and her entourage shaking their heads yes. Minister?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I am happy to make that commitment. I would just say for the moment that we may have to do it confidentially. I don't have the contribution agreement in front of me. In the event that there is something in that agreement that would require it to be confidential, we'll do so. Otherwise, one way or the other, we'll make sure to share it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized, negative \$185,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$3,561,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Finance, total department, not previously authorized, \$5,788,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Health and Social Services, starting on page 8. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Health and Social Services. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$589,000. Does committee agree? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I see in the estimates here that this is for virtual care. Can I just get some details of what the funding has been used

for and how virtual care has been implemented during the pandemic? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can give you some detail on what the funding is intended for, and then I would turn it over to the Minister of health for any update as to what may or may not have happened in the course of the pandemic. The funding under the agreement is to be used firstly for licensing of the various types of software that is required; the hardware itself, which would include iPads, iPhones, and laptops that will actually allow for that care to be provided virtually; and also support for staff in terms of setting up that hardware, training, and setting up the teleconferencing facilities that are required. Again, Mr. Chair, with respect to any update on where that project and where that work is at, I would ask that we go to the Minister of Health and Social Services, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This was the platform that we used to provide virtual care during the pandemic, and the funding is specific to the COVID-19 response. What I can tell you is that the current work is around allowing for secure messaging between healthcare providers and patients. This is an ongoing project, and I just want to note that the expenses here are fully offset by a grant from the federal government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$589,000. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just in follow up to my colleague's question in regard to virtual care: is any of the software that we acquired from funds from the federal government to support COVID-19 and virtual care throughout COVID-19 usable beyond when they were used in the spring? Is it like a software program that we now as the GNWT can continue to use to support virtual care? Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the details in terms of that agreement. I'll see if perhaps the deputy minister has it or else the Minister of Health and Social Services might.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding of the program is going to be permanently used to expand the virtual care capacities of the health system, so it's going to be a permanent solution is what my understanding is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$589,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, COVID secretariat not previously authorized, \$31,677,000. Does committee agree? Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Chair. This is a whopping millions of dollars here. We can't just approve it just like that. In this House, maybe the Minister or the Premier can explain. The Premier did indicate that there was a strong support from Indigenous leaders across the North. I've been making a call to my leadership. I don't see the same note as the Premier alluded to. Just wondering if the Minister or Premier can elaborate more if there is overall support from Indigenous leadership across the North, and also the mayors and the NWTAC, are they in support? If so, can I have those in writing if they do have that in writing, Mr. Chair? Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that the Premier's office has engaged in a pretty wide variety of conversations and engagements over the last little while, so I'd ask that we direct that to the Premier, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely. We had an initial meeting with the Indigenous governments, I can't remember if it was Friday. I believe eight Indigenous governments were there. Out of the eight, seven accepted. The Tlicho government was not there at that time. We did reach out to other governments, as well. Unfortunately, not all governments have had a chance to get back to me on that. I can say that the Tlicho government hasn't given their support, but

they haven't said they're not supportive, as well. That is because we haven't had the opportunity to talk to them on that.

I can say that \$31 million is a lot of money for this year, absolutely. Twenty-three million dollars, almost, is covered by the federal government, so that leaves almost \$9 million. We have asked the federal government for more support for the COVID secretariat. The federal government, talking to Prime Minister Trudeau, has promised to support us further so we've just put in the ask for the additional monies. Once we hear back, which will probably take a little while, I'll report to committee on what that looks like. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, from what the Premier shared with us, obviously not everybody is onboard. This whole thing called secretariat, another form of bureaucracy within this government. We have 5,000-plus employees, almost 6,000, in the Northwest Territories, and we're going to create another 150. Mr. Chair, obviously, I fully support a coordination to deal with COVID-19 since March. We were doing fine with MACA and various other departments coordinating with internal resources, internal bodies that can take on these work assignments. When it came to the secretariat in August, that was the first time we heard the creation of this secretariat and no input from the public.

Mr. Chair, just as recent as yesterday when I went to a funeral in Behchoko, obviously people are still questioning why are we spending \$87 million on the bureaucracy if we have so many needs in our region? Lot of people are dying left and right. In my region more specifically, Mr. Chair, just this past weekend we lost another young lady due to addiction. Mr. Chair, this is a very sensitive matter, and here we are. We're talking about \$31 million that's on the books here. I understand that the federal government, \$24 million -- I don't know why we need to bundle everything together. It's a federal approach where everything is bundled so even though you are against certain items, either you vote for the budget or your vote against it. I feel very uncomfortable with this going forward. I support other issues are on this supplementary with the exception of this COVID secretariat.

Mr. Chair, I'm getting a lot of feedback from my region and also surrounding the North, whether that be emails, phone calls, and people are still confused. Why are we supporting this COVID secretariat? We're talking about \$87 million today. I'd be surprised if it's still the same number in the next few years as we approach this ordeal with the whole COVID secretariat. I just don't understand

why we were pushing forward as a government. In my view, it's the cart before the horse. There was no engagement with the leadership when it was first created. Yes, I understand the Premier says, after the fact, we started talking to Aboriginal groups. We don't operate that way.

Mr. Chair, this is a general statement, but I do have a motion coming after Members speak to this. I'd like to know why the Premier, the Cabinet, is ignoring the public outcry and continuing to push this secretariat. The \$31 million that's before us today, the public don't want it. Obviously, we don't want it. We want more housing. We want more addictions after-care program, deal with our homelessness. As soon as you walk out this door, we have so many homeless people, our people. So many of them are from my region I'm trying to deal with. We haven't identified money for them. Homeless people, yes, they're talking about a shelter, but to put another \$31 million towards this COVID secretariat, 150 people that would be working for us. People are shaking their heads. People that I talk to, anyway.

Mr. Chair, it's very frustrating sitting here to deal with this matter that we're pushing this supplementary ahead without any engagement of the public. I'd like to know what the public view is on the secretariat. The leadership, not everybody's on board. Not all mayors are on board, but we're still pushing through. Mr. Chair, I'm kind of running out of time, but we've heard over and over, housing, homelessness, it's a real issue. Here we're talking about co-investment. Still talking about maybe hiring a person, we should have been proactive to say, well the whole secretariat, the \$87 million, before that discussion even took place, that co-investment should have been the first priority in my view, taking advantage of \$60 million, 75 percent from the federal government, 25 percent from us. No, here we are still talking about it. Are we going to miss the opportunity?

Mr. Chair, I don't want to add more to it because I have already talked about this on numerous occasions now, and I do have a motion that will speak to it, as well. Yes, I will leave it at that. It's a statement to the government that this is unacceptable. From the discussion around the table, obviously, this is going to go ahead with the supplementals, but it will be a recorded vote, so I would like to know who all stands for the government. Mr. Chair, that is it for me until I present a motion on this. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. I will take that as a statement, but if the Minister has any comments?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, a few comments. I tried to catch most of

the statements that were being made along the way. Firstly, with respect to the notion that the government was "fine" back in March and April when COVID-19 first hit, respectfully, Mr. Chair, things were not fine. The entire government shut down. At one point, I think we peaked with 188 staff who were redeployed in the course of the entire fighting of the pandemic. When 188 staff are redeployed, those staff members are not working in housing; they are not working in addictions; they are not working in social services; they are not working in some of the other departments where they are needed. Much of the work that needs to get done in the course of government does not get done. I think the point was made: stop using COVID as the excuse. However, the excuse was that the entire government was shut down and staff were being asked to do other work and other things.

At the same time, we were being asked: why aren't there more people at the border? Why aren't there more people at the airports? Why isn't there more enforcement? Why isn't somebody answering the phone line at NWT protect? The response to that was to create temporary positions, term positions, not permanent positions, within the GNWT to help fill up or to maintain some of those redeployments but to ensure that the other work still gets done by having people available.

Within the COVID secretariat, the 150 positions right now include 22 at NWT protect as of the moment, 16 over at NWT 811, 23 at the isolation centres, 21 in regional compliance, 44 at border compliance. Mr. Chair, that is one of the areas that does distinguish the response here in the Northwest Territories as compared to other jurisdictions, which right now are all facing a very serious second wave of the pandemic, with the exception, really, of a lot of the jurisdictions who, like us, have actually made an effort to have border compliance, to have isolation in place, and to really avoid bringing a lot of waves of travel.

Mr. Chair, really, the positions that have been created here are what answers that, are what provides the actual ability to implement the orders of the Chief Public Health Officer. To the extent that this is now before the House, Mr. Chair, it's here because that is our ability to actually continue to do the things that the Chief Public Health Officer has put in place. It's our ability to actually implement those orders.

As far as engagement, the Premier may want to speak to it, but I can also assure the House that I was involved in a lot of those calls in the early days. There were weekly calls in the early days of the pandemic. Those calls have slowed down over the summer, but to my knowledge, they actually have begun again. No, not everyone is going to agree on

exactly the right way to fight the pandemic, but not everyone is agreeing across Canada or across the world, either, Mr. Chair. What we are doing is following the Chief Public Health Officer and ensuring that her orders are being implemented. The secretariat is one part, but one part, of making sure that we are doing that. It is one, and it is the part that is obviously right here. There is over \$175 million being spent on the pandemic, a large proportion of which has funding coming from the federal government, including a large proportion of which is being funded from the COVID secretariat for the pandemic from the federal government, with the result that we wind up with only around \$8 million that is actually required right now to the COVID secretariat to maintain the functions that are happening as border compliance, regional compliance, isolation centres. The calls that I was on, Mr. Chair, around the COVID secretariat, around the COVID response, they do not want people back in a lot of the communities. Some of the communities continue to be quite afraid of having travel cross the borders.

With respect to the question of whether the public and what the public reaction has been, Mr. Chair, I am sure we have all heard different things from our constituents, but I have certainly heard a lot of people saying that they are happy with the response that the territorial government has initiated and maintained and are not looking to have reopening particularly quickly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Premier, do you have a comment?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely. I will talk about the engagement. The MLA is correct that we did not have good engagement at the beginning. We did offer AOC a briefing on it back in April; that never happened. We offered one again a couple of months later, and it got deferred. When we finally did get in, it was open camera, and it was our first chance to present to AOC. It happened to be public, so it wasn't the way I expected it to go. It's just how it went. That is just how things go when we try to be transparent. We all learn from our lessons.

Since then, I did engage with the Indigenous governments, I talked to the municipal governments, we talked to the business community. More and more people are getting on board when they understand what it is. Mr. Chair, it's \$87 million, but people always make the assumption that that's for this year. That is not for this year. That is for two and a half years. We were asked to provide a four-year budget. If the pandemic goes on, we are projecting \$87 million, worst case. However, as stated in the Assembly today, we are already looking at the major costs. It's our isolation

centres, Mr. Chair. I think that, although I did not reach all Indigenous governments, most Indigenous governments -- I stand to be corrected if not, but I think most Indigenous governments would say that our isolation centres are one of the key things and our border control is one of the key things. Again, I can stand to be corrected because I have not gotten to them all.

The other thing, too, Mr. Chair, is that we don't have a choice. The \$23 million that has been allocated to the COVID secretariat is not an option we can just say to the federal government, "We want to take that money back, and give us money for housing or use it for homelessness or addictions." That money had been earmarked. It had defined areas that we were allowed to use it for. Within the Speech from the Throne, I think that Members would know that COVID-19 is an item within the Speech from the Throne; it's not an afterthought. There will be more money coming for COVID-19 is my assumption, and there will be more money for the other areas. This was money specifically to address COVID-19 in specific categories, and we did not have the option to say we wanted it for addictions or any other thing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I do have some questions and some comments I would like to make about this particular item. The first thing, though, I will start with some questions. I have had mixed reaction from some of my constituents about this COVID secretariat, and there is a lot of concern about the amount of money that we are being asked to put into this. I want to get a commitment out of the Minister of Finance or the Premier about some kind of regular reporting of the expenditures for the COVID secretariat functions to year-end and maybe into the new year, as well. Can I get some kind of commitment about what kind of periodic reporting can be made to Regular MLAs and to the public about the expenditures for the COVID secretariat functions from now till year-end? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to make a monthly commitment. The Department of Finance will be collecting monthly variance reports on the COVID secretariat spending and can make those public as they are available. It does take some time, so September 30th, it does not mean we necessarily put it out on September 30th, Mr. Chair. When it does get gathered and reported and analyzed, it can take a couple of weeks, but we will be getting them and

putting them out on a monthly basis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. In the monthly variance reporting, presumably it's not just going to be a bunch of numbers, that there would be some attempt to explain the changes or differences from what is anticipated in terms of places where there might be extra spending that was unanticipated or, hopefully, reductions in spending moving forward. Is that going to be kind of documented in these monthly reports? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am inclined to just give the simple answer of yes, but rather than use hand signals, perhaps I'll turn it over to the deputy minister. He can describe in a little more detail what the contents of the report might be.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Deputy minister.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we'll do for Members on a monthly basis, and then we'll post it on the Department of Finance website, is a very detailed variance report on the COVID secretariat by every category area. In that category area, we will report on the costs that have been incurred to date; the variance to date; the projected costs that we're expecting to the end of the year and the variance of those projected costs; and an explanation of why we are seeing a difference. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, deputy minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I do appreciate that commitment, and it's, I think, prudent financial management. Earlier, I mentioned how there have been mixed reactions from my constituents. I had an online constituency meeting I think it was early in October about this, and certainly, it was a big source of discussion. I do need to say that I think the communications around the COVID secretariat left a lot to be desired, and I think we've all learned from that experience, I hope. I don't think it was communicated very well.

This is not about creating some new institution or department or something. This is about carrying on a number of functions that have actually been going on since March and April. This is about the ProtectNWT function. It's about the border control functions. It's about the isolation centres. These are

all functions that have been going on literally for months. The functions, as I understand it, that have been added to the secretariat are some additional staff around coordination and communications. We've all asked for clearer communications; I just said that a few minutes ago myself. These are things that we need moving forward to help us better manage our response to the pandemic and allow us to look at different ways of controlling some of the costs and finding cost savings. I think there is a misunderstanding in the public that this is creating some brand new bureaucracy, some brand new positions. People have been doing this job since March, April, for the most part. This is not about creating a new institution, a new body, whatsoever. It's about trying to find a way to better coordinate that, and look at cost saving potentials as we move forward.

This is not about approving \$87 million in spending. The Premier said that is the worst-case scenario. It is over three years. That is not what is before the House right now in the supplementary appropriation. What is before the House with this supplementary appropriation is approval to spend \$32 million on the COVID secretariat functions to the end of this financial year. We've heard from the Minister of Finance that there is \$24 million in federal assistance that is already on the table, with the prospect of more coming, so what we are being asked to approve, Mr. Chair, is \$8 million in new funding to carry on the COVID-related response that has been in place since March, April, May, June. That is something that I am prepared to support, with the assurance that there is going to be monthly variance reporting.

The Premier also spoke about efforts to find cost reductions, particularly half of these costs are related to the self-isolation centres. She has made clear commitments that there are going to be ways to look at rapid testing and whether the self-isolation periods might be changed; having people isolate in regional centres that are not on the self-isolation list right now; working with communities, if they are prepared to have people self-isolate in their communities. There may be some additional savings there, discretionary travel. I agree that we probably shouldn't be covering some of those costs ourselves, so I'm convinced that we're going to find ways to bring those costs down, even for the \$8 million that we're being asked to approve between now and year end.

I think that's all I need to say now, Mr. Chair. With the commitments that I've received here in terms of regular financial reporting, a commitment to ensure that there are ways to reduce these costs moving forward, I am prepared to support an extra \$8 million to keep in place the sound controls our government has had in place to keep COVID out of the Northwest Territories. I think that's a price that

most members of the public are prepared to continue to spend until March 31st to get that peace of mind and keep our residents safe and sound. I'm prepared to support this with the commitments that I've received here in Committee of the Whole from our Finance Minister and from our Premier. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure that there is much to be added. I appreciate the recognition that, to do the work of government, you have to actually do the work of government. That does mean that you have to have people doing the work and you have to coordinate the work, and you have to spend money to get it done. Fighting COVID and implementing the measures we have costs money, and the Member actually does point out quite accurately that, as of right now, the federal government is providing us with an amount that brings down the net cost to the GNWT of just over \$8 million. I'm going to make one more commitment, if I might, and I think the Premier actually spoke to it. If it was missed or if it wasn't clear, Mr. Chair: we aren't going to stop going to the federal government to try to engage. I mean, we will certainly make that commitment and can also continue to update the Members to the efforts that are being made, both, I know, by the Premier's office, but also on the part of the Department of Finance.

I have more than once said in the regular calls that I continue to have that supports from the federal government vis-à-vis our COVID response must be individualized to the jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction is responding in a way that fits that jurisdiction. The way we are responding fits our jurisdiction, and we are going to continue to take that message forward. That will be another commitment, and again, we will continue to provide updates to the Members as to what we are doing in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to be supporting this expenditure, and I am doing it because I have just been in contact in the last 10 minutes to reinforce exactly what the three leaders have said in the community of Fort Smith: the chief of the Salt River First Nation says they support the secretariat; the Fort Smith Metis Nation support the secretariat; and I was also in contact with the mayor of the Town of Fort Smith. I will be supporting the supplementary in full.

I know there are other issues that are of concern, especially the housing issue. Because the housing

issue is a major concern with regard to making sure that we access the \$60 million, I think that one of the things that you can do, Minister, is: because most of the housing issues are for vulnerable people and Indigenous people in the Housing Corporation, at times like that, especially in a pandemic, you might be able to get 100 percent. There have been exceptions before. I am privy to that because, as a former chief, and a strong one, there are exceptions that, because we are in a pandemic, we might be able to just ask them to switch that over. I would encourage you, Minister, to ask that special favour of the Government of Canada.

I don't have a lot of questions. I am going to be voting for this because my community has said that this is what they want. They want protection; they want to remain safe. We have a large group of people. Everybody is vulnerable, and what's happening down South is not a good thing. I think we are very fortunate in the Northwest Territories to keep the numbers as they are, and hopefully, they stay that way. I'm not going to ask any questions. I will be voting in favour of the secretariat.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister, do you have any comments? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Chair. I've been thinking about this for a long time and consulting with the leaders of my riding. The general consensus is: there is not a lot of support for this. Right off the hop, I was reluctant, and I was very skeptical. If you try to make the best decision possible, you look at all the stats. You try to look at all the benefits. I just can't, the rationale behind this, I firmly believe this is a mistake. There is a better way through than allocating what we are allocating. I think that throughout, so far in this sitting, we've mentioned various issues that we are having during this pandemic, everything from addictions and there are gaps in services. Those breadcrumbs are spread out throughout the floor here, and we've talked about them. I honestly think there is a better way through. This isn't it. That's what I believe.

Again, it's frustrating for me. It was funny, when I first saw the first documents come out about this and they had the name secretariat, it made me think of that beautiful horse from the 70s was a beautiful thing to watch, graceful, speedy. I thought: this secretariat is not so much graceful to watch. At the same time, it's tough to navigate this, too. I get the position that the Premier is in. We have to navigate a pandemic, an emergency, and to do what's best for the North, and I appreciate that. Just listening to the Premier's comments, she'd said that there was not 100 percent support on this, not a lot of people were reporting back, not a lot of Indigenous governments reporting back. That's a

clear signal. I think that's something that you should really listen to.

Last year, in our round table, we vowed to work with each other for any major initiative or any sort of major decisions, that we'd work with each other. I didn't see that here. There wasn't a clear example. Again, just to share some of the comments from my colleague from Frame Lake, the communications part was something that we really needed. What we need to learn from that was: we need to do a better job with communications. I don't have any questions at this time. I've said my piece, and I'll leave committee with that. Marsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. We'll take that as a comment. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Initially, when this was brought back to our attention back in, I think it could have been June or this past summer, I think I was totally surprised about what was forming in terms of COVID for \$87 million. That was the price tag put to this project at that time. Then, in subsequent questioning to the Premier on the floor of the House, I wasn't getting answers to many of my questions. Probably one of the biggest ones I had was: was there any absolute thought given to this process? Was there a think-tank group to look at ways we could do this without breaking our bank because as things progress, we find that, and probably the Finance Minister was even saying it herself, that there was no guarantee that the federal government will throw in any more funds. They did for the \$23.4 million, but it's like any of our other major projects. It's the 75-cent dollar that we've got here. We have to put in 25 of our own money.

My concern was: we're taking it from other programs and services to fund this secretariat. We made suggestions, I've always mentioned them, the public health emergency, plus we began with the state of emergency, which gives you the power to direct staff, to recruit from within our workforce of almost 6,000 people. I stated people would have stepped up to the plate and want to be part of this initiative. I stated at that time, most of them will say yes. They'll have a story for their grandchildren at that point, saying, "Yes. This is what I did." For the \$23 million, we throw out lots of ideas; we throw out suggestions. Nothing gets listened to, nothing.

We still have border check stops that no one is happy with because they still see Alberta plates, BC plates; even this summer, there were Quebec plates driving around in the Northwest Territories. It's a free for all. Then we have a situation on Fort Liard, where we didn't even give them the due diligence there to put actual people at that border crossing. Rather, they put an unmanned gate. There is nobody around there because we're

hearing stories of vehicles and quads and everything going around the gates. It's not even manned. We're doing a real sloppy job. I don't know what the situation is up by the Dempster, whatever at the border there, or what's the situation there. Things haven't really improved that greatly there. People of my K'atlodeeche, they keep wanting to put up security, and they have. Fort Providence they had it there, now they took it down, now they've got it back up again because that's how concerned they are about people coming into the communities.

One of my Member's statements was the authority that the Chief Public Health Officer has in granting exemptions without consultations with First Nations communities or with the communities, community leaderships. We had an incident that really put that to the test where the CPHO granted an exemption to a family, and the community was up in arms. These people just came from Edmonton, and Edmonton is a hotspot for us. It's just south of us, with a very many cases of the coronavirus there. Especially, it's starting to hit the major hospitals in that area. I'm not going to say that I'm totally against having something in place.

Like I said before, we could use the local workforce. I think I mentioned it, too, in my Member's statement: Pierre Elliott Trudeau, to enforce something one time, there was an incident in Quebec; he invoked the War Measures Act. He had the authority to do what he wanted to do with his people. That's why I'm saying. You could do the same thing, declare a state of emergency or something to put it back, and you could make things happen. Let's try to look at ways we can keep our costs down so we're not affecting other programs and services. These are the type of things that we don't want to have to negotiate between what's good for the people. They can still be done, and I still believe that we should look at what the federal government gave us was \$23 million. Let's make it work within that budget. I'm pretty sure we could get pretty much close to that.

We've got lots of frivolous travel. The medical travel is okay. The frivolous ones are people just going up and down, in and out of the territory at will. My God, what are we doing to control that? I saw on a Facebook post; I copied it, and I sent it to the CPHO. I think the Premier was in it, too. Someone was coming up from the South with a trailer of goods. I said, "What is going on with this?" I got an email back saying, "That's okay. They've probably got a self-isolation plan already," but they didn't know themselves. They didn't even check that.

We've still got a flawed system here, a flawed secretariat. They want to do it for \$87 million. Let's try this \$23 million first. It's the federal government's money, not ours from the territory. I would prefer to

see it go that way rather than spend an astronomical amount of money on something that's just not going to fix everything. Those are my comments related to the secretariat expenditures. I wish you would really heed a lot of what we say here on this side of the House because there's experience on this side. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. I'm not sure if there's a question in there. Minister, do you have a comment?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister of Finance and the Minister responsible for the public service, Mr. Chair, I believe over 400 members of the public service have put their names forward volunteering at various times to take part in the government's response to COVID-19. Not every one of them can necessarily be positioned somewhere as part of a direct COVID response. Although, I believe at one point, we hit 188, if not more, that were, in fact, redeployed. Again, every time you redeploy someone, you take them away from their home position, and you take them away from the programs and the services that I understand the Member is wanting us to be so mindful of. I agree with the MLA that we cannot interrupt the programs and services that people of the Northwest Territories are depending on and relying on, which is why you can't simply redeploy everybody without filling those positions or without finding a way to otherwise provide those services.

That's, again, part of the reason why there have to be new positions created to respond to COVID-19. I think a lot of people are tired of hearing it, but it is unprecedented. It is something that no one in the world knew what to do and how to respond to. Different governments in different jurisdictions are still figuring that out, but it takes new positions to do it. Otherwise, you wind up interrupting the programs and the services of government.

Mr. Chair, I want to make one last comment again with that lens of being responsible for the public servants is that it's not only those that were deployed under the front lines or deployed to respond under the secretariat's functions. Every single public servant, in my view, over the last several months have been responding to COVID-19, and every single one of them should take pride in the work that they've done. Every single one of them should take pride in being on the front lines of a response from the government, whether they were working at a desk to ensure that invoices were paid to governments or to businesses that were struggling, or whether it's people who are working in the health department. I know the Member is concerned about, and has spoken more than once, and I think I remember hearing the statement in the House, speaking about people's desire to be

involved. I just wanted to acknowledge that, indeed, I do think the public servants really have risen to that occasion, so I appreciate that he's bringing attention to that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We could look back and say this wasn't rolled out properly, but at the end of the day, it happened so fast. It shut down our territory. It shut down, global. It was global. I didn't agree with it at the start, but when I think about it, I have to be here to represent my people as the MLA for Nunakput. I am going to support this in regards to priority one, safety of the people of the Northwest Territories.

When you look back, like this past week, I asked in the House, our community bubbles, we need to be supporting. The funding that we're getting, I hope they can really look at helping our community, local community governments in regards to what's happening here. With everything that's been going on, money from the start in April when the local community government, for instance in Tuktoyaktuk, they did a roadblock. I wish that they could get their funding back, that they did outreach because everybody was scared. As an Inuvialuit beneficiary, we did have a pandemic, Kittingaryumiut. Three thousand families, 3,000 Inuvialuit beneficiaries died there in Kittingaryumiut, 17 miles away from Tuktoyaktuk. For this, when they say pandemic, it means a whole different thing from where I'm from. What we did, the government didn't roll out this the way they should, but they did do something. They acted on it, shooting from the hip, but we're dealing right now. Right now, we're in the whole COVID-19 world.

Basically, the safety of the people is priority. Don't care about the money. The local community bubbles that we should be looking at in regards to helping our local community governments again with funding that they expended upon COVID-19, which should be looked at and should be helped. Our elders in my riding, we should be funding them. They're doing a good job. Our local community government, the community corporation and stuff like that, they're doing good work with helping, sewing kits and stuff like that to keep people busy, but dark days are coming. We've got nothing happening in the community because of COVID, so we should be looking at helping them more. I know the federal government's really been doing their best. They've been doing a pretty good job, and I'm not Liberal. That's the truth, though. They've been doing good work. Thank you.

The schools' safety is priority. The schools, our elders, because if one gets in the community, I don't know how many respirators we've got, but the

last time, I was told we had five, and it's all here in Yellowknife. Our small communities are really relying on this COVID secretariat for the safety of our people. Like I said, it's not about the money. I don't care about the money. It's the safety of the people in my riding. They're doing good work at the airport. I see when I land there, when we're allowed to go home for the weekend, they're doing good work. They are doing the best that they can with what they've got, and they're driving really nice trucks, too. We've got to take it easy on that.

The biggest thing for me is medical travel. That's affected us. It's been really hard on some of my constituents. They come down. They do a two-day testing or whatever they're doing in Edmonton, and they're back here, up to Inuvik for two weeks. If there's any way, for medical travel that I've said in my Member's statement yesterday, that we could shorten it up by doing that rapid testing when it's available, it should be done. Like I said, I'm in support of this. It's safety of the people of the Northwest Territories and in my riding for sure. I thank all who are doing the job, the front-line workers. I want to thank the front-line workers, the RCMP, the health centres, the store workers, the storefront workers, everybody, the hamlets, their staff. I want to thank them for all the work that they're doing under stressful times. Like I said, Mr. Chair, I am in support of this, and we'll just go from there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have any comments or response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A little while ago, in this session, I believe that the Premier made a statement that she had overwhelming support from the Indigenous governments. Then we hear today that many haven't even gotten back to her. I think this is just an example of the confusion that surrounds the creation of this unit and how the misrepresentation of the facts seems to be happening. I can't support increasing government employment at a time when there are so many other needs in our territory. We spent the last few weeks here in session discussing our housing crisis and the last six months on how inadequate our healthcare system is to deal with this pandemic, and our government's solution is to take funding provided by the federal government to deal with COVID and create more layers of government, more bureaucrats.

I understand Cabinet isn't too worried about job losses or businesses going under, since it appears their solution is just to ensure that everyone works for the GNWT. The statistic of 4,000 jobs lost, a staggering statistic given our population and demographics, rolled off the tongue of the Finance Minister pretty easily. You know why? Because they're all private-sector jobs. Coming from the private sector, it's absurd to me that we considered spending millions of dollars on more office space and a handful of senior bureaucratic positions. I believe we were told those items alone would cost a few million dollars. When employees returned to work, why did we not rejig the offices then, create the needed space at that time, and reconfigure? Especially if this is a temporary department and a lot of the GNWT employees are continuing to work from home, the rental of new space seems like a waste of money to me.

I would like to see the federal COVID money used to hire nurses, purchase equipment and PPE, support the private sector, create a public safety department instead of this secretariat, and bring together all the varying departments that protect our people under one department so that, when another crisis hits, we will already have all our services coordinated. That would have been way more useful than something so reactive that is way too late and past the time it was needed. If it had already been in place for so long and you've already gone ahead and spent all this money, how come nothing is improving? You've gone ahead, you've done this, so what good did that do for us in the recent cases? In the situation of the gym exposures, contact tracing wasn't even performed. Instead, a panic-inducing public announcement was made hours after a list of contacts could have been obtained and called, reducing the potential spread by hours. Instead, that did not happen, and we were only lucky that other cases didn't occur as a result.

The Cabinet hides behind the CPHO in deflection of any questions around contact tracing and such. I don't understand, then, why creating more GNWT employees and more bureaucracy is supposed to improve that, when really, that's where we want to get our answers from. That's where the issues lie. There are no communications between you as the Cabinet and the CPHO. I don't see that creating more bureaucratic layers and crap is really going to do any good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also came from the private sector before I arrived here. This is the longest I've spent working in the government, other than a stint when I was about 20 years old as an intern. I do also take

seriously the situation that is being faced by the private sector right now. That said, Mr. Chair, let me go through a number of the other items that I heard.

Increasing government employment. Again, Mr. Chair, it is very difficult to fight a pandemic when you are redeploying staff who have other jobs to do. The money that we received from the federal government was not money that we could take and drop down wherever we chose to drop it down. The federal government was extremely specific about the types of things they wanted us to do with the funding that they were providing, and not only to us; to every province and territory across Canada. They had very specific intentions. For example, PPE for health workers and non-health workers; support for vulnerable populations; testing; contact tracing; and data management. These were the ways in which the bundles of funding that we received from the federal government were to be allotted.

We had some increased flexibility with respect to the way we spent the airline funding. Although, again, that was negotiated on the part of the northern territories, and specifically our territory, so that we could support every single airline in the Northwest Territories and not only the commercial carriers for passenger flight services, as was given to some of the other provinces, because we wanted to support every single airline in the sector. We've been trying to negotiate that kind of flexibility, and the federal government, to their credit, Mr. Chair, have been doing a lot in terms of trying to ensure that funds are flexible. The wage top-up is another example, for instance, where, even though the way things work here, that wages are higher and, therefore, some of the wage top-up wasn't necessarily working the way it was envisioned in Ottawa, we were given the flexibility to adapt it to our needs.

However, that's not the case across the board. The money that is coming in from the federal government, significant amounts of money, millions of dollars of funding that has come in from the federal government, a lot of it has come in for specific purposes, and the money that is being put towards the work in the COVID secretariat is no different. It's not that we can go in and just spend it on more nursing positions. It's not that simple; I wish it were.

As for the job losses, Mr. Chair, we have experienced job losses. So has everywhere else in Canada or the world experienced job losses. We are quite fortunate here in the Northwest Territories to be comparatively insulated such that, by the end of this particular calendar year, we are expecting to be back up at around 90 percent of our pre-COVID job numbers. The exception to that is in the tourism and hospitality industry. I said that earlier today, Mr.

Chair. That industry is going to be continuing to be struggling and suffering, and that is not new or different here than it is anywhere else. That is the message I've heard from other Ministers across Canada, and all of those Ministers across Canada are asking for funding specific from the federal government and are looking for ways that we can use best practices one to the next.

That doesn't change the fact that we have to continue to respond to COVID-19. It doesn't change the fact that we have to continue to keep the people in the Northwest Territories safe. Nobody is going to have jobs in the way that they want to have jobs if we have to shut everything back down because there is a community spread that develops. So far, we have not had community spread in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chair, and it is our intention to do everything we can to continue that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to talk about the reporting back from Indigenous governments, and make that very clear. It's not that the Indigenous did not report back to me. It's that I didn't get hold of all the Indigenous governments. I had a meeting and eight Indigenous governments were there. Seven of the Indigenous governments, on that call, vocally stated that they support the secretariat, once I explained what it was. I had one in that call who said, "I need more information." That chief actually, once we gave the information, replied back to me and didn't say, "I didn't support it." All she said was, "You need to get this out more. You need to communicate more."

Since then, I met with two other Indigenous governments, and both of those Indigenous governments gave me support for the secretariat. Nine out of 10 Indigenous governments that I connected with gave me overwhelming support for the secretariat. One, I don't know, because she just said, "Communicate better." Then the other ones, it's not that they didn't reply back. It's that I hadn't had the chance to get back to them because the secretariat has only been operating for less than a month. I've been in session, so my time has been really tight, too.

The other thing I want to say is about stepping up to the plate. We had people stepping up to the plate. I think every one of you knows enforcement people, and I heard and I believe them. If we had had a forest fire this summer, we would have had to make a choice: fight the fire or do the enforcement. That's the decisions that we would have had to make. It's not about "just as easy." We took out most of MACA. We took out most of health. Those departments stepped up, and they can't keep doing

it. About stakeholder engagement, yes, I didn't engage with everyone, but I did talk to the staff. I wish that MLAs would also talk to the staff because they said it wasn't sustainable. Sometimes, we have to listen to the people who are providing the services, as well.

As for coordinating, that's what we're trying to do. The secretariat has only been in place for less than a month, now. I don't know what kind of miracles you're wanting. Before that, absolutely, it wasn't coordinated well. That's why we said we had to do this. It's only been in place for less than a month, and we are hoping that we'll get more efficient. Like I said, for this year, it's around \$9 million, and we are hoping the federal government will give us more money. Also, we're looking at ways to save money on the isolation units, which you'll see coming forward very soon, because we already presented to committee on our plans to do that. We will bring down the costs, but you have to remember that this is for the people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As my colleague explained, there is \$8 million extra that has not come from the federal government that you are asking us to approve, and I would like to actually see that money spent on better things than Russ Neudorf's salary and some office space. Sorry, my apologies. I apologize. That being said, also, I do recognize and understand what the Finance Minister explained about payments, around what the money was used for. However, as mentioned, you are asking us to approve other and additional funding, which I think would be better spent to all of the myriad of issues that we have been raising for the last three weeks in session.

When it comes to the Indigenous governments, I have heard from many. I have heard from a chief who says they do not support this. I do not hear that comment or any of those discussions coming from Cabinet or any explanation of that side of things. You have been talking about the COVID secretariat for a very, very long time. If you did not have time before session to reach out to the Indigenous governments, then you clearly don't know how to do consultation. Thank you. No questions, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can I just get some more information on the parameters of the COVID secretariat federal funding, what exactly we could and could not spend it on? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There have been quite a number of funding pots with respect to the Canada-Northwest Territories Safe Restart, which is the dollar funding that is coming towards the COVID secretariat. Funding under this agreement was to be used for testing; contact tracing; data management; healthcare system capacity; vulnerable populations; municipalities, on that one, I will note with respect to the municipalities, Mr. Chair, this is one area where we were required to put in a 50-50 contribution to match the amount that was allotted from the federal government, so that is one area where there was an additional amount that went in from the GNWT; PPE for both health workers and non-health workers; childcare for returning workers; and the beginning of some sick leave availability. Mr. Chair, I am happy to provide a costed breakdown rather than reading out the numbers, or I can certainly read out the numbers to the House. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that is a pretty expansive list, and I heard support for vulnerable persons in there. I am confident that, if this money is removed in a supplementary today, the smart folks at Health and Social Services and the Department of Finance will find a way to spend it in one of those categories. In regard to the \$8 million that is the GNWT contribution, is that required to receive the rest of the funding? Are we under any contribution agreements such that we had to put up that money? I note the Minister mentioned that, if we wanted to give money to municipalities, it was 50 percent funded, but is that why we are seeing a GNWT contribution here for other reasons? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I am going to turn it over to the deputy minister because I think I just read out the wrong listing of items, and I just want to make sure that I am not getting that wrong. I am going to send it over there while I make sure I am on the right page. Sorry, Mr. Chair. Then I can come back to the \$8 million.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Deputy minister.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$8.7 million is the residual amount that has to be funded. As Members know, the total projected cost of the

secretariat to the end of the year is \$31.7 million, which \$23.4 million is going to be funded from the first northern bundle, which is being transferred, as Members saw in an earlier page, from the Department of Finance. The remaining \$8.7 million is the forecasted gap that is going to be funded from the consolidated revenue fund of the government. Then the government has to make up the difference. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. I think I first heard these figures back in August, September, but it's been a while, when I remember the COVID secretariat was first announced. I hear the deputy minister saying that the gap there is the projected cost of the COVID secretariat. However, I have also heard commitments from the Minister of Finance, commitment from the Premier, that we will go find cost-saving measures. I have heard a number of really great ideas of how we can do that. They each have pros and cons, as I have said. Shortening isolation periods, increasing rapid testing, renting apartments instead of hotels, putting the hotels out for tender, allowing isolation centres outside of the four hubs, there are plenty of ways that we can save money in this area, and I believe there is a recognition. I am struggling to pass money based on a projection that we are also saying that we will then go and correct. Can I just get a sense of: that initial projection which we are being asked to fund now, has it been revisited due to the number of cost-saving options that are being explored? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Member already listed quite a number of the cost-saving measures that are being quite actively considered. One of the functions and sort of one of the expectations on the secretariat staff right now is, in fact, to go out and provide some of the background for potentially reducing those costs through things like an RFP process for the isolation centres and revisiting a consideration of, in fact, who is being paid for, whose travel is being paid for.

I did want to note, Mr. Chair, it's not as simple as just drawing a line and saying we will not spend money or we will not pay for certain persons to travel. There are Charter considerations to be considered here, where some people, if the CPHO is saying they cannot stay in their own homes and we are telling them then you have to self-isolate at your own cost for 14 days, it creates a significant inequity for the people who live outside of those

four hub communities. Figuring that route forward is not as simple as just drawing the line.

There are some fundamental rights at issue here and decisions that are going to need to be made. All of which is to say that that work is exactly what is happening right now with the COVID secretariat staff. Indeed, those decisions are coming forward and being worked on right now. Yes, again, it will have to keep continuing to come forward and evolve, just as our response to COVID-19 is evolving, just as the reality of the pandemic is evolving. I think the point has already been made that we need to be better at sharing that information earlier and more often. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to begin by saying I am very happy with our COVID response to date. We have one active case right now, and it was a scary case a couple of weeks ago when we were risking community spread. By all accounts, it looks like our response at our borders has been great to date. We are one of the best jurisdictions in testing. I am very grateful we are getting these staff. I have no issue with the COVID secretariat as a whole. I think it is needed. I do have issues asking the Legislative Assembly to pass the costs projected for the isolation centres when there seems to be a consensus that those costs will not actually be what we are passing today.

I have heard a number of options, and I am happy to see the commitment of variance reporting. I think maybe an accountant would say: MLA Johnson, the appropriation is just an estimate, and then the actuals are what actually matter, and the reporting and the variance reporting is what actually matters. However, the Minister of Finance has often told me that, if I want to ask for more things, then I have to ask what I would remove from the budget. I, at the very beginning of this session, said I wanted to see more money for housing and I want to see more money for the municipal infrastructure gap. I recognize we are dealing with a supplemental appropriation and that that it is not the capital estimates, but those things are related. If we move \$5 million from the operations budget, that means there is more money in capital. It gives us money to work. I will do my best as an MLA that, when I ask for something, I give Cabinet an idea of where I would like it removed from. I have asked for \$5 million for municipalities. I know they took a beating due to COVID. I am happy to hear that this funding pool could actually be used by them if we match the dollars.

I will be bringing a motion to remove \$5 million from the isolation centres. One of the problems is: the

way this supplementary appropriation works is it's essentially one line item. I don't want to remove \$5 million from the staff. I don't want to remove \$5 million from testing. I don't want to remove \$5 million from PPE. I don't want to remove \$5 million from the border. I am happy with those things. I am just not convinced that the projection in front of us has the homework done to actually find the cost-savings for the isolation centres. I heard from my colleague MLA Lafferty that he will be bringing a motion. I believe, procedurally, the best way for me to do this would be to wait until his motion and then bring mine to remove \$5 million after.

I have one more comment. I want to clarify that, if this money is removed and we don't find those cost savings, which it seems everyone wants to find, there is nothing stopping government from coming back with another supplemental appropriation in the next sitting. There is nothing stopping them from saying, "We tried. We did the variance reporting. Sorry, we need that \$5 million for isolation centres back." However, the way I see it, we're going to find that cost saving. I as a Member of the Legislative Assembly don't want to approve money that probably won't be spent because my experience with departments is that, usually, they just make a race to spend it all in the fiscal and I don't have the democratic oversight of that money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that my message around, "Don't ask for more if you're not taking something out," is at least falling on some receptive ears. Notwithstanding that, Mr. Chair, the comment about the projections and a lack of certainty or clarity around the projections, the way that we come up with the projection of \$31.7 million, Mr. Chair, was by looking at the actuals that were spent by and across all departments in the initial response, April, May, June, and I think July, as well, which was in and of itself a bit of a process by having to initially putting up codes and saying to each department, "Please code under this COVID code and try to maintain and identify how much is being spent," and cobbling all that together. That took a bit of effort, and it took a lot of effort on the part of all the departments and then on the Department of Finance to pull that together, to evaluate where all of the costs were coming in and where the spending was being affected in order to have our response to COVID-19.

Once that was done, once those were received, that's how the projections for what then became the COVID secretariat were done. It was based on knowing what we had spent to date under the conditions that we were under, under the Chief

Public Health Officer's orders that we were under. Those projections are projections, but they are projections that are fairly accurately based. That said, as far as concern about "the money will just be spent because it's there," Mr. Chair, first of all, I think I've said before that that's not what departments should be doing, ever. Besides which, this is not that kind of situation. I don't think anyone wants to be spending money unnecessarily on COVID-19. Nobody wants COVID-19 in the first place. It's not a situation where the money would then be available to move around within the department, because there is no department here to be moving it around to. There is a very discrete and separate set of functions, which is what we will be reporting on now monthly here to the Members, at the very least, if not to the public on the website, so there is not really anywhere for that money to be squirreled away.

I appreciate the Member's creativity in trying to find a way to save it, but again, this is not something where it's going to sit there and get shuffled off. Also, one last comment, Mr. Chair, is that the money isn't coming from programs and services. It's not coming from municipalities. It is impacting the surplus, the operating surplus, but if it doesn't have to be spent on COVID, then it won't be spent on COVID, period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. At this time, we'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will call the meeting back to order. Before I start, I just want to let you know that the interpreters have gone home, so we don't have any interpreters here. Okay. We'll go to Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I understand that I am the last one to speak and that people are eager to get going, so I'm going to try to be brief. I want to start off by thanking the public service and just saying that I agree that people were asked to work different straight across the Northwest Territories, across Canada, and across the world. People had a lot of responsibility on their backs and really did perform during, as you say, unprecedented times. I just wanted to start off by thanking them for that. I do agree with the MLA Lafferty from Monfwi, my colleague from Monfwi, that I do have concerns around the COVID secretariat in the sense that no one has died from COVID luckily, in the Northwest Territories, and that we are seeing people die in the Northwest Territories from addictions, from illness, from homicide, and from suicide, and \$8 million could go a long way to support addictions in the Northwest Territories and the other demons that we have in

the Northwest Territories that are taking Northerners from us. I do share concerns that MLA Lafferty highlighted, as well.

I also share the same concerns as my colleague from Nunakput, MLA Jacobson, in that over a quarter of people from the Northwest Territories are considered high risk, that COVID running rampant in communities would be absolutely devastating, and that we do need to be able to have some support for the orders of the Chief Public Health Officer in the Northwest Territories. My constituents have shared with me that largely they appreciate that the borders are closed and that does make them feel safer and that they do feel protection from that but that they are frustrated by the responses from the GNWT to support those orders, namely the communication from the GNWT and also through consistent policy foundation from the GNWT.

I understand from the Premier and her colleagues that this COVID secretariat would stand to fix some of those issues. I know from my constituents that items like ProtectNWT, 811, and policy and communications, border patrol through highways and airports are things that they're not willing to let go of. At the same time, people expect us in this room to make sure that the government is being fiscally responsible and is spending money wisely. I also share the comments from my colleague from Yellowknife North in that this money could be spent very, very effectively on things like co-investment fund and municipalities. Eight million dollars for our municipal funding gap would go a long way.

I have concerns about the GNWT being able to change the way that they are running the COVID secretariat without the added pressure to do so. When we look at our self-isolation centres, and we've heard a lot of different ideas this evening and throughout session about ways to reduce the cost of our self-isolation centres, but the isolation centres account for 54 percent of the overall COVID secretariat cost. My worry is that if there isn't an incentive to reduce the costs of that, namely the money just isn't available, then how will we ensure that we're not just funding a status quo COVID secretariat? A lot of times they say that necessity inspires change and if that necessity isn't there, how can we make sure that the isolation centres do change? My first question is: if there is not the support for the supplementary this evening for the COVID secretariat, what happens? If there is not the support for the full supplementary, as the MLA for Yellowknife mentioned removing money from the supplementary, then what happens? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If there is not support for the supplementary, then the extreme end would be to have special warrant for funding to support the actual response to COVID-19, which isn't really something we want to have to do. I don't think that's where this is going, though, Mr. Chair. If there is a removal of some random amount of money, and I don't mean to be disparaging, but essentially a random amount of money that just gets pulled out, then there is less money to deliver on the things that it's meant to deliver on. I don't know where we could take that out of, Mr. Chair. Something would have to give. Does it mean the communications budget gets cut? You want to sort of assume that you would do some sort of cost analysis of where you can keep the money, or do you keep funding as you are now in support of the Chief Public Health Officer, hoping that there is a change in the orders that allows for some savings? I don't have an answer to that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. MLA.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. One of the things I hear quite often from both the business community and from constituents is that they feel that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Unless they are willing to be the one who stands up and says, "This isn't fair. My neighbour got this," or, "This isn't fair. This other business got this," or, "Somebody else is getting this type of exemption," when it comes to businesses, that's a big deal. That means that somebody else is able to pay their bills, whereas somebody else isn't because they didn't realize that they were able to go back to the Chief Public Health Officer and put their foot down and fight it, basically. How would the COVID secretariat make changes to that, and what guarantee do we have over on this side of the House that this promise of better communication and better policy foundation is actually going to happen? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can speak to one example, being that the ProtectNWT is meant to start to have essentially a connection to the business community so that there is a better connection between what's happening with businesses and with ProtectNWT, so that there is more streamlining that is being done within ProtectNWT and enforcement and compliance, so that the exemptions can be done in a more straightforward fashion, can be done more quickly, and can be done, rather than sort of as one-offs but rather by groupings by type. That policy work is being done in the secretariat, and then the implementation of it would also come through the

secretariat in consultation with the Chief Public Health Officer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We've heard discussion of monthly variance reporting from the Minister of Finance on the COVID secretariat mentioned this evening, and there has also been a lot of discussion around ways to reduce the cost of the COVID secretariat. What type of communication with this side of the House does Cabinet see happening in order to make sure that those cost reductions are actually happening and that this side of the House is being included in that conversation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Chair, I would direct that over to the Premier if I could, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we've done already is we've provided I believe it was AOC committee with a paper that talks about what we're doing now, going out and engaging with the stakeholders, the municipal and Indigenous governments, et cetera, to ask about the isolation centres. That work happened last week. It's happening this week. What I can commit to is, once we compile those results, which will be in the next couple of weeks, I'm pretty sure, it will go through Cabinet. Then I'll be offering committee a briefing, or we will provide the information to committee. However, at any time, if committee wants to meet with me weekly or monthly on it, I am more than willing to meet with committee, as well. I think it's important that we work together on this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I am wondering if Cabinet is willing to publish a list of exemptions to the public health orders that are happening across the Northwest Territories, of course, leaving out people's personal information, but just so that people across the Northwest Territories can see what types of exemptions are happening, both in the business community and for personal individuals, as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the idea behind that suggestion.

I can tell the Member that the Department of Finance, and me as Minister of Finance, along, of course, with the Premier and the Minister of health, do meet regularly, weekly, with the Chief Public Health Officer. What I will do is commit to raising that at the next meeting, having brought this forward here and being responsible for bringing forward the supplemental. I will commit to raising it and getting back to the Member as to what the response is, but I am concerned that that might not be as easy as just saying that we'll excise personal information and be able to share everything. There is individual information, family information, businesses. It may be simple, and there may be a simple solution. Before I can go any further, I need to check with the Chief Public Health Officer. I will make that inquiry and get the response back to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. One of the concerns that we hear from the business community is that, sometimes, ProtectNWT is contacted by the public because there are different exemptions that are happening in businesses that aren't well-known by the public, and that creates a lot of volume within ProtectNWT and then creates a lot of frustration within our communities from the public at large who feel that different businesses are not upholding public safety. I'm wondering if Cabinet or the Minister of Finance or the Premier would be willing to help businesses communicate their capacity, for example, or the rules of operation within COVID restrictions in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is an excellent suggestion, and I can assure the Member that that conversation has already been held with the Chief Public Health Officer. It certainly is something that has come up, if not with the Business Advisory Council, then certainly in other circles where I am responsible for maintaining liaisons with. Essentially, it is to demonstrate or to show compliance with the Chief Public Health Officer, so businesses need to be able to demonstrate that they are complying with an order or an exemption, or whichever the situation for them might be, so that people, when they are attending there, know that they are attending somewhere that is safe and is being monitored and is monitoring the situation with COVID-19. As I said, I know there have been some discussions, and I think there is still some work being done on what those options might be. I will make the same commitment that I'll raise that again, see where that

is at, and see what options can be brought forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, COVID secretariat, not previously authorized, \$31,677,000. Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 55-19(2):

TABLED DOCUMENT 217-19(2):

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO.2, 2020-2021 – DELETION OF \$8,277,000 FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COVID SECRETARIAT, DEFEATED

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Chair. [English translation not available.] Mr. Chair, I move that \$8.277 million not previously authorized be deleted from the Health and Social Services operations expenditure for COVID secretariat in the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021. Masi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member for Monfwi. The motion is on the floor and is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Chair. I feel it's important I speak my language, in summary, because this is a very delicate, sensitive matter in my region. [English translation not available.] Mr. Chair, towards this motion that I have submitted. I have been listening to the Members across the floor and here, as well, Regular Members, and different analogies have been read out. I like taking notes from Members when they speak so I can use their words, as well; similar to the Premier. Either we fight the fire or create a secretariat in the North. We must listen to the people. We only have limited resources. We are high in our debt limit. One forest fire, that is all it takes. If that were to happen, obviously, it's common sense, the forest fire would have to be a priority, not the secretariat.

Mr. Chair, the federal funding of the \$24 million give or take, we are not telling the federal government to take it back as the Premier alluded to earlier. Whenever there is a free money, obviously, we like to take advantage of it. This is federal contribution of \$24 million towards the COVID-19, not necessarily towards the secretariat that the government is pushing their agenda here. It's earmarked towards COVID-19 to offset the costs of COVID-19 but not necessarily to establish another bureaucracy within this GNWT. It needs to go to the overall coordination to deal with all COVID-19 in the Northwest Territories. What we are telling people here today, Mr. Chair, is secretariat is good for you.

We are dictating to our own people of the North. We are not listening to them.

Mr. Chair, our government kept us safe since March. It did it in a manner respectful of our rights. It did it in a fiscally responsible manner when it first started, working with existing staff, shuffling our limited resources to where they were much needed. It came at a price in terms of overworked employees and a stressed-out system, but the GNWT made it work and kept us safe, Mr. Chair. Regrettably, at some point in the story, it also turned sour. It's at this point in the story that GNWT stops acting in a fiscally responsible way. It's at this point that GNWT stops making proud of our government and Cabinet that is calling the shots. Cabinet decided on a radical, unsustainable, unjustifiable approach.

Mr. Chair, they invented a model, a secretariat, completely new to this country of Canada, a model that no other Canadian jurisdiction dared to attempt, Mr. Chair, from Ontario, with over 15 million people, down to tiny Prince Edward Island. It decided to reinvent the wheel. What is this novel, untested GNWT approach, Mr. Chair? What our Cabinet wants to do is establish a totally new governmental department. They call it a secretariat, but that is only to minimize what they are doing, which is to set up a totally new government department, a totally new bureaucracy that reports directly to the Premier. The term "secretariat" is just a disguise. What's the price tag for this new department of COVID, Mr. Chair? It's a whopping \$87 million today, but it could be far more even within the next few months or years.

Mr. Chair, just think of what \$87 million could do for our people of the Northwest Territories. It could build 300 homes for homelessness. I have spoken to numerous times overcrowded Northerners. It could construct three new additions treatment centres here in the North, plus six badly needed community health centres across the North. It's also equal to 100 new classroom teachers employed over the next five years. Mr. Chair, it also amounts to a cash grant for 500 struggling northern businesses to the tune of \$200,000 per company. Just imagine. That could be an economic boost to our businesses in the Northwest Territories if we invest in those businesses.

Mr. Chair, instead of reinventing the wheel, there are other more productive, more useful things government could do. The government could focus on human cost, on social distancing rules and isolation requirements. I am talking about the loneliness, separated families, emotional stress, depression, substance abuse that we are faced with every single day. Mr. Chair, instead of more bureaucracy, Cabinet could focus on the costs of locking down the borders. That is where the

COVID-19 is coming from, southern jurisdiction. Lock it down. It could be more establishing new isolation centres, assisting unemployed performing artists, creating work for hundreds who have lost their jobs through the COVID crisis. Instead, Mr. Chair, we are building a monument to the Premier's vanity, a secretariat bureaucracy wasting our taxpayers hard-earned dollars.

Mr. Chair, I can go on and on, but I am going to close off with saying: give us mature, intelligent, decision-making, Mr. Chair, not a new burdensome bureaucracy, not a Taj Mahal that I referred to earlier. Mr. Chair, when the supplementary request for the secretariat comes before this Assembly through this motion deleting that item, I hope my fellow MLAs will give it a reception it deserves. They must say no to the excessive, irresponsible spending of this government. They must say yes to a safe Northwest Territories led by decision-makers free of panic and fear, northern-made solutions with northern input at the beginning of this whole crisis and where we are at today. Mr. Chair, that concludes my opening remarks, and I will have more when I will conclude on the motion. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member for Monfwi. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to express some frustration. That is the first I have seen this motion, and it's moving to remove \$8,277,000. I also am proposing a motion to move \$5 million. The Minister of Finance just recently said we are picking random numbers. I have some questions about what this random number is as opposed to my random number. More to the principle of the motion, I do not agree with the things MLA Lafferty just said. I am in support of the COVID secretariat. I am specifically trying to remove money from the isolation centre costs because the projections for that and what I believe we will actually do do not line up. It's a weird situation where there is one motion to remove money and I am also proposing after this motion to remove money. I, ultimately, due to the fact that I support the COVID secretariat and disagree with the principle behind this first motion, am not in favour of it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. What I would ask anybody speaking to the motion is that you actually speak to the motion in front of you and not the one that may be coming up. Thank you. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I know it's been a long day and long evening, but I am concerned with some of the remarks that I heard. I think I do not support personal attacks on the Premier. This is

not about the Premier's vanity, and I do not accept those kinds of remarks being made in the House. I just don't think that they are appropriate.

This is not another bureaucracy. This is continuing functions that have been going on since March, April, May. This is not a new bureaucracy. This is continuing the efforts of our government attempting to respond to a public health emergency. This is unprecedented. We have a pandemic. We have a public health emergency on our hands, and I take at face value what my colleagues on the other side have said, the Minister of Finance, the Premier, in terms of demonstrating fiscal prudence with monthly variance reports, that there are efforts underway to reduce the cost of the isolation centres, which are the major part of the cost in the supplementary appropriation for the COVID secretariat functions. I'm not dictating to anybody what happens with this pandemic. I accept what the Chief Public Health Officer has done to date in terms of keeping us safe or keeping our residents safe.

Everybody's entitled to their own views about whether they support this funding or not. I'm not dictating to anybody, and I don't believe that Cabinet is dictating to anybody how we respond to the pandemic. A lot of this has been done quickly, and I think it has kept our residents safe. I commend Cabinet and my colleagues on this side of the House for working together through a lot of this. It hasn't always been easy, but I think we've found reasonable compromises and grounds to work together in the interests of all of our residents.

I had hoped that if people on our side have concerns or issues with the cost, that there would be more specific suggestions around ways to reduce them, and I think some of us have brought some of those ideas forward. If you don't like the management function performed by the secretariat, say so, and move to remove that, or the communications function. There's a number of things here that I'm just not prepared to compromise on things like border controls, ProtectNWT, the self-isolation centres. We'll be watching very carefully. We'll continue to put pressure on my Cabinet colleagues to find, to save funding for those functions.

At the end of the day, how much is public health worth, \$8 million? I'm sorry. I'm prepared to spend that to invest in the health and safety of our residents. That's what this is about. We're not approving \$87 million here. This is about funding for the COVID secretariat functions to the end of this fiscal year. Next year, all bets are off. I'm hoping that the pandemic is over by then. We're being asked to approve an additional \$8 million tonight, and I'm ready to do that. I'm not prepared to support this motion, and I would hope that

colleagues, when speaking to this, refrain from attacking individuals that are here in the House. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, MLA for Frame Lake. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. I'm getting a little tired of people policing what other people say around here. If people want to speak to their opinions, then they should be allowed to do so. I think it's up to us to have to sometimes point out hard things and truthful things to the public and to each other, so I defend my colleagues' right to speak to however he would like to.

I agree. I don't think that \$8.277 million is going to be the "make it or break it" for the safety of our people. I recently spoke to, and will speak to probably before the end of session, the circumstances around the last cases that came up around COVID. Nothing about what I've seen around the secretariat or the HSS's handling of the COVID cases gives me any faith that spending an additional \$8.27 million on it will actually improve things. If anything, I think it's just throwing good money after bad, so I won't be supporting my colleague's motion here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question's been called. Sorry. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure how Members feel that this is not an important matter. We're talking about \$8.7 million here. New money. If nobody else is going to speak to it, I want to close it off by saying that this has been an ongoing issue since March, and then the secretariat came in in August. We need to have a coordinated approach. We always have that at the beginning, and I felt that it was the best approach amongst other departments.

The Member alluded to me attacking the Premier. It's the Premier's job to defend the government. I'm asking and I'm pointing facts to the Premier. I'm not attacking the Premier personally. I'm attacking whoever the Premier's position is today. That's our job as MLAs, holding the government accountable. For that kind of money, we're going to throw at creating more jobs. Member says it's not a new department. It's a new established department. We never heard of it five years ago.

Mr. Chair, it's been stated in the House, as well, how much is one life worth? We have people dying on the streets. I can say that over and over. As soon as we walk out of here, we see people

begging for homes, begging for food, and here, we're just going to pass \$8.277 million like it's nothing. I have issues with that. I have people begging and pleading for housing, homeless people in my riding. We have lack of treatment services here in the Northwest Territories. We don't have any treatment centres in the Northwest Territories. After-care program lacking. Mr. Chair, it's very frustrating sitting here, but I just want to state my case that we're going to be voting on a motion here today. Obviously, the public will see how everybody votes today.

I just want to highlight some of the areas where I stand. Mr. Chair, I stand here before you in principle of this motion. The right thing to do for our territory, we should be redirecting that \$8.2 million from the secretariat, the new money, to a co-investment fund or others that are highlighted, homelessness, housing, healthcare. It just makes sense, Mr. Chair.

Today, obviously, I will vote for housing for our most vulnerable, our homeless population in the North. I will vote for housing units which is the state of emergency across the North. That's a real story here. I vote for more treatment facilities, services, after-care programs, on-the-land programs. We are losing lives. As I stated earlier, over the weekend, I lost another young individual my son's age. That's hurting, Mr. Chair. It's hurting the community. It's hurting me as the representative for a region. We need to turn our attention to them. Let's save their lives. Their lives matter more than the secretariat.

Mr. Chair, I just want to close off by saying: I will not be, obviously, voting for the whole COVID secretariat supplementary that's before us, the \$31 million. We must think about our most vulnerable people in the North. I'm not sure how else I can convince the Members, but they've already made up their mind. I'll be voting for the people of the North, to vote against the secretariat establishment, the \$31 million plus overall next four years of \$87 million towards the secretariat. That money should be better off spent elsewhere, where it's badly, badly needed. We hear it every day. We address it in the House almost every day. This secretariat just appeared, and it's before us now. On that motion, Mr. Chair, I would request a recorded vote, so I'd like to know where people stand, either with the government or for the people. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Recorded vote has been called for. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland): The Member for Monfwi, the Member for Great

Slave, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): All those opposed to the motion, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Rutland):

The Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Nunakput.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Anyone abstaining please stand. The motion: four in favour of the motion; 12 opposed to the motion; and no abstentions. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, COVID secretariat, not previously authorized, \$31,677,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

COMMITTEE MOTION 56-19(2):

TABLED DOCUMENT 217-19(2):

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO.2, 2020-2021 – DELETION OF \$5,000,000 FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COVID SECRETARIAT, DEFEATED

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that \$5 million not previously authorized be deleted from the Health and Social Services operations expenditures, COVID secretariat in the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Motion is on the floor and is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. MLA for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll start by saying that I feel kind of silly that this is the second motion to remove what I see as somewhat of a random number from the COVID secretariat. I believe I have to bring this motion to distinguish from the previous one -- I'm not sure if I'm allowed to speak to the previous one. Sorry, Mr. Chair -- In that this is just me doing my job as an MLA. I believe the projections of what we're going to spend on isolation centres and what we will actually spend don't line up.

This is an attempt to give clear direction to Cabinet and to the Chief Public Health Officer that we need to save money in that area. I'm going to express a little frustration with the way that supplementary estimates are brought forward in that there is just one line item here for \$31 million, and if I could bring forward a motion that was \$5 million against the isolation centres, as my colleagues have said, if you're going to cut something, specify what you are doing. That is what I'm doing. I'm trying to save some money on the isolation centres as I believe this money could be better used for our communities and for vulnerable persons.

Unfortunately, the way that supplementary estimates work, they are just one big \$31 million bundle. In general, the \$88 million supplementary we have in front of us is the majority federal money. I'm happy to see we're getting that federal money. I'm happy with this Cabinet's response to getting that money. I'm happy with the COVID secretariat and the Chief Public Health Officer keeping us safe. I just believe there will be savings in the isolation centres and as a Member of the Legislative Assembly I don't like approving money that we won't spend. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Rules of the Legislative Assembly, Rule 63 states that a formal motion that has been defeated cannot be introduced again in the same session. Essentially, we've just defeated a motion to remove a set amount from the bill. We just introduced another to remove a set amount from the bill. We could go through this dollar by dollar millions of times, so I don't believe that this motion is in order, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Does anybody else want to speak to the point of order? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member raises a very valid point in that we can't simply keep bringing motions that reduce an amount by dollar by dollar because that could then be used as a tactic to delay. However, this is \$3 million, which is a significant difference. The first motion was to remove all of the GNWT's portion of the COVID secretariat. This is a different amount. I believe that there is some room within the rules to bring a difference of \$3 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. You're going to remember my riding before the end of the

Assembly, I'm sure. Look, I want to defend my colleague's right to bring forward another motion for a reduction. I think the rationale for the reductions is quite different than the previous motion. I want to support his ability to bring it forward. That doesn't mean I support the motion itself. I would hope, too, that we're not going to end up in a game of bringing forward further amendments to arbitrarily reduce this line item in the supplementary appropriations. I think Members would lose patience in that. I'm prepared to go with whatever ruling you bring forward, Mr. Chair, but I think it should be considered a valid motion because the rationale is quite different. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. To the point of order. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I too, would like to support this. I believe that the intent of this motion is different than the last and the messaging is different than the last. I think that is important. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. To the point of order. At this time, we will take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): We will call the committee back to order. I have reviewed the relevant section. I am satisfied that the motion is sufficiently different, and I dismiss the point of order. We will resume debate on the motion. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the sentiment of my colleague from Yellowknife North in bringing this forward. I feel that I have got sufficient commitments from the Minister of Finance that there is going to be regular financial variance reporting that is going to allow us to monitor. I will hold their feet to the fire in terms of expenditures of funding for COVID secretariat functions between now and the end of the year. I take the Premier's commitments at face value, again, that a process has been started to look at ways to reduce the self-isolation centre costs and to reduce the mental and social anguish that is associated with self-isolation, as well. I am convinced, with those commitments that have already been secured, that there are going to be very serious efforts towards reducing the cost and that there are also going to be additional efforts found to increase federal funding for these COVID secretariat functions. I appreciate the sentiments of my colleague, but picking an arbitrary figure of \$5 million, I think it is quite arbitrary. I say that with all due respect to my colleague. It could have as easily been \$6 million or \$4 million. I just don't accept picking an arbitrary

figure like this and reducing the budget for these important functions in that manner, so I will not be supporting the motion. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I said earlier when I was speaking that necessity is the greatest inspiration for change. I think I totally messed up the quote, and it's actually, "necessity is the mother of invention." Same point, that we need to be innovative, and we need to inspire change to happen. We need to be constantly looking for ways to work smarter. One of the reasons that I like this idea is that, although I do believe that there have been some fair and significant commitments made from the other side in order to be constantly looking for ways to work smarter and including us on this side of the House, one of the things I like about this motion is that it forces the government to come back and ask for money when they run out. It allows us to then, at that point, re-evaluate how the COVID secretariat is working and to be able to be reflective of, hopefully, the positive changes that have been made to how the COVID secretariat is running. I would support this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm the first to admit that this is somewhat of an arbitrary number, but that's due to my frustrations in not being able to get what the projected cost savings in isolation centres are. I believe I've got a commitment that the \$17 million we will approve tonight is not all going to be spent on isolation centres. We will reduce those costs. I hope I am sitting here on April 1st, and I look at what we spent in the various reporting, and it's \$12 million, and we actually went and saved some money as I keep getting promised. I believe my duty as a Member is to approve money when there's a clear plan of how it will be spent.

To me, there's a projection issue here in what we are actually going to spend. I'm not happy that we're bringing multiple motions on the floor in the Committee of the Whole. I'm not happy that people are calling points of orders. I think this reflects a bit of a failure on the COVID secretariat rollout and to get support and to explain all the facts to the public and to Members. I think this fight, which is a supplementary full of federal money, really, it came down to not being rolled out properly. At the end of the day, I'm not in favour of passing \$17 million for isolation centres when I have gotten pretty clear

direction that we are going to go find ways to save that money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion defeated.

---Defeated

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, COVID secretariat, not previously authorized, \$31,677. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$22,094,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, long term care and continuing care, not previously authorized, \$600,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Health and Social Services, total department, not previously authorized, \$54,860,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 10. I will now open the floor to general comments of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detailed contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations

Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$58,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$3,933,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$1,500,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment -- sorry. Member?

MR. O'REILLY: I did have my hand waving up in terms of the tourism and parks supplementary appropriation for \$1.5 million. It's for growth and recovery by investing in tourism fund. I have heard from at least one representative from the retail sector about this funding really being aimed at marketing, trying to find new ways to market products and so on, rather than really being aimed at trying to help businesses through the pandemic. I'm just wondering if I can get some details from the Minister about how this funding is going to be used and whether it's split in any way between trying to find new markets versus survival of small businesses during the pandemic? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is growth and recovery by investing in tourism. The Member makes a good point. It's not necessarily meant at the relief stage. It's not targeting the relief stage that is, obviously, needed by a lot of businesses. There're a number of programs both within the GNWT but also from the federal government that are much more directly targeted at relief. The growth and recovery by investing in tourism has three different streams, if you will, under which individual businesses can apply. The first one is for new product development or innovation meant to be for, again, development

of a new tourism product or, also, the enhancement of an existing product which is meant to be forward looking and to provide an opportunity for recovery for growth and to be ready to move forward when the time comes.

Another schedule under which individuals or businesses can apply would be for marketing and promotion, consistent with a new strategy under NWT Tourism with respect to the Emerging Wisely plan. Trying to support businesses and assist businesses in changing their marketing for the interim period until a time when COVID may not be creating quite the same level of disruption to the industry as it is now. A third one, though, Mr. Chair, does provide funding towards operations and maintenance costs to a maximum of \$5,000, so that does give some opportunity to provide some immediate relief, even before such time as the industry might be back on its feet again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to thank the Minister for that detail. There's three streams. Can the Minister provide some detail as to how much is within each of those streams and if there's flexibility to move money within the streams should demand warrant? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under the first one that I mentioned, the product development, that has a maximum of \$75,000. The second one comes to a maximum contribution of \$10,000. I believe I did indicate previously that there was \$5,000 under the third stream of providing some supports for operations and maintenance. As for whether or not there would be movement from within, and I wanted to note, Mr. Chair, that what I believe is before committee right now is the \$1.5 million that is coming fully federally funded from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, or CanNor, but that is being matched by ITI from internal budgets. A large portion of that is from ITI's travel budget.

Obviously, there is a lot less travel happening in the current fiscal year, so a significant amount of funding coming from there is being redirected to support the industry. Another large portion is coming from what was the large-scale marketing campaign initiative, so normally that would be money that would be directed through to the Northwest Territories tourism strategy and particularly targeting the international market. Obviously, that, too, right now, there is not much sense in spending a significant amount of money

there and similarly with regional marketing plans. Taking that and then redirecting all of that, Department of ITI has been able to actually internally match the \$1.5 million, creating a total of \$3 million available under these three streams.

As to whether or not we will be in a position to redirect any of that funding, Mr. Chair, I was actually trying to, as I was speaking, pull up the binder I happen to have for ITI, but I am not able to read and speak at the same time. What I will do, Mr. Chair, is take that question away. If, indeed, there is more demand in one stream or the other, I will find out an answer as to how flexible we are able to be with that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): [Microphone turned off] ...Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes. I appreciate that detail. What I was really asking was how much money is allocated for each of the three streams out of the \$3 million the Minister just spoke of. I understand she does not have the information at her fingertips. If she could provide that to me, I would appreciate it and the flexibility to move money within the streams.

The other point I would like to make is that I appreciate that our staff go out and do this work to try to get funding to support small businesses, but sometimes, you need to talk to small businesses before you go out and try to get the money, to find out what their needs are. I suppose that is one of the reasons why the Business Advisory Council was set up, but I am not convinced that small business is actually adequately represented on the council, itself. I would like to urge the Minister. I will try to be diplomatic here. This was something that was done before the Minister took over the portfolio, so I just would like to ensure that the Minister talks to businesses, small businesses in particular, before designing support and recovery programs, to make sure that it really meets their needs because I am not convinced that that happened in this particular case. I take the Minister's commitment, and I look forward to getting that information and hope that we can get better-designed programs in the long run. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. I am happy to continue to follow up on that. Actually, I do not think I mentioned it in this context. Mr. Chair, there have been quite a number of opportunities already for me to have a direct connection with the tourism association and the tourism industry. In fact, I am up in front of them tomorrow with a bit of a Q and A, so there may well

be some very direct opportunity within the next 14 or so hours to have that Q and A with representatives from industry and from businesses in the industry. I take the Member's point.

I do want to defend the program a little bit, that it was one that was developed with NWT tourism's input around how to redirect some of the funding that was otherwise, again, in these pots for marketing and for our own travel budgets and trying to find a way to make that more useful for the industry. There certainly was that engagement there. Nevertheless, I certainly acknowledge that this is an industry that has a lot of different-sized players in it, so ensuring that we are, in fact, adequately representing and assisting all of those players is something I will take away and make sure we are doing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, tourism and parks not previously authorized, \$1,500,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, total department not previously authorized, \$5,491,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Infrastructure on page 11. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Infrastructure. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Infrastructure, programs and services not previously authorized, \$1,027,000. Does committee agree? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to see all of the money we can get under the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund. I believe that some of this money is a carry-over, meaning we did not get it out the door. Can I just confirm that is the case? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Yes, Mr. Chair. That is the case.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can I just get some assurance from the Minister that the Department of Infrastructure has a communications plan and has outreach and is going to make sure that we do not fail to get Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund money out the door? It seems to me a representation of the GNWT, that we would fail to get our Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund money spent. I recognize COVID-19 happened. I recognize getting people to apply to funds can be difficult. I am just looking for some assurance that we have a plan to make sure we spend this money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. The Member actually identified a couple of the reasons why the money was not spent, quite outside necessarily the control or exclusive control of the government. With respect to the commitment that he is seeking, I would suggest that we turn this to the Minister of Infrastructure, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund agreement, it's \$4.5 million from the federal government. It's as per some of their parameters, and we respect that. However, we want to get this in the books so that we could start going through some of the spending. I hear the Member's concern. You look at some of the different initiatives, and I do want to say that three of the initiatives from above are administered by the Department of Infrastructure. However, the other three are administered by either the Arctic Energy Alliance or the NWT Housing Corporation or the Department of ENR, so there are other departments involved in this, too. However, I hear the Member's concern that, yes, we should have a plan to get something in place so that we can get this spent on time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Infrastructure, programs and services not previously authorized, \$1,027,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations

Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Infrastructure, total department not previously authorized, \$1,027,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider the Department of Justice on page 12. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Justice. If there are no further comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Justice, court services not previously authorized, \$233,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Justice, policing services, not previously authorized, \$450,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am very happy to see \$450,000 for five additional RCMP positions under the First Nations Policing Program. I hope to see more of these positions. This is long overdue, getting these positions. I also note that it saves the RCMP money because they are funded more than other positions. Can I get an answer of where these RCMP officers will be placed? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): [Microphone turned off] ...Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. They are being allotted a regional way in order to try to help cover off some of the communities that are in need. Right now, to my knowledge, it is the North Slave, Tlicho region, the Deh Cho, and Sahtu that are likely to receive these positions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Perhaps, can I just speak to how we go and get more RCMP officers under the First Nations Policing Program. Is that a request that Justice has made? Is there a possibility of further federal funding in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This was not an easy negotiation. If I may, I happen to be aware of some of the history on this was and back in February of 2019 was the first round of an attempt. The Department of Justice sought, I believe, nine positions under this program, but they managed to get five, which was, I believe, one of the first increases under the First Nations Policing Program that we've seen in quite some time. I think that's probably all I can say at the moment, Mr. Chair. I have no doubt that the Department of Justice would vastly prefer to see their funding come under this arrangement than having to pay for it under the usual seventy-thirty that otherwise exists. I can't promise what the federal government may or may not do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. MLA for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we had a briefing on this whole item at one of our meetings. My concern is that there is no enforcement on reserve at the Salt River First Nation reserve. We have to follow all these rules, like the Wildlife Act and some of these other things, and we do not have any way of enforcing but they want us to follow the act. I want to make sure that the Minister knows about this issue. I think I mentioned it to you during the business plans, and then we put these positions in other places. It's a major issue for both reserves. Enforcement on reserve is not -- the Government of the Northwest Territories wants us to follow all the rules, but they say we're a reserve so we're under federal jurisdiction. There is a major issue and gaps there, and those have got to be addressed. I know they're trying to address it in the trilateral in negotiation, but that's not enough for the members of Salt River. I was sitting at that table many times arguing this whole point, even with the Wildlife Act. There were some issues in the Wildlife Act, it was still pushed down our throats as Aboriginal people. I have a real problem when you have to follow the rules, but they won't enforce poachers. They won't enforce anything on reserve. That's a major issue. I think that the Justice Minister and the Minister of Finance have to address this problem and same with the Premier under the executive. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member actually has foreshadowed my response, which is that it is an ongoing issue. It's not a new problem, but it's one that certainly does involve EIA and the Premier as well as the Minister of Justice. To some degree, there may well be a role for the Department of Finance. Certainly, there are funding considerations here. Mr. Chair, perhaps

what I'll do is ensure that we take that away and provide a written response to the Member that better reflects the conversation that needs to be had by all the departments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. MARTSELOS: I have no other comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Justice, policing services, not previously authorized, \$450,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Justice, total department, not previously authorized, \$683,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we will now consider Department of Municipal and Community Affairs on page 13. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. If there are no comments, does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations not previously authorized, \$5,728,000. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Happy to see this money. Happy to see that we can spend some of the safe restart money on our municipalities. Municipalities have a fiscal year end that ends in a calendar year, not in April, such that they are all doing their budgets right now. It's November, they need to know whether they can put this money into their budgets. They're not allowed to run deficits. My question is: I'm glad, and I will happily approve this money. How quickly can we get the cheque to the municipalities and confirmation such that they can put it in their current budget, and we won't see any tax increases for money they know they're getting but can't include? Have we agreed on how it's going to be distributed to those communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs can speak to the distribution of it. I suggest it go to her, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Minister of MACA.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding that was allocated, we did get kind of a last-minute response from the federal government to say that this money had to be spent by September 30th, so the money has been distributed to all communities throughout the territory. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I received a letter from the mayor saying that is not the case and that they have not included this money in their current budgets. Is that just perhaps because it actually has to be passed by the Legislature, or can I just confirm that our municipalities have this money and I am mistaken, then? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Chair, I think the money that had to be spent by September 30th might be the next line item under MACA, which is funding for sports and community associations. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs was successful in getting us some flexibility on that one. As such, that's the money that had to go out. I apologize. The money that's going to municipalities, if, in fact, the supplementary does move forward then, at that point, we'd be able to formalize the allocation. I know the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs has been engaged with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities and working with them to determine allocation of the funding. If, in fact, this does go through in the next couple of days that should provide the Minister with the ability to formalize that division. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm confident this supplementary will pass. I will hope for it, get a written response a later date that we are confident that we can get this money to our municipalities to include it in their calendar year budget such that they are not making cuts that they will then just get the money for and they're moving things around unnecessarily. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, the Northwest Territories Association of Communities and Municipal and Community Affairs have had a discussion. There shouldn't be any secrets around what amounts are going to which communities, that division has been agreed to between those parties, so this was a very engaged process, one where, again, the association of municipalities and the Municipal and Community Affairs have, indeed, figured out what an equitable distribution will be between all the different communities. Indeed, if this does go through, as we are certainly hopeful that it will, there should be no delay in getting this to the municipalities as allocated, as agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. JOHNSON: No. I am glad to hear that, Mr. Chair. Let's hope Finance can cut that cheque as soon as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$5,728,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, sport, recreation and youth, not previously authorized, \$1,584,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, total department not previously authorized, \$7,312,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-19(2):
CONCURRENCE MOTION - TABLED
DOCUMENT 217-19(2): SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2020-2021,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. You got it right. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 217-19(2) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. The motion is in order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Question has been called. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passed.

---Carried

Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, will be reported for consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee?

MR. NORN: Marsi cho. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? Motion carried.

---Carried

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Hay River South.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act; Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act; Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act; and Tabled Document 217-19(2), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2020-2021, and would like to report progress with one motion adopted, that Bills 17, 18, and 19 are ready for third reading, and that consideration of Tabled Document 217-19(2) is concluded and that the House concur in those

estimates and that an appropriation bill be based thereon, to be introduced without delay, and, Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Seconded by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 2, third reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 15:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT
ACT, 2020

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020, be read for the third time, and, Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Minister of Justice has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the vote: 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 15 has had third reading. Item 23, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, November 4, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Question 358-19(2), Long-Term Care Facility
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
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
 - Motion 21-19(2), Establishment of a Special Committee on Reconciliation and Indigenous Affairs
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Corrections Act
 - Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act
 - Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 15, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2020

- Committee Report 4-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report
- Committee Report 5-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
- Minister's Statement 77-19(2), National Housing Co-Investment Fund
- Tabled Document 165-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 1-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 166-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 167-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 3-19(2): Report on Long-Term Post-Pandemic Recovery - Recommendations to the GNWT
- Tabled Document 181-19(2), Capital Estimates 2021-2022

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, November 4, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:29 p.m.